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Introduction

For all that 'world music' as a commercial genre purports to represent the entire planet in its diversity, it has always consisted of components selected for the effectiveness with which their musical and cultural capital can be transformed into economic capital. Given that the cultural capital of ethnic and national identity is not a consistent commodity, but rather subject to the vagaries of global geopolitics, it follows that trends in commercial world music can function as an indicator of geopolitical shifts. The essays in this volume all engage with a recent major development on the world music scene—one that has not previously received focused scholarly attention—as well as its attendant geopolitical implications.

In the 1990s, Celtic fiddles, pipes and voices were the iconic sounds of European world music. Over the past quarter century, however, this music has slowly declined on the global stage and been replaced by an East European bricolage—Balkan, Romani and klezmer music, and, perhaps most significantly, the generic mixing of all three. Commercial world music has not given a name to this trend, but for our purposes we have come to call it the 'New Old Europe Sound'. [143/144]

Ethnomusicologists who have treated this music to date have tended to approach it from the context of a constituent genre—Gypsy punk, European neo-klezmer or Balkan brass, for example—without explicit acknowledgment of a more general trend. Yet a number of family resemblances in these apparently disparate revivals suggest the usefulness of taking a broader view:

- (1) *Appropriation*. By and large the most successful and prominent New Old Europe musicians are outsiders to the originating ethnic groups. Jewish and Romani practitioners are few and far between, or they lack creative control. The European musicians who claim this music for themselves tend to couch their entitlement covertly in a Herderian logic of landed cultural ownership—if culture grows out of the relationship between a people and their land, then landless people cannot have their own culture. These musicians will often justify their ownership claims with stories of itinerant Gypsies and Jews who have appropriated locally grounded folk musics, framing their own use of those styles as justifiable re-appropriations of 'stolen' traditions. The Western European extension of this logic to Balkan music may be related to the perceived illegitimacy of Balkan nationalisms following the dissolution of Yugoslavia.
- (2) *Primal affect*. The music's dominant affect is primal, and typically manifests in one of two aesthetic forms. The first is wild, unkempt and often frenetic—one of my consultants refers to it aptly as a 'dirty' sound—popularised by Goran Bregovic in the soundtracks to films such as *Time of the Gypsies* and *Underground*. The second, equally theatrical, is a sonic evocation of the ancient and mystical, exemplified by musicians like Kroke and Giora Feidman.
- (3) *Postnationalism*. These aesthetics are tied, often explicitly, to a political claim to postnationalism. The first aesthetic is excessive, and spills over boundaries; the second predates them. Wandering Jews and itinerant Gypsies, with whom this putative socio-musical

freedom is associated, become icons for the hope of a future world without political borders. (4) *Blurring*. Northwestern Europeans who create their own music in a New Old Europe style will often mix sonic markers of the Jewish, Romani and Balkan, thus further deflecting any potential repatriative claims on their music by any one ethnic group. Sometimes these musicians will solidify their claim on this mixed style by avoiding terms like ‘klezmer’, ‘Romani’ or ‘Balkan’ altogether, though these terms may still be used by press to describe their music.

As an analytical category, ‘New Old Europe’ works against a number of conventions in ethnomusicological scholarship. Ethnomusicologists, typically mindful of power imbalances and dedicated to rectifying them, tend to adopt the vantage point of the socio-politically marginalised cultural insider. They place value on the emic language of their subjects. When dealing with cultural appropriation, they usually privilege the perspective of the people whose culture is being appropriated, and grant conceptual primacy to their musical forms. Ethnomusicologists have thus tended to focus on European neo-klezmer and the Balkan brass revival, for instance, as discrete [144/145] phenomena, given their association with distinct ethnocultural groups. In this volume, however, we move in an unconventional direction by granting subjective status to the appropriators of these musics, who, because their practice draws power from being unnamed, have given us no emic gloss for it. We choose to examine their act of blurring lines between klezmer, Romani and Balkan musical identities not simply as shallow, sloppy or the result of cultural ignorance, but rather as a discursive move that serves critical functions. In our analysis, klezmer, Romani and Balkan musics remain constituent elements, and thus part of the New Old Europe Sound, but for our purposes we relegate them to the outer edges of the phenomenon. At its core are the places where these musics blur together, enabled by the strategic and selective erasures of their points of ethnic origin, and motivated by the work that the resulting amalgam has come to do for the people who have adopted and adapted them.

Mechanisms of Appropriation

Each of the three groups in question—or, rather, traditional perceptions of them—provide their own mechanisms of appropriation. Whereas the term ‘Roma’ suggests a linguistically defined ethnic group, the more common exonym ‘Gypsy’ constructs a more permeable identity. Often uncapitalised, the term as used in common parlance suggests that anyone can become gypsy simply by driving an unregistered taxi, living a wandering lifestyle or engaging in any number of stereotyped activities—fortune telling, panhandling, busking, and so forth. The resulting conflation of ethnic and lifestyle identities allows non-Roma to wear the cultural capital of a subaltern ethnicity as apparel. The purported secretiveness and xenophobia of Romani society only adds to the appeal of imagining oneself accepted by this group as an insider (see, e.g., Hancock 2008: 184). The filmic/literary trope of the Gypsy band welcoming the protagonist into their secret, privileged space provides both that imagined accessibility and its appeal. So does the quasi-fantastical character of that Romani world (Clark 2004: 232–3; Lee 2000: 136). When Gypsies become creatures of fantasy, it seems only natural to fantasise about them, and to fantasise about becoming them.

European Jews have also been fairly heavily mythologised since the Holocaust. The shtetl of fiction can be a similarly fantastical chronotope, heightened by the presence of wizened rabbis, persistent dybbuks and the occasional rampaging golem. The study of Jewish mysticism

(Kabbalah) has been a popular entry point for non-Jews interested in accessing the capital of this identity (Huss 2005: 622). Jewishness also has in common with Romaniness a certain non-conformity to standard conceptions of group identity (Scheman 2011: 124–7). Judaism is a hereditary religion, an ethnicity you can convert to, a nation both with and without a state. Non-Jews will thus occasionally feel justified in challenging its boundaries (e.g., Waligórska 2013: 88–92). It has furthermore carried similar appeals to Europeans as Romaniness, for its romantic associations with victimhood, outsidership and freedom of movement (Boyarin and Boyarin 1993: 699–701; Ottens and Rubin 2002: 20–1). European perceptions of modern Jews as hegemonic oppressors—whether as Israeli hawks, [145/146] Hollywood cultural imperialists or global economic conspirators—further strengthens European claims to the heroic victimhood status of the mythical shtetl Jew (Slobin 2000: 26). Finally, the accessibility of both Jewish and Romani cultural goods is further reinforced by the Herderian logic that denies cultural ownership to those denied land ownership. The notion that Jews and Roma have no music of their own, for instance, but only borrow from their surroundings, echoes of the European narrative of those groups as beggars, thieves and parasites, however rephrased in the romanticising language of the free spirit. In the musical realm, ‘klezmer’ has the added advantage of not having the word ‘Jewish’ in it, making it all the more alienable from its originators. For those Europeans who do not know that klezmer is Jewish, the term can effectively be synonymous with what we are calling ‘The New Old Europe Sound’.

The Balkans, classically imagined as a bridge between East and West, have also been a popular vehicle for West European self-exoticisation (Bakic-Hayden and Hayden 1992: 4; Todorova 2009: 15–16). Their Oriental aspect makes them compelling, while their Occidental aspect makes them claimable. In the wake of the ethnic cleansing of the 1990s, circumscriptions of Balkan ethnic identities have become suspect when voiced by Serbs and Croats, making those identities difficult to repatriate once claimed (surreptitiously, musically) by West Europeans. The Balkans for Europe have come to occupy a status not unlike Appalachia in the United States, imagined paternalistically as a clannish, hypermasculine, anachronistic backwater where the continent’s folk roots are preserved as if in a museum (Todorova 2009: 3–15). Like Appalachians, Balkan people are racially marked whites, who the unmarked whites of the civilised West can mine for racial and cultural authenticity. Moreover, like the Jewish and Romani, Balkan identity can be blurry at the edges (Markovic 2008: 15).

In addition to all of the avenues that Jewish, Romani and Balkan identities offer individually for general European appropriation, the New Old Europe Sound provides the additional mechanism of blurring the lines between those identities. When the blurring is covert—that is, when musicians do not acknowledge it explicitly—it operates as a practical form of camouflage, covering the tracks between the music and its source traditions. When overt, blurring feeds an ideological discourse of postnational humanism, wherein all human culture is universal human property (see also Stokes 2004: 59–61).

When it comes to historical interactions between klezmer, Romani and Balkan musics, plenty of overlap can be cited to support this universalist ideology. Much of the music to which the Balkan label is applied is produced by Romani musicians, especially the ‘Balkan beat’ that has become so popular in the world music market (Markovic 2009: 109–13). Professional Romani musicians must frequently cater to non-Romani audiences, often playing music those audiences would identify as their own national traditions (Silverman 1996: 238). Klezmer scholars have long acknowledged the hybridity of that music (e.g., Feldman 1994: 6–10; Slobin 1987: 96–7). East European Jews and Roma have historically played music together (although

not as [146/147] commonly as is often assumed) and have shared tunes and stylistic approaches both amongst themselves and with other neighbours (Feldman 1994: 2–6; Silverman 2015).

At the same time, certain tunes, styles and traditions are also specific to these groups. In other words, proof abounds to support both particularist and universalist orientations. My critique of the narrative of Jewish and Romani musics as permeable and hybrid is not so much that it cannot be argued based on musical evidence. Rather, my concern is with the way the erasure of the particularist half of the story reinforces the Herderian tradition of denying cultural specificity and ownership to the landless, and allows those Europeans who have benefitted materially from the power imbalance embedded in that tradition to erase the evidence of their own privilege.

Balkan Folk/Popular Fusions, and the Roma as Balkan Id

A reconstruction of the factors leading to the spread of the New Old Europe Sound, as with any attempted explanation of *Zeitgeist*, is necessarily an act of hypothesis. The 1990s were a period of major historical upheavals in Europe—the aftermath of the fall of the Iron Curtain and the concomitant shift in focus from Cold War to Middle-Eastern enemies, the formation of the European Union, the Balkan wars and dissolution of Yugoslavia, and the resurgence of racist nationalism in Northern and Western Europe. All of these upheavals, I will argue, helped lay the groundwork for the ascendance of the New Old Europe Sound.

In Germany, the fall of the Berlin wall meant more than simply the collapse of the Soviet Union. The country also suddenly had to reinvent itself as a unified nation-state, which it had not been since Hitler. The 1990s thus saw a massive uptick in interest in Jewishness, especially such as it could be claimed as German cultural property and so balm the reopened psychic wounds of Germany's Nazi past (Gruber 2002). A mythified East European Jewish cultural history was fabricated for Germany, which in helping to erase the country's actual Jews (historical and present-day) from national memory further reinforced German possession of that Semitic essence (Gruber 2002: 201). Argentine-Israeli clarinetist Giora Feidman had been marketing his klezmer as a humanly universal language in Germany since the mid-1980s. In the 1990s the accessibility he promoted helped make him an ideological centre for (and legitimation of) the European neo-klezmer revival (Gruber 2002: 210–15; Rubin 2015).

On a larger scale, perhaps the most obvious precursor of the New Old Europe Sound in Europe writ large was the early 1990s explosion of folk/popular fusions within the Balkan region itself. Both rock and 'Ottoman-sounding' music had been suppressed under the Soviets; Vesa Kurkela has suggested that the rise of *chalga* in Bulgaria following the fall of the Iron Curtain, for instance, might have been in part a backlash against that suppression (Kurkela 2007: 145–6). Similar arguments could probably also be made more generally for the post-Soviet Balkan states.

Scholarship on West Balkan folk/popular fusion genres from this period tends to highlight their political charge relative to the Yugoslav wars. At two extremes of the spectrum, Serbian turbofolk has typically been read as ethnic separatist propaganda [147/148] for the Milosevic regime, while Goran Bregovic's mixture of folk elements into his rock music was an explicit anti-nationalist move (Gordy 1999: 130–44; Gourgouris 2002: 336–8). Yet neither music has proven stable in their valence. Rory Archer has argued that turbofolk is less a distinct musical genre, and more a label applied to ethno-pop that serves a particular ideological purpose; take away the label, and the same music flourishes among the victims of Serbia's genocide (Archer 2012: 179–82). Bregovic's music has similarly been taken up by ethnic nationalists (Gourgouris

2002: 337). Rather than functioning as a clear indicator of political perspective, then, Balkan folk/popular fusions seem to operate more generally as a field in which tensions between multiple possible ideologies play out.

A long-standing trope not only for outsiders' understanding of the region but also for Balkan self-identification, the purported liminality of Balkanness has been a key discourse for identity reformation in the process and aftermath of the Yugoslav wars (Levy 2004). In their mixing of folk and popular styles, folk/popular fusions are effective in navigating the East/West tensions attendant to that process of self-definition (Archer 2012: 178–82; Gourgouris 2002: 336–8). Eastern elements in the music temper anxieties about West European cultural hegemony, while Western elements promise an escape from the destructive power of ethnic particularism. The problem is that the inverse is also true. The music necessarily breeds the same anxieties it works to settle.

Here is where the symbolic capital of Romaniness comes into play. The Roma have traditionally been constructed as a kind of externalised essence of the Eastern, Ottoman half of Balkan identity—or, musically, as the 'ethno' half of ethno-pop (Szeman 2009: 101). In this construction, Europe and the Roma stand in opposition as something like *superego* and *id* to the Balkan ego. Romani music is flexible, then, in being able to represent not only Roma themselves, but also a general Balkan ardour. When playing for Serbs, for example, Romani musicians are expected to express in their music the inner passions of the Serbian soul (Port 1999: 291–2). Goran Bregovic uses very similar Romani music for his soundtracks to both *Time of the Gypsies* (about Roma) and *Underground* (about Serbs) (Markovic 2009: 116). In Bulgarian pop/folk, 'folk music' is often simply a gloss for Romani music (Silverman 2012: 179). Just as the Balkans can function as a source of archaic 'folk' identity for Europe as a whole, so in turn can the Roma grant an ethnocultural core to the imagined Balkan identity.

The Roma are also charged with the symbolic capital of statelessness, whose stock during the 1990s was only rising. Aleksandra Markovic attributes Goran Bregovic's interest in Romani music and identity to this very factor:

His identification with exotic Gypsies arguably stems from his personal feeling of 'homelessness' after the break-up of Yugoslavia. Feeling like an alien in the country that was disappearing in civil wars, speaking a language that has meanwhile broken into three languages, Bregovic chose Gypsies as his speakers. (Markovic 2009: 115)

Especially useful is the coexistence of these two facets of the Romani aura; that of statelessness on the one hand, and Balkan essence on the other. The combination of [148/149] these two factors turns the Roma into a symbolic argument for a Balkanness that is essentially postnational in character.

The Resurgence of European Racist Nationalisms, and the Rise and Fall of the Celtic

The fall of the Iron Curtain also resulted in something of an identity crisis for Western Europe as a whole. For decades, a political identity for the region had sufficed, defined in opposition to that of the Soviet Empire. With the collapse of communism, however, very quickly the spectre of Otherness shifted southward, to a Middle East whose supposed threat of terrorism was perceived through an Orientalist lens as densely and inscrutably ethnic, cultural and uniform (Semati 2010: 257–60). Especially in the face of immigration (past, present and future) from the Middle East, the absence of deeply felt European cultural or ethnic identity to balance the perceived threat of

Islamisation became a sudden source of anxiety.

This anxiety, combined with a global economic downturn and the decline in national political autonomies as a result of the formation of the European Union, translated into a massive surge in racist nationalism, expressed both in the arena of party politics and in the white power movement (Weinberg 1998). The self-entitled ‘national movement’ had been kept on low heat by a small European network of enthusiasts since its marginalisation in 1945 (von Beyme 1988). It had a ready supply of deeply felt European cultural and ethnic pride which, to that significant minority now willing to embrace or overlook where it came from, served well as a counterbalance to the perceived cultural density of the Middle-Eastern Other. For the majority of Europe that still felt uncomfortable with Nazism, however, an essential Aryan identity for Europe would not serve as an acceptable solution.

Michael Dietler argued in 1994 that one way in which the European Community was attempting to establish ethnic coherence was via Celtic identity:

Over a dozen major exhibitions on Celtic archaeology have been mounted in Europe since 1980, most of them well financed, sponsored by more than one nation, and constructed with objects from a wide array of countries. The political theme of these exhibitions is rarely far from the surface, and it conforms perfectly to the strategy for the formation of an integrated European identity through emphasis on cultural heritage, as charted by the European Commission (Shore and Black 1992). An early exhibition, held in Steyr, Austria, was subtitled ‘An Early Form of European Unity,’ while the most recent, mounted in Venice in 1991, is entitled ‘The Celts: The First Europe.’ (Dietler 1994: 595–6)

This approach had much to advantage it. Celticness is typically imagined as primeval, grounded and mystical (Bowman 2002). It might thus supply a useful counterbalance to the spectre of Middle-Eastern cultural influence. Moreover, Celtic identity has long been understood in popular culture as an indigenous, colonised one (Baker 2012: 249). The 1990s saw a spate of movies about Irish and Scottish struggles against their English colonisers—*In the Name of the Father*, *Rob Roy*, *The Crying Game*, *Michael [149/150] Collins*, *The Boxer*, *Patriot Games*, *The Devil’s Own* and of course *Braveheart*.¹ A myth of Celtic origins could thus serve the additional function of allowing Europe, in reimagining itself, to bypass the sins of its colonialist past.² Conceived of as an ancient, subaltern, mystical and pan-national essence, Celtic identity could do much of the same work for Western Europe that Romani identity was doing for the Balkans (see, e.g., Stokes and Bohlman 2003: 8).

Music was one of the primary media via which the notion of Celtic identity was disseminated during this period. In this first decade of the worldmusic boom, the massive popularity of Irish music—which at the time was widely conceptualised as central to or even co-terminous with Celtic music—did much to reinforce the abovementioned narrative. The Pogues brought a punkish, subaltern aesthetic, while Enya’s New Age voice was spiritual and primeval. The Chieftains grounded themselves with an aesthetic of folk authenticity, while helping to

¹ Several of these movies were about the modern IRA, and were not consistently enthusiastic about the activities of that group.

² The *Asterix* cartoons, popular across Europe since the 1960s, provide an excellent example of how the myth of a proto-European Celtic identity can temper Europe’s colonialist history by simultaneously valorising and erasing it. Here the Gauls are the oppressed indigenous population to the villainous Roman empire, yet almost every book in the series is also a colonialist hero’s journey narrative about Asterix and Obelix’s adventures in a foreign land.

establish Celticness as an international Kulturkreis with albums like *Celtic Wedding* (1987; music of Brittany), *Santiago* (1996; music of Galicia) and *Another Country* (1992; Irish/American country fusion).³

This very capacity of Celticness to manifest as nobly beleaguered and mystically ancient was also, I would suggest, its downfall. As it happened, this narrative was also appealing to white supremacists, who had actually embraced it long earlier. Seeking the roots of Celticism, historian Louis Snyder identifies it simply as a French variant of Aryanism; according to nineteenth-century racialists, Celts were tall, blond and ‘superior among all the branches of the white race’ (Snyder 1962: 62; see also Casey 2006: 96). The Nazis were interested in the Celts as a pre-Christian European racial group as well, alongside the Aryans (Hutton 1998: 126–34). Celtic identity has moreover long been celebrated and mythologised by American southern white supremacists.⁴ In [150/151] the late 1980s and 1990s, this connection became more publicly visible on the continent when European white power bands embraced Celtic mythology and symbolism, helping to make the Celtic cross one of the most popular international symbols for white pride (Casey 2006: 97).

The increasingly visible white power music movement of this period (featuring band names such as Celtic Dawn, Celtic Cross, Celtic Warrior and Celtic Moon) could not have helped the cause of promoting proto-European identity as Celtic among the general public. Riverdance, the last major burst of the Celtic in mainstream popular culture of the 1990s, was probably doing the cause no favours either, with its kitschy, lockstep aesthetic (Segal 1996). The final nail in the coffin might have been the formation of the annual North Atlantic Fiddle Convention in 2001, signalling the general abandonment of the term ‘Celtic’ among traditionalist musicians. The newly favoured term ‘North Atlantic’ cedes any claim to ethnic coherence, abandons subaltern status by including the English, and literally marginalises itself off the edge of the continent and into the ocean.⁵ While Riverdance has continued touring to the present day, and even expanded via its off-shoot Celtic Woman, once ‘Celtic music’ was abandoned by its traditionalist legitimators it could no longer hope to deliver what it promised in its heyday.

A New Musical Ethnicity for the New Europe

³ Paddy Moloney opens his liner notes to *Another Country* by arguing for a common Kulturkreis for Irish and American Country music: ‘The concept of recording a Country album has been on my mind for several years; 30 years ago I presented a radio series based on the influence and relationship of Irish music to Country Music’ (The Chieftains 1992; see also Stokes and Bohlman 2003: 13–14).

⁴ In the United States, neo-Confederates celebrate the Confederate flag as a derivation of St. Andrew’s cross, the traditional burning of which in Scotland was also the model for the Ku Klux Klan’s burning cross (Satterwhite 2005: 327; Taylor 2002: 341). The Klan (whose name is also inspired by Scottish tradition) has also been using the Celtic cross as a symbol since the 1920s. In the 1980s the white supremacist League of the South revived the narrative of American southern culture as essentially Celtic with their central text, Grady McWhiney’s *Cracker Culture*, according to which a ‘cultural conflict between English and Celt not only continued in British North America, it shaped the history of the United States ... and ultimately exploded into the War for Southern Independence’ (McWhiney 1988: 7). According to this narrative, the American Civil War was simply an echo of the various Irish and Scottish independence struggles against the English. The League of the South, the Ku Klux Klan and the John Birch Society all strongly recommended that every (white) American Southerner should go see *Braveheart*, to better understand the cultural underpinnings of their history of oppression by northerners (Taylor 2002: 341).

⁵ I thank Tes Slominski for leading me to this insight.

The 1990s were also the decade during which the New Old Europe Sound began to spread throughout Western Europe. The seeds of the European neo-klezmer movement, planted in the mid-1980s, were coming to fruition (Ottens and Rubin 2002: 20; Waligórska 2013: 27–8). Romani music was becoming popular via festivalisation, and Goran Bregovic's take on that music was spreading via the films of Emir Kusturica (Markovic 2008: 11–14; Silverman 2012: 149). In 1989, *Time of the Gypsies* won Best Director at Cannes; and in 1995, the same year that *Braveheart* took home the Oscar for Best Picture, Kusturica's controversial film *Underground* won the Cannes Palme d'Or.

The first of these musics to be loosened from its ethnic origins and claimed by Western Europe may be klezmer, promoted by Giora Feidman in Germany as a universally human expression since the middle 1980s (Birnbaum 2009: 306–8). This process of alienation becomes more generally observable around the mid-1990s. The klezmer sound of seminal Polish band Kroke shifts from representing 'the quintessence of ancient Jewish culture' (1996) to signifying a generically Eastern tragic Other (1999; see also Ottens and Rubin 2002: 37–8). The West is served a merging of 'Balkan' and 'Roma' categories in 1995's *Underground*, with the music of the latter used to represent the former (Markovic 2009: 109–11; Szeman 2009: 100). In the early 2000s, Bregovic's soundtracks become club music for a German alternative crowd via BalkanBeats Berlin (Dimova 2007: 230). [151/152]

Without a unified label to consolidate the music in the cultural consciousness, the New Old Europe Sound has never achieved the visibility enjoyed by Celtic music in the 1990s. Yet after the cultural capital of the Celtic was spent (arguably, the moment of the tin whistle solo in 'My Heart Will Go On'), the New Old Europe Sound picked up some of the slack and wound up doing very similar work.⁶ The angry, disenfranchised, punkish aesthetic of the Pogues lives on in Gogol Bordello, while the primeval mysticism and spirituality of Clannad manifests itself again in Kroke. The ancient, universal yet subaltern (and thus innocent) European ethnicity that Celtic music once offered can still be delivered by the New Old Europe Sound, with the added advantage of a Romani/Jewish inoculant against any white supremacist overtones.

While Bregovic's soundtracks might have been somewhat more politically vexed in the former Yugoslavia—again, they have been celebrated by ethnic nationalists there, and Kusturica is sometimes read as a Serbian nationalist himself—in Berlin this music suffered from no such connotations and could be embraced wholeheartedly (Dimova 2007: 226–8). The Yugoslav wars would actually have made Bregovic's music easier for Germans to claim, because the violence justified a paternalistic adoption of the Balkan region as Europe's unruly problem child. The Balkan tradition of placing Romani passions at the centre of their ethnomusical identity was an added bonus. If the Roma represented a core of authenticity for Balkan music, then that music could easily be claimed by Western Europe as well given the pan-European spread of the Roma, using the same Herderian logics of repatriation.

The New Old Europe Sound also goes beyond the Celtic in being able to elegantly negotiate a whole complex of anxieties concerning Middle-Eastern immigration to Europe. Like Celtic music, the New Old Europe Sound can offer a sense of European ethnocultural grounding to balance the perceived threat of Islamisation. Unlike the Celtic, it can do so without evoking the racist overtones of those anxieties, its Jewish and Romani capital situating it about as far

⁶ Music critic Carl Wilson, in describing what he once perceived as the cultural impoverishment of James Cameron's *Titanic* soundtrack, listed as evidence 'Celtic pennywhistles, saccharine strings and ... Céline Dion' (Wilson 2007: 3; original ellipsis).

from Nazi aesthetics as humanly possible. Functioning as what I have elsewhere called a ‘mid-East proxy’, New Old Europe grants a safely domestic and thus manageable form of Easternness, its Jewish elements especially marking it off from both Islam and Aryanism (Kaminsky 2014: 271–4). It is, in the words of Edward Said, ‘a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient’ (Said 1979: 3).

As individual phenomena in northwestern Europe, the Balkan Romani music scene and the neo-klezmer revival have been powerful for the strategic anti-essentialisms they offer Europeans trying to renegotiate their identities in the face of major political and cultural changes (Lipsitz 1997: 50–68). Their fusion and confusion magnifies this power not only by blurring the distinctions between those ethnicities and thus making their cultural products more accessible to outsiders, but also by pushing both groups back into a shared mythic past that erases the mostly negative connotations [152/153] those present-day groups hold for Europeans today. The modern and unromantic Jews and Roma of the European imagination—the former assimilated, wealthy, Israel-supporting, and the latter impoverished, begging in front of supermarkets—do not cross paths. Rather, the putative musical collaboration is between romantic nomads, the caravan fiddler and wandering klezmer, whose spirit can be claimed by any European because they no longer exist in real life, having long ago been murdered by Nazis. The dark underside of the New Old Europe Sound is its basis in a worldview that banishes authentic Jews and Gypsies to a romanticised past, when Europe was innocent of the Holocaust, and its reliance on the survivors of that genocide remaining silent, or better yet absent, in the present day (Iordanova 2008a, 2008b: 308–10; Kaminsky 2014: 267; see also Trumpener 1992: 849). All of this in a European political climate whose marked xenophobia has expressed itself in increased levels of both anti-Semitic and anti-Romani violence (Simon and Schaler 2007: 160–5; Stewart 2012).

The articles in this volume examine the New Old Europe Sound from a number of different perspectives—broad and narrow, inside and out. Carol Silverman sets the stage by exploring the recent explosion of klezmer/Gypsy music fusion projects in Europe, the majority of whose participants are neither Jewish nor Romani. She traces the roots of these projects from the distinct European vogues for klezmer and Romani Balkan brass in the 1990s, to their eventual merging beginning about a decade later. Silverman argues that the attendant discursive practice of conflating Jewish and Romani histories and musics effectively erases the lived experiences of both groups, and thus becomes a critical tool for the appropriation of both Jewish and Romani cultural goods.

My article addresses how the New Old Europe Sound can allow northwestern Europeans to advocate for a progressive, postnational, multicultural society, albeit in a comforting, non-binding sort of way. For a case study I focus on the ethnically Swedish band Räfven, whose heightened, quasi-Gypsy personae are undergirded by a trademark frenetic klezmer-inspired musical style. I argue that while Räfven’s social project of refashioning their own Swedish identity as essentially postnational and multicultural via this music can encourage anti-racist social activism, it can also—because the New Old Europe Sound allows their whiteness to be read as multicultural—invite complacency by allowing their audiences to imagine that a postnational future has already been achieved, even in the face of their own racial homogeneity.

Joel Rubin engages with the capacity of the New Old Europe Sound to vacillate between ethnic specificity and non-specificity, and the practical benefits this flexibility can afford to working musicians. Rubin takes as his study the German careers of Argentine-Israeli klezmer clarinetist Giora Feidman and his protégés. Feidman himself has garnered great success in Europe by positing klezmer as simultaneously Jewish and universal. His acolytes David

Orlowsky and Helmut Eisel have extended this logic to their own careers, alternately erasing or flaunting their musical Jewishness as the need arises. By contrast, Feidman's student Irith Gabriely has [153/154] consistently marked her music as Jewish, which caused her career to suffer once German interest in Jewishness began to wane at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Stephan Pennington demonstrates how the New Old Europe Sound's capacity to allow its practitioners to deny the cultural provenance of their music can dovetail with West Europeans' desires to reinvent their own national histories as essentially mono-ethnic, even as they espouse a cosmopolitan, inclusive identity. Pennington takes as his case study the Belgian art videogame *The Graveyard* and the song that functions as its centre-point, Gerry de Mol's 'Komen te Gann'. He argues that both the song and the game bear the markings of a Flemish identity scrubbed of its historically Jewish elements. This historical whitewashing, in turn, reinforces an anxious discourse on the part of the supposedly pro-immigration game-makers about threats to Flemish identity from 'foreign' cultural influences in the present day.

Finally, Alexander Markovic addresses how the people whose cultural goods have been appropriated are adapting to the market realities of the New Old Europe Sound. His work engages with a group of Romani brass musicians from Vranje, Serbia, who for economic reasons have acted to revise their publicity, music and performance styles to take advantage of saleable carnivalesque stereotypes propagated via the New Old Europe discourse. Markovic argues that these musicians have proactively tempered these stereotypes by creatively redeploying a parallel stereotype complex—that of Gypsy as hybrid—and using it to refashion their image as one of cosmopolitan sophistication.

The Sound of New Old Europe

As these articles will demonstrate, there is a wide variety in the degree to which the ethnic valences we attribute to the New Old Europe Sound are actually reinforced in verbal or visual discourse by musicians. In the case examined by Carol Silverman, klezmer/gypsy is an explicit label for German deejays, while the musicians behind 'Komen te gaan' in Stephan Pennington's article deny any ethnic signification in their song arrangement altogether. Our argument is that by this point the entire narrative has already been encoded sonically in any case. We call New Old Europe a 'Sound' rather than a 'Music' or 'Style' or 'Genre' quite deliberately. Once we make the sound our object of analysis, we can begin to see how ubiquitous it has become, from the most explicit and obvious examples (e.g., Räfven, Gogol Bordello) to the least (e.g., Gerry de Mol, Hazmat Modine).

While the sonic markers of the New Old Europe Sound's source traditions may be various, certain family resemblances are recurrent in its present-day iterations. The augmented second is first and foremost among these, signifying an Eastern exoticism nevertheless kept European by virtue of almost never being played on a specifically Middle-Eastern instrument. Beyond this marker, a primal sensibility manifests in both of the Sound's two prevailing aesthetics: the carnivalesque (associated primarily, but not exclusively, with Gypsies) and the mystical (associated primarily, but not [154/155] exclusively, with Jews). The former privileges dirty sound over pure tone. Attacks are excessively forceful and intentionally unprecise; brass players overblow and keep their embouchures loose. This aesthetic is excessive and lively, a little bit out of control. The latter, by turns hypnotically meditative and sweepingly evocative, is marked by ambitious arrangements and dramatic dynamic and timbral shifts.

None of these markers are exclusive to this new tradition. The augmented second extends into the Middle East, as well as to Orientalist film scoring. The dirty brass sound is shared by other festive brass band traditions, from the Punjab to New Orleans.⁷ The carnivalesque excesses of New Old Europe are also generalised folk, anti-classical signifiers; its mystical evocations are the bread and butter of worldbeat. The New Old Europe Sound is just as blurry at the edges as it is within, which once again speaks to the appeal of its borderlessness, and to the difficulty of pinning it down.⁸ Ultimately, while New Old Europe's internal blurriness may be the quality that allows northern and western Europeans to finally claim the kind of musically subaltern identity meant to populate their invention 'world music', its external blurriness may extend this license beyond borders, and so allow them to colonise even that musical alterity on a global scale.

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⁷ Frank London explored sonic connections between klezmer and New Orleans brass band music on his 2005 album *Carnival Conspiracy*.

⁸ Ultimately, the sonic encoding of this entire ideology is also the primary mechanism behind the erasure of ethnic differences that enables the music's easy appropriation. Most West and North European audiences are simply not equipped to hear any distinction between the sound's source traditions.

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