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## The Embodiment of the Ethnic Cultural Capital of the Roma *Lăutari* in Romania

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‘Furthermore, in so far as the expressive bias of performances comes to be accepted as reality, then that which is accepted at the moment as reality will have some characteristics of a celebration. To stay in one’s room away from the place where the party is given, or away from where the practitioner attends his client, is to stay away from where reality is being performed. The world, in truth, is a wedding.’ — Erving Goffman (1959: 35–36)

### 1. Introduction

*Muzică lăutarească* remains one of the most representative folk music genres in Romania today.<sup>1)</sup> The *lăutari*, who profess in the music, have by and large been considered to be engaged in a family occupation in Romanian Roma. The image of *lăutari* can be found in popular culture today. For instance, footage of Taraf de Haïdouks, a band from the Clejani village of Wallachia, with narration by Johnny Depp, can be viewed on YouTube; some of these videos have received more than 100,000 views (Gypsy Caravan 2012). Traditional *lăutari* have acquired a unique position and value on the globalised pop cultural scene as well in the ethnopop genre of the Balkans, such as in DJ Vasile’s collaborative project featuring ‘Everybody in the Casa Mare’ sung with the Moldovan pop group Zdob și Zdub (Zdob și Zdub 2006). However, it would be misleading to characterise *muzică lăutarească* as *muzica rromilor* or Roma folk music. The Roma *lăutari* musicians, with their familial involvement and cultural production of musicianship, are agents of music on the Romanian cultural landscape. *Muzică lăutarească* is Romanian national folk music, which is performed mainly by the *lăutari* Roma as a way of being in the world. In fact, the *lăutari* have shown little concern for and little interest in associating with any aspect of their music that is related to an ethnic category (Rădulescu 2004). This chapter is an attempt in musical anthropology, as conceived by Seeger, to elucidate *muzică lăutarească* as a lived style of sensibility: it presents the conviction that this music is something only a selected set of Roma can and should make. Musical anthropology, instead of positioning music as a part of culture or society, ‘studies social life as a performance’ and ‘examines the way music is part of the very construction and interpretation of [the] social and conceptual relationship and process’ (Seeger 2004: xiii–xiv). For this purpose, this chapter develops arguments based

on the phenomenological observations of Merleau-Ponty (1968), who referred to the everyday reality of the experienced world as intercorporeality, Accordingly, *muzică lăutărească* is a musical style as well as a condition for a specific type of sensibility that emerges only in interactions that occur throughout the entire process of music making. Subjective division between the performer and the audience becomes pervasive as intercorporeality emerges among the resonating bodies, never precluding a process of mutual, inseparable interactions (Suwa 2012).

Bourdieu's (1977) practice theory should provide a viable framework for discussing *muzică lăutărească* in that his idea of habitus nicely bridges issues of corporeality and social structure. Practice theory provides a model that is particularly well-suited to European cultural contexts, in which social class stratification has been the fundamental force for producing power and coping strategies, as in the case of modern France (Bourdieu 1984). Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (CC), in particular, concerns the performative aspects of music. CC furnishes the root for disposition or habitus, which crystallises in artistic taste to make class behaviours emergent. Habitus is a tacitly acquired social behaviour that structures everyday life transactions. Habitus contextualises fixed patterns of social behaviour, either routine or improvisational, stratifies the social classes into a hierarchy, and in this very regard, CC becomes a source of power. The precondition for strategy is called doxa. Unlike written texts, doxa is tacit, unseen, and performed as a speech act. CC conceptualises culture as patterns of behaviour in which *modi operandi* are stratified into multiple doxa, an ideological effect that we feel as tradition, authenticity, or cultural codes, as a result of adopting practical strategies (Bourdieu 1977). However, Bourdieu's argument of CC is somehow limited to the habitus of upper social class behaviours, such as Parisian-accented French; it is devoid of research in and discussions directed towards, say, African and Arabic populaces. With regard to minority culture, then, CC is evasive, since it privileges the disposition of the higher cultural strata. Consequently, the lower strata are prone to be depicted as underprivileged, subaltern, and silent. In this framework, there is no place for the precious art of Josephine Baker or Sydney Bechet, who lived with dispositions that did not reflect upper-crust behaviour; instead, they embodied a corporeality that interacted similarly to CC. Minorities must be entitled to CC of their own, i.e. minority cultural capital (MCC). MCC should complement Bourdieu's idea of CC in that the interaction between the social strata is multilateral rather than unilateral, and the dynamism between the two generates a habitus of multimodality with regard to socio-cultural interactions.

In this paper, MCC will be modified to another specific term when CC is ethnically embedded: ethnic cultural capital (ECC). ECC is a special coinage of MCC, to be used when ethnic symbols and imaginations assume a significant role in reproducing CC. ECC interacts in a manner that is similar to CC, but the former is a *modus operandi* for the lower or subaltern strata of social classes. Initially, ECC is conceived in analysing Tuvan overtone singing known as *hoomei*, in which a country singing practice is appropriated by urban artists and globally marketed as fine, authentic, rural Tuvan heritage. In this production process, *hoomei*, which comprises rural Tuvans' disposition, is displaced, becoming a signifier of a youth subculture in the city centre of Kyzyl as well as of the

Tuvan cultural identity, whereas the authenticity of Tuvan heritage is, in fact, handed down by pastoral Tuvans who sing *hoomei* as a pastime during herding or winter breaks. No matter how *hoomei* becomes marketable and professed or practised by urbanites as a sign of being 'cool', the very ground is authenticated by herders who actually sing on the rural sound-/landscape (Suwa 2008, 2012). Whether ECC is a common trait of post-socialism in Eurasia awaits further scrutiny, but it at least seems that ECC is a disposition involving the global market. In post-socialist Romania, after the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu in 1989, Romanian music found a niche; the successful coverage of Taraf de Haïdouks in the world music market outside of Romania is exemplary in that Romanian Romani music has acquired authenticity in terms of representing Romanian culture as a whole. The *muzică lăutărească* genre as ECC is a result of the 'misrecognition' (Bourdieu 1977) that cultural industry produces the music to essentialise the ethnicity of the Roma *lăutari*.

In terms of musicians' strategies, musical reification and fetish can constitute an objective of music making when market expectations are met. Whenever musical production is involved, ECC becomes visible when the global market operates and codifies world music cultures and capitalises on the cultural signs being reproduced. Whereas both MCC and ECC do not necessarily presuppose globalised social situations, musical mediation inevitably involves them on the plane of worldwide networking and imagination. In the performative space, wherever, as in the recording studio, music classrooms, concerts, or listening to a radio programme, ECC is the *modus operandi* of the cultural assemblages of the ethno-musical. Whether it ends up constantly articulating and marginalising minorities or leading to the empowerment of the minority group, ECC realises the artefacts and behaviour that are appropriated by the minority interacting with its surroundings. The world music market refashions music culture by emphasising that it is distinct to a minority group; however, music as performance, per se, is not a fetish; it becomes one only when it is packaged and reified as a representation of an indigenous way of life, just as Tuvan herders never sing *hoomei* to represent their way of life. ECC fashions music as an attitude towards the cultural mainstream, as in the case of an urban subculture symbolising resistance when the ethnic minority associated with a particular genre of music exhibits a feature of the social underclass. In this regard, the articulation of ECC as MCC can be observed in performative micro-level actions in an ethnographic space.

ECC and MCC refer to a condition of habitus in which the misrecognition of certain stereotypes becomes reified and projected onto actants' personhoods, regardless of performer or audience; it must be stressed that stereotypes and other cultural products are merely effects of ECC or MCC and not the disposition itself. Goffman (1959: 35) relates that: 'Furthermore, in so far as the expressive bias of performances comes to be accepted as reality, then that which is accepted at the moment as reality will have some characteristics of a celebration'. Such a 'celebration' is obviously a metaphor; it is the space in practise that truly interacts, so as to generate various tangible cultural signs and discourses, and CC is a disposition of the interaction that governs behaviour in the space, whether expectedly or unexpectedly. By the same token, the space in which any CC

develops into a strategy is never fixed, despite the impression that they are reproduced in hierarchical order. Specifically, ECC develops in a global music market that assumes little hierarchy but is concomitant with the genre distinction that is projected onto the world map; this means that the relationship between the global market and each local market is not hierarchical, since such a market employs a strategy characterised by regional idiosyncrasy. Besides, in the age of social media, as Attali prophesied, public music making has become increasingly similar, indeed nearly identical to private music making, to the extent that they are inseparable, as evidenced by the way numerous YouTube and Instagram posts are produced and viewed (Attali 1977). This decentralising power in the age of social media appears to place ECC in an even more subtle position, no longer admitting a concept such as 'ethnic identity' as valid. People assume and fashion practically multiple or fractal identities, and not even social media are used as tools to express their identity; rather, they are tools for what to do with any identity, claimed or unclaimed.

## 2. Ethnic Cultural Capital: The Issue of Becoming a Minority

At first glance, the interaction between the *lăutari* and their audience reflects Goffman's idea of 'performance' (1959). The *lăutari* in the everyday life context have a 'front', an inter-facial social space that is, by nature, interactive and expressed in many appearances and manners, such as a well-ironed shirt, a pair of shiny shoes, musical dexterity, humbleness, poise, and so forth: 'As he grows old, the prestigious *lăutar* becomes a *persona* studiously built up in greater and greater harmony with a certain imago' (Radulescu 1996: 137). Performances by *lăutari* actually extend beyond music making to encompass 'ideal values' that should not be observed as a psychological state, but rather as an assemblage that articulates the performer and the audience. The 'ideal' is also a reality in which one can experience the sound of music and its memory. Goffman's renowned concept of 'impression management', which is, at times, rephrased as 'self-staging' (1959: 248–251), is a view of the self that generates performances in everyday-life social contexts and makes sense of the world's complex reality. However, it must be stressed that impression management as a desired action and the result of such an action should not be confused. In the case of *lăutari*, impression management is a very blurred action; for one thing, while being well-clad and having a polite manner can indeed be impressive, on the other hand, an unabashed request for a bigger tip, if that ever happens, might not give the impression of good conduct. In this regard, Goffman's idea of faciality in performance needs to be expanded and developed from a different angle; impression management and faciality together are becoming something unknown that is being revealed in a particular time-space. *Muzică lăutărească* as a musico-cultural phenomenon in this sense is not reducible to a social behaviour; rather, it is an articulation of sound being embodied and is simultaneously a way of being. The faces in music making are the sound of music, which extends to the personhoods of those who are involved in the space of the here and now.

In addition, an analysis of situational interactions by drawing on Goffman might not be sufficient to meet this paper's objective of ethnographically exploring the *lăutari*'s livelihood since it necessitates addressing the ultimate question: why music? The musicians would say that music is a family business. Hence, *muzică lăutărească* is not an expression of cultural identity, but rather a matter of economic survival. Nevertheless, the very interaction of music making and musical phenomena remains an issue because the musicians are often unsure about, unaware of, or indifferent to why the *muzică lăutărească* genre exists, intersecting with contemporary Romania's cultural scenes. Anthony Seeger's idea of musical anthropology, which is antithetical to Merriam Webster's coinage of the anthropology of music, suggests that music is not a part of culture 'as a whole.' Seeger (2004: xv) states: 'The "because" answers to "why do the Suyá sing?" are not final causes'. His concluding phrase 'Suyá society was an orchestra, its village was a concert hall, and its year a song' is not meant to be taken as a parable (Seeger 2004: 140); rather, to the Suyá, music is truly a structuration of everyday-life social conditions which are inseparable from one another. We can certainly rephrase Seeger to share his concerns: 'why do the *lăutari* sing?' or 'why do the Romanians dance?' Following Seeger, posing these questions would lead to the realisation that contemporary Romania is a concert hall, and its year a *horă*. Gregory Bateson, who faced everyday life among the Iatmul of New Guinea, might have called it getting a 'feel of the culture', in that the ethnographic spacing of participant observation must be elusive, and it is difficult to simply categorise the behaviour of the cultural other as 'ethos' (Bateson 1958, 1972; Suwa 2012: 83–87). Bateson's description of locally-exposed cultural phenomena as the 'feel of the culture' and not an ethos indicates rather vividly that ethnographic events are essentially a matter of interaction as well as interpretation between the informant and the participant observer. Music is not supposed to be reduced to an outcome of behaviour. *Muzică lăutărească* is a musical phenomenon that generates a 'feel of the culture' and actants, not vice versa.

Faciality in the performative space is therefore an interaction of articulation; it never means a 'face' as in a façade. In order to analyse the multifaceted articulations of faciality, the idea of participatory discrepancy, proposed by Charles Keil, is a worthwhile consideration. Keil states: 'We really have to get down to the recording studio or dance floor to groove a while and ask people about what has been happening' (1994: 107). Participatory discrepancy is not a division or schism between performer and audience or among performers; rather, it articulates musical experience as a whole, making 'music a peculiarly powerful vehicle for participatory consciousness and action' (Keil 1994: 98). While Keil draws examples from North American music of African and Polish backgrounds, in the case of *muzică lăutărească*, participatory discrepancy is evident in the way the *lăutari* and the audience interact. Accomplished *lăutari* are without exception fully aware of *floricică* as the interactive element of music making. However, the issue of *floricică* is well beyond impression management because it simultaneously articulates both the performer and the audience, and the faciality of *floricică* never belongs to any particular actant. *Floricică* is a condition of interaction. In this regard, in field research, what the Wallachian Roma informants described to the ethnographer-outsider as *floricică*

should contain multiple indications, since it is interactional and never to be essentialised. This means that any micro-level analysis of ECC needs to focus on interactions that articulate the performer and the audience on an ambiguous plane.

Whereas the concept of ECC is developed from practice theory, in which behaviour might not always involve a phenomenological plane, the musical phenomenon should be discussed in the manner of Bateson's argument of getting a 'feel of the culture', as long as *floricică* is interactive and articulates musical reality. In the field of ECC, musical phenomena occur in situations that participatory discrepancy can describe, that is, between the *lăutari* and the non-Roma audience as well as the non-*lăutari* Roma. This means that *muzică lăutărăască* needs to be viewed not as a mere product of musical behaviour, but rather as an assemblage of actants and sound phenomena that articulate each other. In this regard, *muzică lăutărăască* is an assemblage par excellence (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Practice theory can describe how ECC produces the musical scene in Romania, whereas the idea of assemblage might answer the question 'why is it music?' by viewing music as pervasive and permeable or intercorporeal, that is, inseparably attached to the place of personhood. The issues in *muzică lăutărăască* ought to be seen as follows: music is an agent for those who are involved, and alternately, personhood becomes an agent for the music, dance, and perhaps noise that is resonating in the here and now (Suwa 2012). The *floricică*, which is the generator of *muzică lăutărăască*, is a becoming-music process, turning musical sound into a recognisable reality (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). *Lăutari* performances are becoming-music not only in the sense that performance achieves, but also because during performances, the sound articulates musicians' and audience members' personhoods. In this regard, *muzică lăutărăască* is an assemblage; the sound of music articulates performers and audience members from different backgrounds, but together, they are components of a single musical experience that is taking place in the performative here and now.

Since assemblage is becoming-music in micro-scale interactions, ECC as musical phenomena appears as fluid, ambiguous articulation. Ethnographically-observable ECC articulates in micro-scale interactions, which can involve layers of social class and stakeholders or participants being assembled and projected in various or multiple social settings. The actants of ECC, in this regard, can be said to have agency, as conceived by Alfred Gell (1988) in his anthropology of art. Musical phenomena are non-existent without assuming interactions, and agency is an interaction process among actants; it provides a space for cognitive processing, weaving out a sense of reality. A car is an agent to humans, as a means of transportation or for the enjoyment of driving, but it also can be, as Gell (1988: 18) describes in the following excerpt:

[An] injury suffered by the car is a personal blow, an outrage, even though the damage can be made good ... Not only is the car a locus of the owner's agency, and a conduit through which the agency of others (bad drivers, vandals) may affect him — it is also the locus of an 'autonomous' agency of its own.

Any interactions in the vicinity of *lăutari* and *muzică lăutărăască* must be sought in

this very respect: Gell's idea is important in that this type of reality is not limited to Frazer-like animistic discourses but is rather common to people's everyday lives. Agency can be identical to an 'assemblage' in that agents are mutually interactive and relative, and under this very condition, they come into sensible being. Music is inseparable from the bodies that embody resonations. The musically-embodied body would lose density and annihilate itself if the music ceased to resonate. 'Assemblage' in this regard does not merely mean a mixture; rather, it is knitted with the threads of relationships to form a whole. Every agent of assemblage is a becoming of other agents without forming a hierarchical 'arboreal' order. At this point, music departs from an issue of ownership, CC and its habitus, to that of becoming-music, as previously mentioned (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). 'Becoming' assumes an assemblage, where interactive relationships are realised as strata or different levels of interactions, without necessarily depending on a hierarchical order or social roles. When a *lăutar* plays music, her/his personhood is imagined in the agent of music, the audience. By the same token, the imaginary process simultaneously takes place in the performer, who feels an assemblage of audience reaction amalgamated with the sound of music: this is *floricică* assembling. Therefore, ECC is a generative force to becoming-minority; it is a *modus operandi* of assemblage that emerges as a cultural process of becoming-minority, and *muzică lăutarească* is an agent of becoming-music, articulating the becoming-minority of the *lăutari*. The *lăutari* are agents to the music that weaves out musical time-space through the resonance of performance. The audience is an agent to both the *muzică lăutarească* and the *lăutari* through receptive interactions, and any resonating body that embeds *muzică lăutarească*, albeit through playing or dancing, becomes minority.

Wallachian folk-musical life relies, by and large, on professional Roma *lăutari*. The Romani community in Romania form endogamous subgroups based on family enterprises to reproduce networking. In Wallachia, those who profess in *muzică lăutarească* are customarily members of the subgroup *lăutari* (musicians), but occasionally, individual musicians can originate from the *vătrași* (farmers). Although the term '*lăutari*' can technically signify any *muzică folclor* musicians, today it categorically, if not stereotypically, denotes the Romani who profess in *muzică lăutarească*.<sup>2)</sup> In post-socialist Romania, street performance is not common, and musicians earn their living from contractual appearances at weddings and various parties including Danube cruisers, *folclor* or classical orchestras, and on television shows. In the case of local events, such as weddings and weekend parties, these appointments are negotiated directly with the clients. On stage, the *lăutari* assume their role by managing impressions, that is, wearing a 'mask of manner' (Goffman 1959: 57). Aside from their quality time with music, they perform via a set of customary acts, such as well-ironed clothes, shiny shoes, meals that are served separately, asking for tips, and humble reactions to random outbreaks of ballroom violence.

*Muzică lăutarească* as ECC from the perspective of the *lăutari* includes the following aspects. First, the *muzică lăutarească* repertoire forms a continuum between folk music, hitherto practised by various ethnic groups, such as the Hungarians, the Ukrainians, the Saxons, the Bulgarians and the Jews, and nationalist concert music, such

as Grigoraş Dinicu's 'Hora Staccato' and 'Ciocârlia' (The Skylark). Whereas such a continuum vividly displays the *lăutari*'s avid, versatile musicianship, it also puts them in an ambiguous position: on one hand, given their elegant manners, they are highly respected as an artistic, intellectual group in Roma; on the other, their distinct musicality leads to the cultural stereotype of minority. Secondly, by means of their music, the *lăutari* comprise an agency that is beyond ethnicity; *muzică lăutărească* consumers include the Roma, ranging from countryside *vătraşi* farmers, who save for years to host their weddings, to nouveau riche interlopers, who would spend thousands of Euros on a weekend party. The *lăutari* also conduct some parts of the wedding ceremony, which are separate from the church service. Their music is used to cue or articulate the different sections of nuptial rituals, which the non-*lăutari* have forgotten. It is not only the Romanians but also the non-Roma non-*lăutari* who have no clear memory of the sequence of a wedding's ritual segment, since visitors usually only attend the dance. In Grădişte, a community south of Bucharest, a *lăutar* from nearby Comana directed the ritual, telling the bridegroom to break an urn and throw the pieces over the roof or bite an apple from a Christmas-tree-like fir in front of the tent. As a cue, a short passage was played on the saxophone and the accordion. Once the dance music began, the hosts and guests chatted, danced, and dined to music until the next morning.

*Muzică lăutărească* becomes ECC as global marketing authenticates the *lăutari* in the discourse of locality and traditionalism; their dance music played on the *ţambal* zither and with the flourish of clarinet improvisation in an effort to make a living from country weddings has become prestigious despite its painstaking nature. Ironically, in rural settings, the *lăutari* neither relate to the music as Roma tradition nor do they regard the performance as an expression of Roma cultural identity; the musical style, per se, is simply called *muzică folclorică* or *muzică populară* (the socialist 'people's music'), without a connotation that discerns between the Romanians and the Roma. ECC mediates the *lăutari* with *muzică lăutărească* and represents them as the agent of the globally-marketable sound culture of Wallachia as well as one. In this cultural process, the *lăutari* become *muzică lăutărească* or a becoming-minority of music culture, which resonates on the Romanian, or even European, ethnoscape. The *lăutari* comprise a minority in a double sense: they usually learn music within their families during early childhood and their ethnicity is Roma.

The world music market that connects local and indigenous music cultures with the world activates ECC through the artistic discourse of the grassroots' voices, regardless of the musicians' intentions; take for example, the way it marketed the band Taraf de Haïdouks, which has become globally representative of *muzică lăutărească* and is too busy to play regularly in their Danubian homeland. However, the relationship between the musicians and the producers is not necessarily harmonious; at times, it is even exploitive (Pulay 2008). In this regard, ECC is a fragile, often elusive form of CC in which the musical actants do not necessarily gain social advancement from the actants of other types of CC.

The *lăutari*, however, display little concern for the identity of their repertoire, since it is the music of Romania regardless, and it belongs to the tacit knowledge that they act

as an agent for generating intimacy in locals' musical lives, which is inseparable from the Romanian roots experience. This musical assemblage produces a discrepancy regarding the authentication of Romani culture. *Folclor* music, the state-run apparatus of the 'people's music', fashions Romanian national identity using regional costumes and rustic farmhouse interiors in Bucharest studios; this idyllic fantasia receives all-day coverage on national television, especially during Yuletide, cultural festivals, and the folk music competitions that are hosted by local municipalities from summer to fall all around the country. In such cases, the *lăutari* are merely members of the orchestra behind the usual Romanian dancers and solo folk singers dressed in ethnic costumes. In the social space where *muzică lăutărească* is resonating, the relationship between the *lăutari* and the audience is reversible because resonant corporeality is shared by means of music: the audience is articulated by the sound of *muzică lăutărească*, and the subjectivity of the *lăutari* resonates in the audience. The resonating bodies become music themselves, and the very sound of the musical cultural condition of minority is embodied. Sound structure, audience interactions, and social roles may present a discrepancy at this point, and assemblage articulates itself due to this discrepancy. Servitude to patrons, which is the premise for *muzică lăutărească*, is cultivated through the relationship with audiences in the Romanian local setting. This aspect of performance activates ECC in authenticating *muzică lăutărească* as 'genuine' folk music to be marketed globally. Whoever is involved or preoccupied with *muzică lăutărească* with respect to the patron–client relationship, through dancing, applauding, or desiring the music, in turn becomes an agent for crystallising the *lăutari*'s subjectivity. Nonetheless, ECC is a form of CC with respect to agency; it is never realised in unilateral enactments, but rather interacts in terms of faciality, forming an assemblage of lived experience. The *lăutari* are articulated by means of performance, and at the same time, the audience is conditioned by *lăutărească* ways of life.

### 3. The Agency of the *Lăutari*

The following three subsections will exemplify the modus operandi of *muzică lăutărească* as ECC. The first discusses the idea of faciality, which was introduced in the context of informal conversation. The second observes aspects of performer–audience interaction by delineating an episode of paying a tribute, as reported in an interview with a *lăutar*. The last posits the rare case of a non-Roma *lăutar* whose disposition requires further intriguing discussion with respect to ECC. The ethnographic data, including the informants' statements, were mainly collected between 2012 and 2014 in the Giurgiu municipality within the Muntenia region of Wallachia (See Map 1). Additional data obtained after 2015 are specified by year. The sequences are written in the ethnographic present tense.

#### 3.1 The Faciality of Music

A detailed musical analysis of *floricică* (flower) as an improvisational embellishment to the melody appears in Victor Stoichita's (2008: 184–188) monograph, based on the



musicianship. Among the older generation of farming Roma, joining the ranks of the *lăutari* was attractive because of their clean, neat dress, polished-to-shining shoes, graceful manner, and the power of their music, not to mention the applause they receive from patrons and clients. The Ceaușescu regime did not recognise *muzică lăutărească* as the people's music (they censored its lyrics), nor did they acknowledge *lăutar* as a legitimate occupation. A number of old *lăutari* recall that law enforcement such as the Securitate would attend each meeting to check that the musical programme and the hour of performance shown in the submitted plan were being adhered to.

*Floricică*, however, is not a generic term used among audience members. There is a discrepancy that the audience's reaction to the music, whatever it may be, is present; there is no word or phrase among the audience members for the condition of assemblage. At a number of weddings in which I have participated, as well in some weekend television broadcasts of celebrity parties and based on various accounts from Romanian party guests, musical space is, without exception, articulated by dancing. Spontaneous dancing occurs unisexually whenever a tune attracts dancers. A large encircling formation is assumed when a fast dance like the *horă* begins. Many attendees feel like joining this big circle of hand-in-hand dancers, and as the tune plays, a mild sense of *communitas* seems to arise among the dancers, despite their various social positions, some of which are distinctly hierarchical (Turner 1974). Nostalgic dance tunes that were popular in the socialist era sometimes can elicit emotional reactions; Jean-Luc Nancy (1991) references an 'inoperable community', meaning that the olden days, assembled with that particular sound of music, are forever lost.

In *floricică*, the audience and musicians articulate with each other, as shown in the following statements by *lăutari* in conversation:

We got no territory to play. We just go to anywhere requested. You must cover this large area and know a good variety of music. You'd be in trouble if you don't know a folksong from Banat or Moldova that you are asked. Even around my place, I once played in front of about thirty Moldovans in a wedding party and had to sing their songs. (Nița, Malu)

I get the audience's taste after I play about ten tunes. I watch their faces and listen to their conversations. If I could find someone feeling sad, I would get tipped. I sing the songs that immediately connect with the root of his sorrow. (Vasile, Mârșa)

I always make a final decision at the last minute. I read people's faces before playing: he's got a lot of money; I try to figure out what he is worrying about or how he is feeling. One night in Syria, we were invited to the Prince's house with the ambassador and the governor. We did 'Ciocârliă' because the violin imitated a singing bird. In a foreign country, winning the audience's favour is just like that, but winning the prize in the *folclor* competition in Romania is a different story: you'd be competing with those real *lăutari*. In a music festival in Pitești, just ten minutes before our stage appearance, a unique idea struck me. I borrowed a portable *țambal* (a type of zither commonly used in Romanian folk music) from a man in the hallway. I told my brother to play the instrument and our

violinist, who had a good voice, to sing along with him. My idea was to imitate a village band that plays and walks down the street during the wedding. Our orchestra played three decent rustic tunes with these two soloists, and in the end, the *tambal* played while we walked away from the stage to a fade out. We won the first prize. One of the judges told me that the production was a great fusion between true folk music and an orchestral piece. (Florentin Feraru, Giurgiu)

When I was a saxophonist for a cruiser band on the Danube, we went up as far as Passau. I used to perform at night, so I went up on the deck to check the passenger couples to guess their relationships to each other: a happily married couple, a rich guy having an affair with his mistress, and so on. About 70% of all *lăutari* must be doing exactly what I do. Attending weddings to play music idly just never makes you a real *lăutar*. (Florentin Feraru, Giurgiu)

In order to make money you need to improvise and check your guests' faces. I try to get information out of the guests' faces so I can select songs. A sad song causes sobbing. A funny one causes laughter. For a wedding, there are songs to describe the sorrow of parting from one's parents and the like. (Marin Feraru, Giurgiu)

This practice among the *lăutari* of reading clients' faces can be called 'faciality', to borrow from Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 167–191). Active *lăutari* learn a large number of songs and crystallise audiences' desires in musically sublime ways, which is expressed in their facial expressions that can then be gazed upon; hence, this is a face-to-face interaction for both sides, each making a face, as ruling affects become a performative space for music. The *lăutari* find and 'read' their audiences' faces, and the audience is attuned to the sound that comes from the heartfelt, reassuring faces of the *lăutari*. Sentiments such as *dor* (longing/yearning), *dragoște* (affection), *trist* (sadness), and *poftă* (desire<sup>4)</sup>) become faciality through resonance; for example, *dor* is the sentiment shared among migrant blue-collar workers in Spain and also in France. The audience members, emotionally charged by the sound of the music, become *lăutari*'s music through interactions involving faces. The facial interaction between the performer and the audience assembles a selection of songs that have the ability to distinguish accomplished *lăutari* from mediocre ones. To 'give one's heart', as in Vasile's remark, means that the condition is not simply manipulated but rather is realised only through becoming, intercorporeally, each other's agent.

Authoritarian power discourages the body of *lăutari*. An orchestral conductor, who is also a *lăutar*, tells a story about his hardship:

I have been conducting since 1998. Conductor Marghi Ghiocel gave me lessons when I was playing the clarinet in the orchestra in Alexandria (a city 50 km southwest of Bucharest). After he joined the National Broadcasting in Bucharest, I came back to Giurgiu and toured around Moldova, Russia, and Germany. In 2000, when we came back from a tour in Braşov, I found out that they had terminated my contract. 'Due to political

reasons', the manager said: 'A graduate record from a conservatory is now required for all members in our orchestra'. I asked why, and he replied, 'Because someone who lacks academic background also lacks culture'.

But, what's the matter with school? On the streets of any European city, you see a *țigăn* (gypsy) playing without music sheets. I just learned very basic clarinet in junior high school and that was it. Anyway, after I lost my job, I went to Munich as a clarinetist in a restaurant. Our *taraf* (music band) was a trio: an accordion, a guitar, and me. This place was frequented by members of the Philharmonic. One night Jose Carreras came to dine. We played some *lăutarească* and faked up a Brahms, Monti's 'Csárdás', and a Khachaturian. They exclaimed: 'Why don't you play with us?' They were serious about it, but I declined. The music is just too different, and I was a bit ashamed of my background. I came back to Romania. After four years, they realised that without us, the orchestra is a mess, and they asked us to come back. A brother of mine is still in Germany as the bassist in an orchestra, though. (Florentin Feraru)

Faciality seems to lose its interactive power when the concert hall context becomes the musicians' arena; at times, it even makes them hesitant and ashamed of their musicianship. Without faciality, *muzică lăutarească* loses its enchantment. A Khachaturian piece can be played in either a restaurant or concert hall, but the spontaneity is a *floricică*, as long as it generates faciality. The global context, as in this case the German music market, might reactivate ECC, again facilitating the interactive faciality of *muzică lăutarească*.

From the audience's perspective, faciality relates to the reception of the music: the artists' personhoods assemble the way in which the audience members are treated or serviced by the music. A poor reaction might highlight such interactions. In the summer of 2017, at a restaurant<sup>5</sup> situated in Bucharest's historical district, in a historical building that is an international tourist spot, a *taraf* is playing 'Ciocârlia' in a nearly empty chamber; undoubtedly Romanian folk music, it is known as a fine virtuosic piece in which nationalist Romani composer Dinicu's violin imitates a skylark. However, the performance of 'Ciocârlia' is somehow lacking direction; the performers' faciality, which should seek a positive reaction, is not present. To those who hear them play, this obscure faciality articulates as non-assemblage or weak assemblage; the artists hardly give a look, and evidently, faciality does not articulate in their audience. In a sense, their presence was not much different than recorded folk music from the amplifier would have been. The assumption, interpreted from the audience's perspective, that 'Ciocârlia' is enough for international tourists who have little knowledge about Romania is clear in their selection of music: the players never articulate any faciality to induce further interactions.

Faciality does not entail a façade with regard to an event, but rather the interaction that can take place; hence, obscure articulation of faciality or a lack of it means that the situation is un-musical. On another occasion during the same summer of 2017, in a residential area in Giurgiu, a family is hosting an evening weekend party dedicated to a young child as part of a Romani ceremony, the details of which remain unclear. At 19:00, recordings of electronic *manele*, the contemporary style of ethnopop, are heard

from the amplifier. A *taraf* starts to play at about 21:00, but they play only briefly. Someone is overheard yelling in the dark, and the air becomes tense, as though foreshadowing violence. The vocalist among the *lăutari*, who is arriving late, is falling apart musically. The party is taking place in a fenced area, but the lack of sound reaction is a clear indication that nobody is happy with the musician's manner. In short, the clients are dissatisfied. After a long pause, the singing starts again, this time impromptu; the musician is complaining about his tight schedule and his clients' lack of understanding and support. He is wrapping up to go home because, although he has come from far away, his clients are indifferent and unfriendly. There is no sign of physical violence, but in the exchange among the *lăutari*, voices grow louder and harsher. The band leaves in a van.

### 3.2 Tipping as Interaction

Vasile of Mârșă village, who is also known as DJ Vasile, comes from the farming subgroup and painstakingly taught himself music during his extremely impoverished post-war era childhood. Whenever he spoke, Vasile's stories would begin with insightful comments on music and end with the memory of financial entanglement, betrayal, and exploitation. One of his stories goes something like this:

I was drinking with a man who got his band a contract with a live television programme. The manager asked him how much he received in cash. Vasile honestly replied '300 euro'. 'That cannot be!' The manager was surprised: 'We contracted 1,800 euro for the three of you, and you've got to be paid 600!' The manager was kind enough to pay his wife's medical bill. I did not wish to start up a fight with my guys; I always keep quiet even if I got cheated because these things will pay off in the end. One of the guys was grabbing pieces of roasted meat from the buffet and filling his pocket with it to take home. Boy, I don't want to be a man like that.

Certainly, Vasile's story is a type of speech act. The *lăutari*'s faciality is not to be interpreted at face value. For an outsider, being involved with a Roma sometimes entails a special kind of configuration, a stratum which I have already taken into account in the psychodrama of *lăutari* faciality. The incident with Vasile was indeed such a case: his speech act projects our future, not only because he displays modesty, but also due to the anticipation of payment balancing at our meeting. Payment to the musician articulates a mixed expression of anxiety and excitement in their look, which would be carefully concealed in a humble, graceful manner; it is indeed an ineffable kind of desire, as their gaze is directed at my fingertips and the bank notes being taken out of my wallet, like a child watching a magician's hand for a coin that has disappeared—it marks our time and space, the whole meeting. They never request an exact amount because that is not their manner, but their face reveals how happy they are, and then they kiss and utter blessings. Their expression is so multifaceted that it is virtually impossible to derive a single interpretation from their faces; displays of friendship in words, gestures, and actions can indicate a variety of things, such as a compliment, a cunning manoeuvre, whole-hearted

sincerity, a glimpse of pure innocence, or even the malice of dissatisfaction. This indeterminacy of expression is also a projection of my own attitude towards the informant, since I would have appeared almost as equally ineffable as they. The *lăutar* might be wondering, ‘This Japanese man accompanying a Romanian family is claiming to be a scholar. He claims that he only received a small sum, but who knows?’ Here, again, faciality is an assemblage; it is always interactive. Our faciality, the intercorporeal, emerges only through exchange; it extends to and pervades each other’s personhood. This interactive sequence is not necessarily a process of mutual understanding but rather of discrepancy; at any rate, as an agent for their ECC, I activate *muzică lăutarească* as an assemblage.

Ambiguity of interaction can take place very subtly. On another occasion, after our interview and demonstration, while we were dining at the same table on their homemade meatball *ciorbă*, in a rare scene for *lăutari* and their clients, Vasile exclaimed to me: ‘You are my son!’ However, as we left, he also made a very polite inquiry as to the price for a day. This action appeared to be a double-bind, and it mystified my Romanian student’s family who kindly escorted me home; on our way, the action was finally interpreted as an example of Romani behaviour. Vasile’s move was regarded as a double-bind because despite whole-hearted hospitality, he made a request for financial assistance, which is an anomaly in the Romanian context. An ethnic Romanian family might compare their guest to kin in a gesture that is meant to convey whole-hearted welcome with unconditional love; hence, money matters are not supposed to be raised within the same discourse. Obviously, Vasile was not manifesting his ethnic identity; rather, his action, which extends to his musicianship as well, was part of *floricică*.

### 3.3 The Romani Disposition as Intangible

I encountered two *lăutari* who happened to be actual ethnic Romanians. One is an accordionist, a young man in his late twenties, whom I met at Vasile’s home in Mârșa. He is Vasile’s neighbour and occasionally joined Vasile’s band. He is hospitable and repeatedly demonstrated passages of *floricică* patterns for me, but generally he does not speak much. Aside from music, Vasile sends him out to run errands, such as fetching a jar of water or a pack of cigarettes. It is not easy to tell at first glance, but the Romanian family who accompanies me instantly recognises this ethnic difference from the colour of the young man’s eyes. The Romanian plays the accordion in the *lăutari*’s manner, but from a Romanian point of view, his conduct is ineffably yet unequivocally unlike Vasile’s cultural capital.

The other case also involves an accordionist, who busks in the residential compound of Giurgiu. I overhear someone playing on the street from the fifth-floor balcony. The man enters the tavern across the street. It is just after the lunch hour and there are hardly any customers, but he starts to sing a rather plain song on the porch: ‘I have two kids, but I am so poor that I cannot even drink water’, etc. After a couple of songs, he is kicked out with a loaf of bread. Back on the street, he starts to sing again, but the pedestrians ignore him. His large hat and thick belt with a large metal buckle on it are typical of rustic Roma. We go down to the ground floor to ask him for a story because

we believe he is a *lăutar*, but he actually turned out to be Romanian. Marinel is sixty years old, his wife is in her forties, and they have two daughters and a son. He was raised as a foster child in a Roma family known as the *căldărari*, a Romani subgroup that professes as copper pot makers and distillers. Family connections helped him find a job in a metal factory, but he felt uncomfortable there and left. Then, colleagues invited him to work in France and Belgium, but he decided not to go for fear of exploitation, conflict, and violence in a foreign country, which is a familiar narrative in his community. He takes a train to the city every day from his home in Toporu, which is a small town 30 km northwest of Giurgiu.

As a little boy, he loved to sing in front of the neighbours. He learnt music by himself, using folksong cassettes, since the *căldărari* do not profess in music; this is also the reason his style of accordion is not *lăutari*. He loves composition, which is based on his feelings of happiness and sorrow as well as his everyday experience. He prefers to perform alone because he feels that other *lăutari* cannot be trusted; this distrust stems from the fact that he does not belong to the endogamous guild. Performing in a foreign country was an attractive prospect, and there were some offers, but again, after hearing stories of exploitation and wife-stealing, fear motivated him to stay at home. Most pedestrians in the area are cold, but street kids like his songs, and they have become his good friends. His sister's husband was dismissed from his work due to a cancer diagnosis. His son married a Roma classmate, and her family is asking for a bridewealth of 1,000 lei; meanwhile, his son owes some money from a certain underground finance venture. After telling a story and singing part of a song, Marinel whole-heartedly accepts a tip and the present of a pair of shoes. After returning home, he calls us, asking for more financial assistance. Marinel is spotted again in the same neighbourhood in 2017, singing and playing the accordion. He is wearing well-ironed purple shirts, black pants, and a black felt hat. The neighbours greet him: '*Buna ziua* [Good day], Marinel!' He again asks for second-hand clothes. Despite his style of dressing and his musical identity, his frank attitude, smile, and conversation remind those in his surroundings that he is just a man next door who behaves in a curious fashion and not a professional who stages himself perfectly. Nobody is concerned with or critiques his selection of tunes or the quality of his music. He is a refreshing feature on a landscape of dull, decaying communist apartments. While tips in the form of used shoes and clothes are appropriate for this needy old man, they are not given as a price for his music. His music is not considered a service to patrons; rather, it is viewed as his strategy for mingling in a place where he does not belong. These are never the hallmarks of Roma *lăutari*.

Marinel's ethnic identity is perhaps not the decisive key in determining *muzică lăutărească* musicianship. His non-*lăutari* background is the main backdrop for his self-taught accordion playing. His attire, with its touch of Romani flavour, is ambiguous; it might be his uniform for *muzică lăutărească*. The discrepancy between Marinel as Romanian, Marinel as Roma, and the rest of ethnic Romanian is somehow mediated by his dress, which is to be decoded by his audiences as that of a typical rustic Roma *lăutar*. However, Marinel also exhibits behaviour that is not typical of the Romani *lăutari* in that his repertoire mostly consists of autobiographical compositions and he appears to

read his audience's reactions as indicated by their facial expressions less carefully. Perhaps this is because he is not concerned about whether anyone is in the mood to listen. For example, on one occasion, he mindlessly stays in close proximity to some men who are barbecuing outside of an apartment, despite the fact that they completely ignored him. How, then, can we identify Marinel's strategy or habitus, if, according to Bourdieu, the misrecognition of symbols is 'second nature' in cultural behaviour. Alternatively, in a naïve application of Goffman, could it be a case of crude impression management? Who is seeing the illusion—him or us? Could it be a case of a trickster who comically relieves some of the tension in the world order between the Roma and the Romanian? Judging between genuine and spurious or appropriate and inappropriate somewhat misses a point here, since Marinel's case reveals that both the voicing of personhood and faciality are rather complex issues. Marinel's makeup is multi-layered, even polyphonic in a way, which reflects his complex livelihood, and ironically, he survives the political economy of contemporary Romania on his own terms. As a subjunctive Roma, this is the only way he receives tips as a street-performing solo musician in the context of Romani faciality. Regardless of whether the financial return is little or nil, his livelihood is personalised through his relationship with street kids by means of music.

In addition, a Roma can be a musician and perform *muzică lăutărească* without assuming the disposition and strategy of a *lăutar*. In the summer of 2017, in Leul de Mare restaurant, which is located on the same beach as Eforie Suda, a resort near Constanta, there is a *lăutar* who sings karaoke, with shuffled *folclor* tunes blasting from his laptop. It is around six in evening, which is a rather early hour for music. Some of the few diners that are present tip him, request songs, and dance. He is Roma, but he does not identify himself as a *lăutar*. In fluent English, Florin introduced himself as a veterinarian working for the quarantine inspection office in Constanta; he described his relationship with *muzică lăutărească* as 'just a hobby'. During summer, he receives 100 lei each from this restaurant and a couple of other dining halls per attendance. Florin says that this arrangement came into being five years ago when his boss brought him to Leul de Mare for dinner, and a *lăutar* came down off the stage and handed Florin a microphone to sing along. Everyone told him that he has a good voice, and that with some music lessons, he could sing on stage. Florin enrolled in the conservatory in Constanta two years ago as a mature part-time student to learn *folclor*. Now, with encouragement from his professor, Florin is studying opera and classical vocal pieces in his second year. Tonight, he sings alone, but his friends are in the habit of joining him. Florin's complexion is clearly Roma, but he appears to have little concern with presenting himself as a *lăutar*: he wears casual pants and a bordered tee-shirt in the style of a tourist; during tunes, he looks up at the ceiling as though avoiding eye contact with the audience or recalling the lyrics; he turns his back to the audience to check in with the tuner; and he has no improvisatory interactions with the audience. In short, Florin hardly exhibits the *floricica* disposition. This is a further indication that *muzică lăutărească* is not a matter of musical style but rather of the music's faciality, which is a particular trait of conduct that makes one a *lăutar*.

#### 4. Conclusion: Towards a Musical Anthropology of Romanitude

Musical anthropology, as developed from Seeger's (2004) assertions, regards music as a phenomenon with respect to the cultural or social process. Music is approached as performance in order to answer the ultimate question: why music? In this sense, musical anthropology is a study of the musical condition of *Homo sapiens* (humans) in cultural settings, and to achieve this aim, its analytical frames cannot reduce musical phenomena to a formal category of music or social roles and behaviours. Corporeality is not a matter of possessing but becoming—a point that practice theory does not highlight; issues of becoming should not be replaced by those about disposition. For musical anthropology, therefore, the issues surrounding the corporeality that makes the cultural process a lived world is indispensable: corporeality is in fact corpo-reality, or body-cum-reality embedded in music. As for *muzică lăutărească*, the Roma is a becoming-minority of the music. Their musical performance or faciality embeds and articulates their audiences; consequently, their life experiences find their space by being embedded in the sound of the music. Roma musical experience, as in the examples, becomes identical with the human condition of sound, and in this process, the minority displaces the majority in the music being performed and that which resonates.

ECC as *muzică lăutărească* is a musically-embedded condition of minority in Romania, which can be denoted as 'Romanitude'; it is becoming-minority, interactional, 'in-between' in the sense of being intercorporeal, and it articulates in discrepancies. Regardless of ethnic identity or social role, Romanitude is also a condition of the audience, simply articulating in discrepancies with the performers from situation to situation. Without music there is no faciality, and with ECC, faciality articulates the assemblage of becoming-minority. Therefore, Romanitude is an articulation of *muzică lăutărească* as a whole, as in assemblage of performance, audience, and the music resonating among them. In this regard, the faciality of *muzică lăutărească* is manifold, displaying many layers among the Roma, the Romanians, the clients and the patrons, and the *floricică* involving *lăutari*. Becoming *lăutari* hardly means the development of a social category; rather, it requires an extension of personhood, that is, musical sound reaching around the vicinity. ECC as Romanitude simultaneously activates desire for as well as the desires of the *lăutari* and articulates the minority. As in the life history of the *lăutar* Florentin Feraru or the career of Dinicu, even classical music is within the wide range of the musical practice of the *lăutari*; therefore, it must be kept in mind that Romanitude categorises *muzică lăutărească* only when the musical market and audience expectations interact with musicianship in such a way that it becomes a stereotype.

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## Notes

- 1) Following Romanian convention, *lăutar* (sing.) and *lăutari* (pl.) are declined accordingly, and the plural form is never spelled *lăutars*.
- 2) *National Geographic România* attempted a tentative categorisation.
- 3) The words *flori*, *floricel*, and *floricică* are reflexive forms of *floră* (flower), and in all contexts here, they mean finesse, embellishment, or improvisatory articulations. They appear in this text in the forms uttered by the informants.
- 4) *Pofită* literally means ‘appetite’, but it also has the figurative meaning of an intense feeling of favouring or wanting something.
- 5) Hanul lui Manuc.

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