From the Center in the Middle: Working Tambura Bands and the Construction of the In-Between in Croatia and its Intimates

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Prelude: Miroslav Škoro's Twentieth Anniversary Concert

In November 2009, Croatian pop singer Miroslav Škoro performed in front of some twenty thousand fans at Arena Zagreb, the capital city's much lauded new sports hall. This was the second largest audience drawn by a Croatian act since the hall's opening the previous December,[1] a testament to Škoro's continuing status as one of Croatia's most popular patriotic performers (as well as television star and, in recent years, politician and record mogul). Aside from the notably large attendance, the concert in Zagreb was of particular significance to Škoro for its timing: held on the twentieth day of November, his performance celebrated twenty years' work in the music industry as a professional singer and songwriter. Accompanied by his band (on backup vocals, tenor saxophone, acoustic and electric guitars, keyboard, drums, and electric bass) and a number of guest musicians from past projects and from his family, Škoro performed repertoire from throughout his career and thereby commemorated his twenty years of hit songs and his many musical collaborations with these and other musicians.

Škoro spoke to those of us in the audience about the significance of several of these individuals to his life and career, drawing particular attention to one who, although unable to attend, loomed large over the event: legendary Pittsburgh-born player of traditional *tambura* chordophones, Jerry Grcevich. This longtime musical collaborator of Škoro's had arranged most of the singer's early hits and had singly performed the accompaniment (of overdubbed melody and rhythm tamburas) to each of the songs on Škoro's first and third albums. Škoro singled out for us a song ("Ne Dirajte Mi Ravnicu"—"Don't Touch My Plain") that he had written and recorded with Grcevich twenty years earlier while studying in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (where the singer had joined his newly wedded Croatian-American wife Kim Ann Škoro, née Luzaich). Upon their release in the early 1990s, Škoro's original 1989 recording of "Ne Dirajte Mi Ravnicu," as well as an immensely successful cover version by tambura band Zlatni Dukati, had resonated strongly with his newly independent but heavily war-torn country. Škoro

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acknowledged the song's widespread popularity, announcing that it had become "a song that is no longer mine, but all of yours," and crediting it with inaugurating his musical career.[2]

Škoro also credited Grcevich as the other person responsible for writing the song and told us that the famed *tamburaš* (tambura player[3]) unfortunately could not be there to play it himself because of illness in his family. In lieu of a personal appearance, Škoro then had a video that Grcevich had recorded projected onto a large screen that was suspended above and behind the stage and flanked by two enormous installations of LED light-panels in the shape of the roman numeral "X" (identifying the twentieth [XX] anniversary concert). High above the musicians, Grcevich's face appeared on the screen, expressing his regrets in English and sending his best wishes for the concert, all to loud cheers from the audience. As Škoro then sang the song that they had written twenty years prior to the November twentieth concert, twenty thousand fans sang along through each of several verses, choruses, and even instrumental breaks.

Škoro, however, had planned yet another iteration of the number 20: although Grcevich could not be there, he announced, twenty local tamburaši would accompany his singing. Škoro had invited semiprofessional tambura bands Slavonski Bećari, Ravnica, and Lyra, all from his city of birth, Osijek, to perform with him. In the middle of the concert, they assembled on stage in a long row, relieving the regular band for a short set of songs from this early period of Škoro's career when he sang almost exclusively to the accompaniment of tambura groups.[4] Tambura fans generally consider these the three best ensembles in Osijek, and two of them share a long history of performance and mutual influence with Škoro. Slavonski Bećari invited Škoro to join them on two tours organized by the Croatian Fraternal Union of North America and thus enabled his acquaintance with both Croatian-American publics and his future wife, whom he met on the second of these tours in 1988. Shortly after returning to Croatia from Pittsburgh in the early 1990s, Škoro performed extensively with Ravnica and recorded his second album with them. Both a former and a current member of this ensemble (electric/tambura bassist Antonio Krupilnicki and *prim* [first melody] tambura player Aleksandar Homoky, respectively) now play in his regular band and accompanied him in the concert's other sets that night. The twentieth anniversary concert thus celebrated Škoro's entire career by way of returning to the musical style and indeed the musicians who launched it.

Škoro performed many of his best-known hits with these twenty tamburaši and, although fairly brief, this acoustic interlude occasioned some of the concert's most intimate moments. Hundreds of fans packed the standing room in front of the stage in the arena and, along with thousands

of others who had risen from their seats in the bleachers, stood swaying with arms around each other's shoulders and singing along earnestly. In my position, seated on the stage-left side of the arena, I would have been hard pressed to avoid joining in, as the seat-row of the bleacher itself was rocking from side to side in time to the music of the tamburaši, and the bodies of those around me gently but firmly coaxed my own into motion. Down below us on the arena floor, fans in their teens and twenties raised large Croatian flags, patriotic banners, and the bodies of friends into the air. Audience members of several generations demonstrated great familiarity with, and enthusiasm for, these then twenty-year-old songs and for Škoro's singing to the accompaniment of traditional Croatian instruments. The twenty tamburaši were thus significant to the concert not merely for their number but for the atmosphere that they cultivated with Škoro in commemorating his career and the songs that they had popularized together.

Tambura Bands, Commercial Success, and Positioning 'In the Middle'

In this article, I examine recent economic strategies and difficulties of Croatia-based semiprofessional tambura bands in light of their relations with musical celebrities such as Škoro and with Croat fans in both domestic and international contexts. Drawing on fieldwork conducted with numerous bands at rehearsals and concerts between 2007 and 2011, I situate their present endeavors and concerns in a deeper historical context, focusing especially on musical trends and economic changes (and their continuing role in musicians' discourses on the state) since Croatia's secession from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991.[5] I argue that the circulation of tambura music and mobility of ensembles in foreign extensions of the Croatian tambura scene have become integral to the current social positioning of Croatia as both occupying an economically and culturally intermediary position (in relation to its more "Balkan" and "European" neighbors) and constituting a musical center (related constructs that I explicate below). I further analyze the commercial limitations that working tambura bands face in establishing their music within Croatian popular culture and examine the impact of these conditions on the construction of a Croatian tambura "sound."

Ensemble performance of tamburas—traditional plucked string instruments historically played by individual performers throughout much of Southeastern Europe but now typically combined in ensembles of melody, harmony, and bass tamburas—initially rose to popularity among Croats during the nationalist Illyrian movement of the 1840s and was particularly

prevalent in East Croatian cities such as Osijek (March 1984:111). By the early twentieth century, towns throughout present-day Croatia (including several along the Dalmatian Coast) had established tambura orchestras in recognition and aid of this bourgeoning nationalism.[6] The presence of tambura musicians of other ethnic backgrounds (especially Hungarians, Roma, and Serbs) in continental Croatia and northern Serbia throughout this period, the subsequent prominence of the radio tambura orchestras of Novi Sad and Sarajevo in post-World War II Yugoslavia, and the historical importance of other folk instruments in Dalmatia complicated constructions of the tambura as exclusively the instrument of Croats and of Croatia; yet, following the death of Yugoslavian president Josip Broz Tito in 1980, Croatian separatists (particularly the country's first president Franjo Tuđman and other members of the Croatian Democratic Party) were quick to promote the tambura as an instrument of distinct Croatian culture. Furthermore, the forcible expulsion of Serbs from Croatia-controlled territory by the Croatian government and army in the 1990s helped to realize a new nation-state in which, with very few exceptions,[7] tamburaši were exclusively Croats. The government's strategic deployment of Croat tambura bands such as Zlatni Dukati in this wartime context fostered a flourishing popular music scene for Croatia's "national instrument" in the 1990s that was still quite active during my fieldwork.[8]

I consider this a popular music scene inasmuch as, to this day, tambura bands enjoy many of the same types of experiences (and avail themselves of the same strategies) as other Croatian bands that play musical styles such as rock and pop typically marketed as "popular" musics across the globe. Similar to their rock- and pop-band counterparts, tambura bands write and record songs, release albums and singles for radio play, perform in public and televised concerts, play private functions such as weddings and corporate parties, travel widely for both single appearances and (to a limited extent) longer tours, and perform regularly in venues dedicated to their music (particularly in Slavonian locales such as Slavonski Brod's Café Boa, Osijek's Old Bridge Pub and the National Restaurant "City Basement," and Đakovo's Šokački Disko "Tom-Tom"). Such tambura bands' activities within mainstream popular culture and their distinction from ensembles that still perform for folklore groups have earned them the common designation "neotraditional" tambura ensembles of Croatian scholarship (Bonifačić 1998; Čeribašić 2000).

There is significant overlap between Croatian tambura and Croatian pop/rock in terms of both musical practice and the musicians involved. Many popular Croatian singers have featured tamburaši on their recordings and in their concerts, and Miroslav Škoro has retained tamburaši in

his regular band even while largely adopting amplified instrumentation as his accompaniment. In his recent autobiography, Škoro also writes that, no matter what song he releases and with what sort of instrumental accompaniment, it seems to end up on the tambura charts (Škoro 2010:191).[9] Similarly, tambura bands occasionally incorporate amplified or percussion instruments for certain songs, and both tambura and rock/pop acts commonly play one another's hit songs to fill out set lists at lengthy private engagements. For many of these bands, familiarity with one another and with each other's repertoire extends back through two decades of performances at patriotic music festivals such as Slavonski Brod's *Brodfest,* at which organizers have emphasized commonalities of patriotic lyric content over differences in instrumentation (Baker 2010:41).[10]

What distinguishes tambura bands is largely their instrumentation. While the texts of their original songs do tend to address themes of rural life in Slavonia (the East-Croatian region that is home to the greatest number of tambura bands) more so than do those of Croatian pop/rock bands, tamburaši perform so wide a variety of musical styles as to make it difficult to draw generic divisions based on repertoire alone.[11] In addition to their own songs and the music of current Croatian star singers and pop/rock bands, tambura bands performing at private events typically play sets of classic Yugoslav, British, and American rock 'n' roll; "evergreen" songs popularized by singers such as Frank Sinatra; American country music; "starogradske pjesme" ("old-city songs") from the nineteenth century; older and more traditional Croatian folk songs; newer "folk" music from throughout the former Yugoslavia; and recent hits by *klapa* ensembles from the Dalmatian coast. Klapa ensemples are a cappella vocal groups, most typically all-male, that have long rivaled the continental tambura bands (and recently surpassed them in popularity) with their own adaptation of a traditional Croatian music practice for the popular market. In the past decade, as the popularity of klapa groups has soared throughout Croatia, the demand for live performances by tambura bands has waned dramatically everywhere but in Slavonia. Tambura bands have subsequently settled into a frustratingly limiting niche of performance; instead of featured concerts of their own music, they play private engagements at which patrons expect an ever-expanding array of popular Croatian musical styles. It is in this context that I examine current semiprofessional tambura bands and their activities within and across Croatia's borders.

I begin with an overview of three such bands' participation in the Škoro concert because in the span of a few hours the performers raised each of the issues that I address here: the role of the diaspora for Croatian music scenes, the continuing demand for patriotic tambura music, and

the disparity between the successes of working tambura bands and those enjoyed by singers such as Škoro who have crossed over into more strictly popular music. This last matter was particularly troubling to the tamburaši who played in the twentieth anniversary concert because, despite their long recording careers, numerous radio hits, and personal histories with Škoro, they had (and have) yet to achieve even a small fraction of Škoro's commercial success. In recent years, Slavonski Bećari, Ravnica, and Lyra have not been able to draw enough fans to justify holding their own concerts in venues of this size; they have rarely profited from those concerts that they have played; they instead have played mostly at private functions, at which they work much longer hours and can only briefly feature their own songs; and their income from the latter has been insufficient to allow them to abandon their primary, non-musical professions (let alone to achieve the wealth enjoyed by popular singers such as Škoro). I turn now to a discussion of this disparity's context and resulting power dynamics and will return shortly to questions of the diaspora, musical patriotism, and the role that each of these plays in Croatia's ambiguous intermediary positioning.

Exacerbating the issue of commercial success was the inability of tamburaši to profit even from performing at such gainful (for Škoro) events as the twentieth anniversary concert. Škoro, claimed several tamburaši, did not pay the majority of them for their services, which also included a joint tambura rehearsal in Osijek, a three-hour drive each way between Osijek and Zagreb, and a pre-concert rehearsal at the Arena. When I spoke to one of these ensembles' tamburaši (whom I will call Marko) about this, however, he directed his frustration with the situation less at Škoro than at his country and what he considers its immature forms of democracy and capitalism—words he used interchangeably. This conversation occurred after one of his ensemble's rehearsals that I attended near Osijek in early December 2009, at which he and two other members had vexedly discussed their non-salaried labor at the Zagreb concert two weekends earlier. As he drove me back to my apartment in Osijek en route to his own home just outside of the city, Marko explained to me that he and the rest of his band were generally unable to profit directly from accompanying singers such as Škoro (for whom they would again play without compensation in Osijek a few days later) because everyone knows that they will work for free "just for the chance to play with stars [*sa zvijezdama*]." Playing in televised concerts with stars such as Škoro was necessary in order to charge a decent rate for the weddings and private parties that were their only musical sources of income.

Although clearly upset about not being paid, Marko rationalized his ensemble's arrangement with Škoro not as a failed negotiation with the star but as a regrettably normal part of the national musical and economic

system. In his account of this system, a tambura band must seek out certain types of publicity in order to ascend to and maintain a higher celebrity status and pay grade for private performances (an account that I heard repeated by many tamburaši from both well-established and relatively novice ensembles). According to Marko and the members of other ensembles with whom I discussed this, "everyone" (pop stars, tamburaši, fans, and potential patrons) recognizes the value to a tambura band of publicity from accompanying a star singer at a televised concert, and tamburaši therefore have little leverage to negotiate wages for this type of labor.

When I interviewed Miroslav Škoro in March 2011, he informed me that he is currently pursuing a doctorate in economics at the University of Osijek and therefore views his hiring practices and relationships with tamburaši in terms of his field of study. He stated that one can explain these relationships entirely through "marketing," which he conceptualized for me as the process of creating, recognizing, and capitalizing on various forms of "value" (Škoro 2011b).[12] There are certain tambura musicians such as Jerry Grcevich and Aleksandar Homoky, he explained, whose work he values very highly because of their superb musicianship: specifically, their ability to replicate quickly and faithfully any melody that he dictates to them, their technical precision both on stage and in the studio, and the depth to which they "feel" and "love" the music (*ibid*). Because both of these tamburaši recognize their value to Škoro (multiplied due to the scarcity of such musicians in Škoro's view), they can wait for him to seek them out (they, not he, are in demand). They as well as Škoro therefore expect that the latter will compensate them for their labor (*ibid*).[13]

In Škoro's opinion, however, most tamburaši currently playing in Croatia are neither as musically talented nor as musically motivated as Homoky and Grcevich. He said that most play because they believe that performing in a band can be highly lucrative, and they do not develop great skill on their instruments (*ibid*). Because of their prioritization of money over musicianship, he added, they do not "feel" and "love" tambura as do Homoky and Grcevich—and as he himself feels and loves his music. "I can still make myself cry with my songs," he proclaimed (*ibid*), referring generally to the emotional performances that he prides himself on delivering, and likely also to a specific recent concert in Zagreb's Vatroslav Lisinski concert hall in which he famously cried throughout his performance of "Majko Jedina" ("Mother, One and Only"), a song dedicated to his deceased mother (Škoro 2010:223). Those whom he judges incapable of feeling the music so deeply—who, by (his) extension, value profit more highly than an emotional connection to the music—are not of great value to Škoro. In his opinion, such musicians are abundant and easily replaceable, and the chance to perform together is

much more valuable to them (for the potential such a performance holds for marketing their ensembles to potential patrons) than it is to him. Therefore, based on the principles of marketing, he explained, he can wait for them to come to him and can expect that they will be willing to perform without salary (Škoro 2011b).

Škoro's explanation of his process of contracting work from tamburaši, however, struck me as somewhat figurative: his relationships with different tamburaši vary considerably, and his description of all of them *coming to him* for work generalized an array of negotiations and arrangements that was almost certainly equally varied. Indeed, throughout the interview, with the exception of this explication of "marketing," he described a much more active role for himself and his management team in dealing with tamburaši, from organizing the twentieth anniversary concert to planning future projects that would "give the tamburaši something to do" (*ibid*). That in reality many tamburaši may have been waiting passively, if eagerly, to accept the singer's offers (rather than actively approaching him about appearing in his concerts) did not enter into the value-based "marketing" schema that Škoro presented to me. Marko's and his band-mates' objection to the terms of their participation in the anniversary concert appeared to stem in part from just this sort of assumption: that although Škoro clearly valued the way in which their participation and musicianship enhanced his own performance, as evidenced by the role in the concert that he allotted to them, when it came to negotiating compensation he acted as though they alone were looking to gain from the performance. As noted above, however, Marko placed the lion's share of the blame on the Croatian state for its part in creating and regulating a musical economy in which "everyone" takes these assumptions (and perhaps also a willful blindness to the complex, intersubjective processes involved in assigning value) for granted. That is, although upset at the terms of his band's performance and the attitudes responsible for them, Marko voiced the greatest displeasure at what he described as a national economic system that left him and his colleagues with no recourse to profit directly from (or to turn down an offer of) this type of musical labor.

Marko expressed similar frustrations over their inability to profit from CDs, which in recent years have also served only to promote the band and to justify higher fees for private performances. On the same ride back from the rehearsal to Osijek I had told him that I would be interested in purchasing a CD from his band. Rather than answer my request, he launched into a controlled but earnest invective against the CD market in Croatia. Although reluctance to accept money from someone whom he viewed as a guest of the band and/or as a patronizing foreigner could explain Marko's refusal to even acknowledge my offer, the speed and despondency with which he segued

into his critique suggested rather a sense of futility at the prospects of selling a single CD in light of their general inability to profit from them. He added that, in this respect, the roles of CD production and of live performance in marketing and financing musical enterprises are "upside down" in Croatia. The Rolling Stones go on tour, he explained, in order to promote an album and subsequently sell more records—their main source of income. In Croatia, however, the opposite is true: bands are only able to profit significantly from live performances, and the release of an album is merely ancillary to their search for high-paying private and public appearances.[14]

Marko's simplification of the supply and marketing logic of a global music industry in which the Rolling Stones operate reflects, in part, the experiences of Croatian tambura bands such as his own that the Croatian Fraternal Union of North America (hereafter, the CFU) has brought on its annual tour of the United States and Canada. Each year for more than two decades, one tambura band from Croatia (in combination with a popular singer) has toured Croatian Fraternal lodges of North America for three weeks in late August and early September (the CFU postponed the tour of the next scheduled band—Garavuše, the first all-female band invited on the tour—in 2009 and then again in 2010 due to the recent economic recession, but the musicians remain hopeful that the CFU will be able to reschedule the tour for fall 2011). As in the imagined album tours of the Rolling Stones, the focus for many of the musicians on the CFU'S recent tours has been the promotion and sale of newly recorded songs.

Damir "Budo" Butković—director of Slavonski Brod's city tambura orchestra and *berda* (tambura bass) player and vocalist for the well-established Berde Band, who played on both the 1998 and 2007 CFU tours—explained to me that the compensation that they had received for performing on the tour's seventeen stops was rather meager and only a secondary consideration in accepting the CFU's invitation (Butković 2010). Moreover, the CFU, he claimed, had not increased its salaries between 1998 and 2007, and he and his fellow musicians had therefore earned significantly lower nightly wages on the second tour than they were accustomed to receiving for private parties in Croatia by that time.[15] As Butković and members of several other bands that had participated in the tours noted, they had also had to forgo premiering songs at the annual televised "Zlatne Žice Slavonije" ("Golden Strings of Slavonia") festival in Požega, Croatia, in early September. For over a decade, this festival has been a primary publicity opportunity and a regular source of new tambura songs for state radio stations seeking to add to their programming, and it remains an important yearly event in the business lives of semiprofessional tamburaši. Thus, in terms of both wages and schedule, touring for the CFU meant sacrificing lucrative opportunities in Croatia.

In the eyes of most tamburaši with whom I spoke, what justified making these sacrifices for the tour was the opportunity to sell CDs. Bands could usually sell large quantities of CDs on these tours, provided that they had new material to offer Croatian-American fans familiar with their oeuvres and already in possession of their previous albums. When I attended Berde Band's performance for the CFU tour on September 3, 2007, at the "St. Lawrence" Croatian Home in Steelton, Pennsylvania, I was one of many audience members who lined up at the band's merchandise table to purchase a copy of the new CD that they were selling during a break between sets. Entitled "USA & Canada Tour: Special Edition," the album was a new product intended for the 2007 tour, and rather than the band's own well-known hits it included a variety of newly-recorded traditional songs from Southeastern Europe and popular songs from Croatia, Western Europe, and North America. During my 2010 stay in Slavonski Brod, tamburaši from Berde Band and other ensembles that had toured for the CFU such as Širok Šor and Zvona told me that they would typically enter the recording studio before embarking on the tour, and cited the unique opportunity to promote and sell a new album on tour as their main reason for going. As Butković commented to me, tamburaši also valued the chance to have the spotlight and to play short, self-programmed concerts in the style of American tamburaši such as Jerry Grcevich (*ibid*). In comparison to these limited (and highly selective) opportunities in North America and the seemingly inaccessible careers of western rock stars, the prospects for marketing and selling records in Croatia appeared rather dire to most tambura bands.

The combination of the stagnating domestic CD market and expectations that tambura bands would accompany star singers without salary left many tamburaši whom I interviewed with an extremely dissatisfied opinion of their country's economic status. Marko argued that Croatia—in contrast to the United States, Great Britain, and other "Western" countries—is still a young country new to democracy and does not yet have the infrastructure or organization for a large number of touring and recording bands. Instead of being rewarded for their musical authorship and concert appearances—which most tamburaši consider the more artistic and more enjoyable sides of their musical endeavors—they must use these activities to secure other work, which is profitable but much more exhausting.

Most evening events that I attended or that tamburaši described to me (including parties for weddings, football [soccer] clubs, private firms, and birthdays) lasted until 5:00 or 6:00 am. At this point, the musicians would spend roughly an hour's time putting away instruments and equipment. This was the "hardest part" of the job, as Željko Danković, one of Berde Band's vocalists and *brač* tambura players, noted to me as we carried mic stands

back to the ensemble's van following their performance at a promotional raffle in Slavonski Brod's *SuperNova* shopping center (Danković 2010). Bands typically arrived and began setting up for these engagements between 5:00 and 6:00 pm and played from 7:00 pm onwards, though weddings sometimes required musicians to arrive as early as 8:00 am. Bands normally charged between 1,000 and 2,000 euros for an evening event and received an additional 200 to 500 euros in tips from guests who requested songs and/or special attention (such as having the band play directly around their tables).[16] Divided among five to seven musicians (typically), this income provided each tamburaš with a few hundred euros. This was a decent daily wage in Croatia and a valued source of income, but did not begin to rival the gross gains that Miroslav Škoro drew upon selling 20,000 tickets at nearly 20 euros apiece. For bands that had not accompanied pop stars or released an album, the difference was even more substantial.

Marko and members of several other ensembles complained frequently that the only step that Croatia had taken toward adopting "Western" musical practices was to regulate and heavily tax private gigs, all of which they officially must register. "For 25 years I played for cash and never had to pay taxes," he told me, referring to life in socialist Yugoslavia, and comparing its relative liberalism for enterprising musicians to the current levying of taxes on musicians' wages. He cited his own dues at 35 percent, the tax rate for artists with an annual tax base of 96,000—268,800 kuna, approximately 13,000—36,000 euros (Porezna uprava 2007:13). Marko acknowledged that, in reality, they regularly took advantage of both legal and illegal means of reducing the amount that they lost to taxes, and he estimated that on average they paid the state about 15 percent of their performance income.[17] He posited that in another 25 years Croatia would sort out a better system—presumably more like the idealized one enjoyed by the Rolling Stones and one that would (once more) "require" no cheating of the system. But by then, he grumbled, he would be a *djed*, a grandfather.

Such feelings of in-betweenness—of having acquired the tax-heavy bureaucracy but not the increased opportunities of the capitalist "West"—are quite common among Croatians who have worked both domestically and abroad. These feelings are particularly common among musicians whose regular and frequent international travel keeps them in constant flux between the regulations and experiences of their own country and those of foreign states. They have come to imagine Croatia stuck, both temporally and spatially, in the middle: between a Yugoslavian past (with its own particular amalgamation of capitalist and socialist structures) and a fully capitalist/democratic future; between their more "backwards" Balkan neighbors and the lands of record sales, radio stars, and Rolling Stones farther west.

In her book *Imagining the Balkans*, Maria Todorova notes that the discursive construction of "Europe" has long placed the "East" on the far end of an axis with elided temporal and spatial vectors (Todorova 1997:11–12; see also Wolff 1994, as cited in Todorova 1997:11). In this discourse, Eastern Europe is not fully "Other" with respect to Western Europe, but rather appears to the "West" as an image of its own past. Todorova introduces the term "balkanism" to describe the situating of the Balkans as Europe's incomplete self along this axis in between the "West" and its more clearly "oriental" Others. Her argument that balkanism treats differences within and not between racial and religious types (and thus situates the Balkans incompletely as part of white, Christian Europe) helps to explain the ambiguity of Croatia's own positioning in between normative Europe and Europe's incomplete self. Most religious Croatian citizens and nearly all ethnic Croats are Catholics, and readily point to the historico-geographical divide between Catholic and Orthodox Christian Europe as distinguishing their Central-European country from Balkan Serbia; however, the idea of a genetically close though non-homogeneous South Slav entity encompassing both Serbs and Croats[18] remains prominent and is closely tied to the racial imagining of the Balkans as transitional but, in Todorova's words, "positioned on this side of the fundamental opposition: white versus colored, Indo-European versus the rest" (Todorova 1997:19). In this way, Croatia occupies religiously and racially (as well as musically) its own particular in-between position as what Catherine Baker has called a "borderland" (Baker 2010:2).

Balkanist constructions of religious/racial difference and similarity are deeply rooted in the region's history of empire and statehood. Todorova posits that "the Balkans are [. . .] tantamount to their Ottoman legacy," and this legacy is a source of heated contention among those who wish to distance themselves from the Balkans, particularly in Croatia (Todorova 1997:13). Croatia's centuries-long history as a "borderland" and zone of conflict between Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian forces offers evidence to both those who assert and those who deny Croatia's place in the Balkans. More recent historical periods offer similarly ambiguous evidence. Those in countries situated more squarely within the Balkan Peninsula and those more distinctly outside of the "Balkans" often see shared history with other former Yugoslav republics as proof of Croatia's Balkanness, while Croatians typically blame these past ties for their country's inability to progress evenly with other, more "advanced" territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In discussing traditional music, however, Croatian tamburaši often speak inclusively of their southern neighbors and declare the Balkans (Croatia included) Europe's richest musical region. They emphatically qualify such

statements with a denigration of *turbofolk* music, a largely non-acoustic popular music genre that they see as a Balkan mixture of European and Turko-orientalist elements and as a foreign, pernicious threat to the traditional musical wealth of Croatia (and to the pocket money of potential tambura patrons). A number of Croatian tamburaši referred to this music as *"šund,"* a common slang term for (musical) "trash" that, perhaps tellingly, is an appropriation of the German word "Schund" (Katarinčić 2008; Žderić 2010). Aversion to turbofolk music builds on a much older ambivalence in Yugoslavia toward newly composed folk music [*novokomponovana narodna muzika*], a genre of songwriting that peaked commercially in the 1980s and that was characterized by the combination of aspects of several local musical styles and the incorporation of elements considered foreign and more "Eastern." Of its mixed reception, Ljerka Rasmussen writes: "At the same time that NCFM [newly composed folk music] prompted issues of the homogenization of folk music's regional and ethnic diversity, it crystallized internally divisive issues, chief among them the distinction between Yugoslavia's east and west. The dominant position, that NCFM embodied an "eastern" cultural model of Yugoslavia, drew on two facts of regionalism: the greatest concentration of NCFM's audience (and commercial production) in the southeast (Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Montenegro), and its "orientalist" features, most prominently expressed in singing styles" (Rasmussen 1999, 4). At the time of its development, Croatian musicians tended to (and largely still do) see this sort of music as a deterioration of authentic folklore styles such as tambura music and as yet another move toward the 'true Balkans' and Turkey, and away from the 'high' culture of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which had introduced the very methods of folklore study that led to the tambura's initial rise as a national instrument in the nineteenth century (March 1984:94–98, 108–111; Forry 1990:109–110). Croatian tamburaši therefore typically see shared history with Yugoslavia as a negative influence and hindrance not only economically but also musically.

Such negotiations of Croatia's ambiguous Balkan status contribute to the processes of balkanism and incorporate its tropes into the constructions of Croatia as in the middle. In attempting to distance themselves from newly composed folk music and turbofolk, as well as from the Balkans more generally, Croatian tamburaši reinforce discourses on the in-betweenness and incompletely European status of Southeastern Europe and its music that in turn reinforce the ambiguity with which Central and Western Europe view Croatia. The fact that Bulgaria and Romania have joined the European Union and that Macedonia's prospects of doing so sometimes seemed better than Croatia's own during my fieldwork, further complicates the ways that

Croatians view "Europe" as a normative space in relation to their country.

One of the clearest indications of Croatia's own distinctly intermediary position that I encountered in my research was anxiety over "Europeanness."[19] Antun Žderić, the president of Osijek's Slavonian Tambura Society "Pajo Kolarić," emphasized to me several times how "europski" ("European") the city of Osijek is visually and culturally (Žderić 2009). Tamburaši whom I interviewed in Austria never expressed a need to say the same to me of Vienna, whose European status they took for granted; musicians that I met in Bosnia and farther south and east seemed equally comfortable with their *distance* from "Europa," which they often referred to as a (foreign) destination to the north and west. In Croatia, however, anxiety over exclusion from Europe and inclusion in the Balkans constantly informed constructions of the country's intermediary status and balkanist denigrations of Croatia's music industry. Following Milica Bakić-Hayden's introduction of "nesting orientalisms" to describe "a pattern of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which Orientalism is premised" by which any given society can readily locate its own relative "Orient" (Bakić-Hayden 1995:918), one can note within such anxious discourse corollary patterns of nesting *occidentalisms* (and perhaps, specifically, *europeanisms*) and *balkanisms*. In Croatia, tamburaši, other individuals, even whole societies avail themselves of gradations of selves/Europes (both normative and incomplete) to soothe their own anxieties and justify the culturo-geographical distinction necessary for orientalizing their neighbors.

As Michał Buchowski argues, however, constructions of difference in formerly socialist states of Eastern Europe have depended less and less on models of geographic distinction and distance since 1989, and have increasingly located alterity within or across (rather than simply between) societies. He contends that for those in Poland "still thinking in "orientalizing" terms *a mental map has morphed into social space*, or, that they have found "otherness" in their sisters and brothers" (Buchowski 2006:466; original emphasis used). They have done so largely by employing three parallel dichotomies: "urban vs. rural, educated vs. uneducated, and winners vs. losers of transformation" (*ibid*). Independent Croatia differs from Buchowski's Polish case in that the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and wartime expulsion of Serbs that comprised transformation have facilitated new constructions of Others "confined" or "incarcerated" in foreign space (Appadurai 1988:37: as cited in Buchowski 2006:465). Yet, differences within and across Croatian societies themselves have also registered over the past twenty years.

At the November 20 concert, such differences were apparently at work in the relations between Škoro (who now lives in the Zagreb urban center, has

pursued post-secondary education both in Croatia and in the United States, and has repeatedly succeeded in his commercial music endeavors since 1992) and the members of Lyra, Ravnica, and Slavonski Bećari (who continue to live in heavily agricultural Eastern Slavonia, have on average undertaken less advanced education, and earn too little from their activities in these bands to abandon their daytime professions). In my experience, the "winners" of Croatia's political and economic transformation are not typically so blunt as to label their sisters and brothers "losers," but the differences register in such matters as the understanding that top popular performers need not compensate accompanying musicians monetarily for their musical labor.

Škoro, for his part, introduced and used these terms freely (in English) in my interview with him (Škoro 2011b). He told me that while he would not like to name anyone as a "loser" of the transformations following Croatia's secession in 1991, he does consider himself a "winner." "I have *won* certain things for myself," he told me, and he proceeded to list the following highlights of his successful career: freedom from the 9 am to 4 pm routine; the ability to wake up when he wants; and the ability to dress and care for his personal hygiene as he desires. Škoro's appearance at our interview seemed to support this: his face—always immaculately shaved for performances—was covered in stubble. He had also, he made clear, won the right to perform what, where, when, and with whom he wants, and to carry out his hiring practices based on his understanding of (and ability to control) "marketing."

Disparities between "winners" and "losers" also registered in a reactionary reversal of these roles that tamburaši performed in discoursing on the state's immaturity: they described Croatia as young and new to democracy/capitalism, and argued that they themselves had a much more advanced understanding of how things could and should operate in the future than did the country's government and bureaucratic institutions. In the meantime, they also knew and boasted of many ways of bypassing the bureaucracy of the state.[20] In these ways they emphasized their own successes in comprehending and envisioning the future outcome of transformation vis-à-vis the failures of the state and society as a whole to do the same. In each case (i.e., both that of the tamburaši and that of the state), the one side positioned himself in between the stagnated progress of the other and the future possibilities already realized in the "West."

In a critique of anthropologists' (as well as Croatian society's) focus on locating the "initial moment" of post-socialism in transition's inceptive event, Ines Prica writes that such reactions to economic difficulties are also typical of a broader (i.e. not only musical) population of Croatian society that considers itself the losers of the processes of transition and therefore "is

inclined to negative assessment of the newly-arisen situation and to seeking a "sacrificial goat" for its own condition," (Prica 2007:41 [my translation]). Citizens, she continues, are in position neither to explain their own failures at "comprehending and executing the changes" brought by transition, nor "to understand them with respect to [the fact that] they skew the reality of transition as the crisis and problem of society" (*ibid*).

In employing transition as the societal scapegoat, both Croatians and the anthropologists who theorize them also often skew the reality of socialism itself, Prica argues, for Croatia differs significantly from Poland and other former satellite states of the USSR in another significant respect: it belonged to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its (and Tito's) own particular, nonaligned mixture of socialism *and* capitalism. As Prica writes, "contrary to transitional societies with the experience of deprivation of material goods, here materialism is exactly the consequence of a continuity of *consumers of undeserved goods*." Indeed, familiarity with and consumption of "Western" culture, such as the music of the Rolling Stones, in Croatia far precedes the post-socialist period (Prica 2007:44). This continuity extends beyond consumerism to include conceptions of the value of labor. Citing Ivan Rogić's work on transition (Rogić 1998:54), Prica adds that "it turns out that (Yugoslav) socialism is an obstacle of transition exactly because it is some form of "corrupted capitalism" in which, aside from deceitful intellectuals, exist also "deceitful workers in deceitful factories", "mannequins of the epochal program of liberation", who thought that "every banality that they perform must be very expensively paid for" (Prica 2007:44). While deceit is perhaps too strong (and unfair) an accusation to make of current tamburaši who quite rightly point to discrepancies in the rewarding of musical labor in comparison to both pre-transition practices in Croatia and contemporary foreign music scenes, there is certainly a (self-)deception at work in their pronouncements about the way things were, are, and ought to be.

At a rehearsal of the city tambura orchestra in Slavonski Brod that I attended in April, 2010, director Butković was attempting to schedule an extra rehearsal in preparation for an upcoming performance. When he expressed surprise and dismay that several members would be unavailable for an afternoon rehearsal on a Sunday (historically a free day for workers) because they had non-musical, professional commitments, one of these players humorously shouted out across the orchestra: "Vidiš, kapitalizam je stigao u Hrvatsku!" ("You see, capitalism has arrived in Croatia!"—i.e. new capitalist practices have resulted in employees working through the weekend).[21] This comment played on an irony well-accepted by the musicians, that despite requirements to work more, capitalism still has not truly arrived. The joke also points to a second irony: capitalism (in a perhaps

corrupt, if more agreeable form) had already arrived in Croatia before the "transition." The treatment since the 1990s of transition as a sudden, "surprising event" obscures continuities maintained over several decades and distances the present from the past. In so othering their own Yugoslav past, Croatian tamburaši construct a space and period in the middle that is nested in between East and West, past and present, in gradations of orientalisms/balkanisms/occidentalisms.

Turning to Emigrants, Constructing a Center

Typically accompanying these constructions are both a strong opinion of how the music industry and infrastructure ought to be once Croatia catches up with its Western companions and a clear idea of the many unlawful means of sidestepping bureaucratic and financial hassles in the meantime. This often involves travel and work in the very regions between which musicians see their country positioned, whether geographically, culturally, or economically. Indeed, it is the mobility of tamburaši in neighboring countries Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Hungary, and farther abroad in Austria, in Germany, and on the aforementioned North American tour, that allows them their particular perspective and almost patronizing air of authority on requisite national changes. I turn now to a discussion of these musicians' activities beyond Croatia's borders and to the alternative positioning of Croatia as a musical and ethnic center in relation to the diaspora and other foreign communities.

The surge of patriotism during the war years bolstered Škoro's rise to stardom, increased the demand for tambura bands such as Ravnica and Slavonski Bećari, and spurred the founding of numerous ensembles throughout Croatia. Scores of new semiprofessional bands, almost exclusively all-male, began recording with pop stars, releasing their own songs on cassettes, and performing this new material at new festivals of patriotic *domoljubne pjesme* ("songs for the love of the home[land]"). The end of the wars saw a decrease in domestic interest in patriotic tambura groups, however, and left a diminished performance market in a country saturated with bands. They could rarely profit from their recordings or performances with pop stars, and, as foreign Croat enclaves once again became accessible with the cessation of fighting, these bands began to compensate for low numbers of domestic gigs by working abroad (see Figure 1 for a map of the movement of ensembles outward from Croatia discussed in the following pages).

Croatia-based bands have played increasingly in Herzegovina, where Croat fans of tambura music were accustomed to hearing local tamburaši before the war but have since looked eagerly to Croatia as their main source

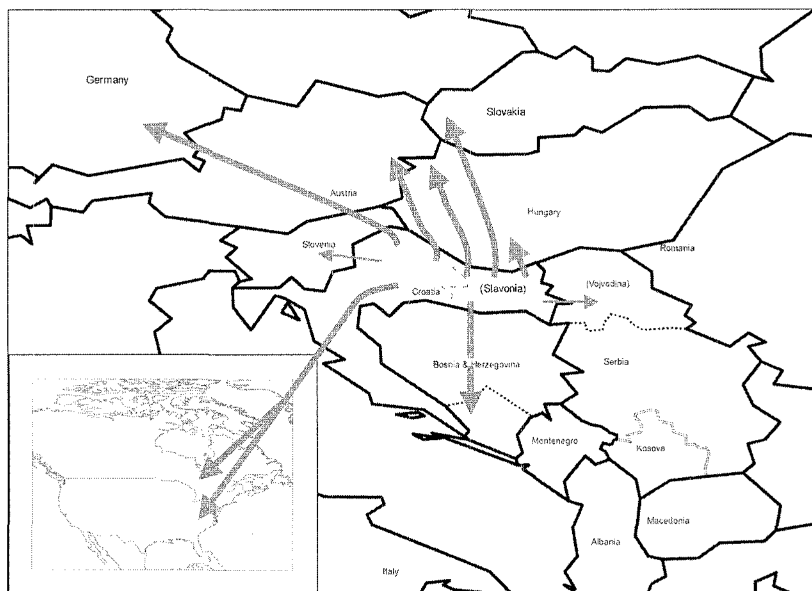

Figure 1: Foreign travel routes taken by working tambura bands based in Croatia

of music for private parties and weddings. One Osijek tamburaš told me that they can get away with not registering their work or paying taxes when they play in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that the long trip allows them to charge higher rates. Another in Slavonski Brod added that purchasing food and alcohol at cheaper rates to bring back to Croatia is another benefit of crossing the Bosnian border for work. The same advantages attract bands to work in the Burgenland and Baranya regions of Hungary, where they commonly out-compete local, relatively amateur ensembles.

Another result of the wars, though also of Yugoslav financial troubles following the end of communism, was the hyperinflation of the dinar currency. This prompted tambura bands to seek payment in Deutschmarks and, since 1999, in euros (now standard despite the adoption of the relatively stable kuna). Many tambura fans relocated during this period to Germany, whence they and earlier immigrants were able to send foreign currency to family in Croatia and where, just as importantly, they now often hire Croatian tambura bands for organized events. Refugees similarly relocated to Canada and the United States, where they joined fourth– and fifth-generation Croatian-Americans in supporting bands on North American tours. In my 2008—2009 fieldwork in Pittsburgh and in subsequent research in Chicago, Cleveland, Harrisburg, and Toronto, I witnessed patrons from both Croatian-American and recent Croatian immigrant communities (which mix and interact quite readily in many North American cities) avidly supporting tamburaši

from Croatia. Much longer established Croat diaspora communities in the Austrian and Slovakian Burgenland provide similar opportunities and are regular sources of income for several Croatian ensembles. Regular, if less frequent, work in Croat enclaves of Slovenia and Northern Serbia fills out the musico-geographical framing of Croatia constructed through these bands' activities.

Work in these countries joins Croatian tambura bands and foreign patrons in imagining Croatia as an ethnic and musical center. Tamburaši view their country from a different geographical and sociological perspective; if constructing Croatia as 'in the middle' relies on musicians looking outward while living within the country, viewing it as a center involves looking back in from an acquired external perspective and incorporates the experience of repeated physical departure and return to and from several foreign countries. This dual perspective is, of course, not unique to tamburaši in Croatia. Indeed, it is very similar to what, following Mikhail Bakhtin, one might call the dialogic relationship of the insider and outsider perspective (1981). What is important in this case is the ever-increasing complexity of locating the margins along which this duality persists. As the geography (human and cultural, as well as physical) of foreign Croat enclaves becomes more fragmentary, as it incorporates more and more formerly isolated individuals via new technologies of communication, and as the resolution of tenets of ethno-nationalism with the realities and practicalities of intercultural mixing becomes more thorny, constructing Croatia as a center takes on greater import.

Those who listen to and particularly those who hire the bands help to finance and reinforce this perspective among Croatian tamburaši. Such patronage existed prior to the 1990s to some extent, but Croatia's secession from Yugoslavia and the subsequent war bolstered patriotic support. The creation of a politically autonomous Croatian entity that, following the expulsion of Serbs and influx of Croats from Bosnia and Serbia throughout the 1990s, became much more ethnically homogeneous than had been the Yugoslav Republic of Croatia realized a long-imagined ethnic homeland. This served to center the transnational movement of certain ensembles that had previously relied on much more lateral and ethnically diverse musical networks.

This re-centering of transnational musical and ethnic flows transpired within and partly constituted what, in a redirection of Arjun Appadurai's model, I propose was the *re*territorialization of an (ultimately Croatian) ethnoscape (Appadurai 1996:33–38). The realization of the Croatian state's sovereignty over its present-day territory took nearly seven years, from the republic's declaration of secession and subsequent war with Yugoslavia in

1991 to the eventual United Nations-supervised demilitarization of Slavonia (Croatia's easternmost region) that concluded in early 1998. During this time, Croatian emigrants in countries across the globe spent (and sent) considerable amounts of time, attention, effort, and money as they followed and supported the endeavors of the Croatian government and army to achieve this sovereignty.[22] In the 1990s, what had been a somewhat deterritorialized diaspora in Central Europe, and in more peripheral locations such as the United States, became a group quite engaged and invested in the *construction* of a central Croatian homeland in terms of both geographic reunification and an emergent social imaginary.

The issue of territory and sovereignty was no less important to populations of Croats in other republics of the former Yugoslavia, who found themselves separated by new national borders (many of them difficult to penetrate due to the battles lining them) from the nominal homeland and governmental seat of their "nation." Many of those who left these republics (primarily Bosnia and Hercegovina and the North-Serbian province of Vojvodina) for Croatia because of the war, and those already living within the republic of Croatia, focused their concerns and efforts largely on what they considered Croatian lands occupied and/or damaged by the Yugoslavian army.[23] As Catherine Baker (2010:42) has demonstrated, the issue of regaining specific occupied lands and territory in general was a primary theme in the songs of many Slavonian tambura bands such as Slavonski Bećari during this period, and the recording of Škoro's own "Ne Dirajte Mi Ravnicu" by Zlatni Dukati (now known as Najbolji Hrvatski Tamburaši—The Best Croatian Tamburaši) resonated with contemporary political messages about "returning" to the "ravnice" ("plains") of Slavonia (Bonifačić 1998:138; Ivanković 1993). The transnational flows of people and money into, within, across, and because of the war zones, and the cultural forms such as tambura songs that promised and celebrated the return of Croats to all their territories, took part in the re-invention of a Croatian homeland to which its citizens and expatriates related, not on the plane of the fantastic (Appadurai 1996:38), but through deeply personal and intimate connections to territory.

James Ferguson (2006) argues that the introduction of this sort of sovereignty also contributes to the invention and reification of the state by fostering a blindness to the very transnational connections that made possible and sustain its (uneasy) existence. He writes:

> Where the national frame of reference has enjoyed an unquestioned legitimacy, economic grievances have tended to be seen as "problems" that are essentially local and internal to a national economy, and economic critique has been largely channeled into discussion of whether or not

> "the nation" is pursuing "the right policies." In this way, the wider system of economic relations that is constitutive of many of these "problems" is removed from view, thus localizing and depoliticizing the discussion in a very fundamental way from the start. (Ferguson 2006:64–65)

Croatia, as a newly sovereign nation, has been a ripe place for these sorts of narrow economic critiques from both within and outside of its borders, and not least from tamburaši. The musicians' construction of Croatia as a musical, economic, and territorial center from which they move outward to foreign enclaves has, in part, built upon the very idea of Croatia's responsibility for their economic hardships, even as they have witnessed (and participated in) firsthand the economic connections that extend beyond its borders.

These connections are imbricated with conditions of significant economic inequality. While more peripheral enclaves in Western Europe and North America are often able to spend money on trips to the "center" or to bring over musicians from Croatia, the opposite case (i.e., tamburaši traveling as tourists or financing tours of American musicians) is rarely true. As Ferguson argues, such conditions of inequality are not simply indexes of coincidental differences between completely independent political and economic units but, rather, symptoms of actual economic relations that get lost in the focus on countries (*ibid.*). Thus, while the creation of a sovereign ethnic homeland fed the demand for patriotic music that initially enabled the rise of many tamburaši to celebrity status and commercial success in Croatia, it also eventually fed into constructions both of Croatia's "domestic" problems (its position 'in the middle') and of foreign enclaves in which tamburaši began to work and network as distant, independent sites for sidestepping Croatia's economic policies and bureaucratic institutions.

The current network of which Croatian tambura bands avail themselves configures a sort of geographically fragmentary "imagined community" (Anderson 1991:6) beyond but centered through the nation-state: what I have come to call "Croatia and its Intimates." By "intimates" I refer to those enclaves that, across varying degrees of geographical and historical separation from the current nation-state of Croatia, participate in its construction as center. Some of Croatia's intimates are in the diaspora, and some of them are merely separated from Croatia by what their populations commonly consider unfortunate national boundaries (either recently solidified, as in those with Bosnia and Hercegovina, or present throughout the history of Yugoslavia, as in those with Hungary). These intimates take part in a number of intimacies with their nominal homeland: familial, as receiving family members from abroad forms the basis of many of these connections; marital, or sexual, as travelers form new families and remain abroad;

spiritual, as Croatian Catholic churches provide spaces and occasions for travelers to commune in worship; and, finally, what Michael Herzfeld has termed "cultural intimacy."

Cultural intimacy is a theory that identifies non-official discourses of externally embarrassing national stereotypes that citizens employ in blaming state ideologies and structures, but that somewhat paradoxically also reinforce reifications of the state by reinscribing the latter's presence within these discourses (Herzfeld 1997:3). In the case of tamburaši, discourses of Croatia's Balkanness and status in the middle are embarrassing but not easily avoidable, particularly as they take compensating measures that to many outsiders, including Croats abroad, place them culturally in league with their "Balkan" neighbors (e.g. the use of non-state-issued currency and the avoidance of taxation abroad and, when possible, at home). Their work and consumption among Croatia's intimates buttresses the structure and presence of the state by both making up for its economic short-comings (preserving a functional status quo) and serving the state's ambitions of maintaining connections with Croats abroad (many of whom it calls upon as citizens but only irregularly serves in any official capacity).[24] The perspective from these intimates of Croatia as an ethnic and musical center helps to legitimize distinctive national stereotypes and practices as quintessential; in this way, foreign enclaves contribute to the complex negotiation of stereotypes and officialdom that are vital to the intimacies shared by state and citizens based in Croatia.

Musical Styles and Strategies

Within the center itself, Croatian bands have developed a particular style of tambura playing and song-writing that many refer to as the "Slavonian sound" [*slavonski zvuk*] due to the prominence of bands from Osijek, Slavonski Brod, Đakovo, and other cities in this easternmost Croatian region. From fieldwork that I have conducted in Pittsburgh and in the Austrian Burgenland, it is evident that exponents of this Slavonian sound, such as Berde Band, Lyra, Ravnica, and Slavonski Bećari, are still quite popular among a number of Croatia's intimates and are the most common non-local tambura acts to perform there. Tambura musicians from the Slovakian and Hungarian Burgenlands also claimed a preference for Slavonian bands (over local groups and those from other intimates and other parts of Croatia), and Slavonian bands affirmed in interviews that their songs and their style of playing gave them an advantage abroad. In this section, I discuss sonic characteristics of their musical practice in order to elucidate the limitations

and opportunities that they recognize from their complexly intermediary positions in the center/middle.

To speak of a Slavonian style of tambura is a fictive action that risks both obscuring internal differences and ignoring cross-regional and transnational consistencies in tambura practice. Many Slavonian tamburaši advised me on how to distinguish aurally musicians from such nearby Slavonian cities as Đakovo, Vinkovci, and Osijek, and then retreated into the vagueness of musical relativity, asserting that borders do not exist for music and that they share a continuity of tradition with other regions of Croatia as well as throughout the greater Pannonian Basin (a lowland area that also includes Vojvodina, much of Hungary, and even part of Northern Bosnia). Most tamburaši, however, were equally aware that certain political borders and combat zones did erect and constitute musical borders during the wars, and that it was economically sound practice to continue to construct such boundaries. Distinctions in performance and songwriting style that solidified during the war years (when isolation from tambura practices of other Yugoslav republics was at its greatest) continue to play a role in the way Croatia-based tamburaši position their music in relation to both foreign tambura styles and competing genres of popular performance. For the present argument, it is therefore useful to identify a few features of the general tradition and of the Slavonian style of tambura music that became particularly salient in the 1990s. I begin with an overview of instrumentation and performance techniques and then proceed to an analysis of common song structures in order to discuss the musical expectations of domestic and foreign patrons.

Semiprofessional ensembles throughout the former Yugoslav republics employ a variety of combinations of the most common tambura instruments. These range from the small, round-bodied lead *prim* tambura (also known as *bisernica* or sometimes simply *tamburica*) to hourglass-shaped secondary melody (such as the *čelović*, the *čelo*, and the *basprim*, also known as *brač*) and harmony (i.e. the *kontra*, also known as *bugarija*) tamburas, and finally to the largest, *berda* (also known as *bas*), which resembles a double bass in appearance and function. A working tambura band features a minimum of berda, kontra, basprim, and one other melodic instrument, but many ensembles have one, two, or three additional tamburas. Some bands incorporate violin and/or accordion into their lineups, although this is less common in Slavonia, where many Croat patrons associate these instruments with Roma from Vojvodina and with Serbian musical practice (see Pettan 1998:16-18). Musicians use plectra for all tambura types and, with the exception of berda and kontra players, typically play all note values longer than an eighth note

with tremolo. The berda and kontra players most typically play alternating strokes on, respectively, the strong and weak beats of the bar.

Characteristics that tamburaši in Slavonia as well as in northern Serbia and Bosnia confirmed were particular to the Slavonian style of tambura performance include close, tertian, often parallel vocal harmonies within the baritone range; frequent chromatic passages on the lead prim tambura (including short, stepwise fills between successive notes of the vocal melody and longer runs when the vocals are silent); heterophonic doubling of the vocal parts on tamburas in multiple octaves; and what many tamburaši refer to as an "aggressive" plectrum technique consisting of hard attacks, quick tremolos, and stricter duple division than one tends to hear in northern Serbia or Bosnia. These characteristics, several musicians told me, were typical only of people on the plains of Slavonia. Geography and genetics—tropes that relate closely to wartime (and subsequent) discourses on the Croatian ethnic group's territorial claims to formerly occupied Eastern Slavonia—were common explanations for both the ability and the sensibility of Slavonian tamburaši in this performance style (Butković 2010; Zbiljski 2010).

In addition to these characteristics of Slavonian tambura performance, a number of recurring, archetypal harmonic and melodic structures also emerge from the newly written tambura songs of this period. I argue that these archetypal structures factor in the ways fans recognize, enjoy, and participate in the Slavonian tambura tradition. Škoro's "Ne Dirajte Mi Ravnicu" utilizes one such archetypal structure, and, in addition to the aforementioned distinctive musical characteristics, his performance of this and similar songs at Arena Zagreb exemplified the new style of Slavonian tambura songs that emerged during the early period of his career (I analyze only the second verse and chorus, as these representat well the general melodic structure of the song, though each verse has minor nuances that accommodate stresses in the text).[25]

The verses are harmonically and melodically static, employing only triads within the key signature of E major and repeating a phrase that, on a structural level, moves only slightly (to the second scale degree) and then returns to the tonic on which it began (see Example 1, measures 1 through 8). As is common in many songs from this region, however, the refrain moves to the subdominant via characteristic instrumental runs that tonicize A major: one from the tonic of E up the scale to A and one from E down chromatically to C# (measures 8 and 16). The melody that subsequently enters consists of a simple descending pattern (measures 9 and 10) that repeats sequentially (measures 11 and 12) over harmonies more adventurous than those of the verse. Structurally speaking, this melody elaborates a linear progression (measures 9 through 16) descending stepwise to the tonic (from

2nd Verse:

Tenor

Još u se-bi - ču-jem maj - ku ka - ko tužna govo - ri

Melody Tamburas

E E f# f# A B E E

Harmony and Bass Tamburas

E: I ii IV V I

5

T

"kad se jednom - vra - tiš si-ne - - - ja - ću te če-ka - ti"

Tamb.

E E f# f# A B E EM7E7

I ii IV V I I7 V7/IV

Refrain:

9

T

Ne di-rajte - mi ve - čer-as - - - uspomenu u me - ni

Tamb.

A A B B E G#7 c# a

13

T

Ne di- raj-te - mi rav - ni - cu - - - jer ja ću se vra - ti - ti

Tamb.

E E f# f# A B E EM7 E7

I ii IV V I I7 V7/IV

Example 1: "Ne Dirajte Mi Ravnicu" ("Don't Touch My Plain"). Music and Lyrics by Miroslav Škoro, Arranged by Jerry Grcevich.

Tenor

c♯m G♯7 A E B7 E B7 E

Tambura Bass and Harmony

E: vi V7/vi IV I V7 I (V7 I)

Example 2: Alternative Linear Progression

[2nd Verse:]
Još u sebi čujem majku,
kako tužna govori:
"Kad se jednom vratiš, sine,
ja ću te čekati"

Still within myself I hear mother,
how, sad, she is speaking:
"When once you return, son,
I will be waiting for you"

[Refrain:]
Ne dirajte mi večeras
uspomenu u meni
Ne dirajte mi ravnicu
jer ja ću se vratiti

Don't touch, tonight,
the memory in me
Don't touch my plain

Figure 2: "Ne Dirajte Mi Ravnicu" ("Don't Touch My Plain")

scale degree 4 in this case, though 6 and the upper tonic are also common).[26] Other common song structures employ similar sequential elaborations of linear progressions (with different harmonic patterns) in the refrain, such as those from the upper tonic that set structurally prominent scale degrees 1, 7, 6, and 5 over, respectively, vi, V7/vi, IV, and I harmonies (see Example 2). The progressions then typically proceed stepwise down to scale degree 3 (e.g. Berde Band's "Hrastovi Slavonije Ravne"—"Oaks of Flat Slavonia") or, in some cases, all the way to the tonic (e.g. Škoro's "Šumi, Šumi Javore"—"Rustle, Rustle Maple"), employing V-I harmonic cadential formulas.

In both these and other archetypal song structures, recognizable transitions to the refrain cue an audience acquainted with the style to join in singing phrases that are easily accessible because of their internal sequential repetition, frequent recurrence, and similarity to other songs. This allows audience members and other fans to learn and then recall the song readily and to join the musicians on stage, and the swaying fans around them, in an intimate performance of these songs' lyrics of nostalgia for home and the rural countryside (see Figure 2 for a translation of the second verse and chorus of "Ne Dirajte Mi Ravnicu"). Indeed, the audience in Arena Zagreb

on November 20, 2009, followed the cues each time, even when Škoro fell silent during several instrumental repetitions of the refrain.

When a Croatian tambura band plays a song such as "Ne Dirajte Mi Ravnicu" at private gigs, even among foreign fans who do not understand the Croatian lyrics, the musicians elicit the same sort of participation and cultivate an intimate rapport with their patrons and the guests. This is important for a band's reputation and future success, as well as for its immediate earnings, particularly with regard to tips. Choosing (and being ready to play on request) those songs that are familiar or familiar-sounding and suitable to fostering such intimacy requires attending to the desires of particular audiences and has a significant impact on the repertoire and sound of any given ensemble. Patrons in Croatia's intimates usually expect a strictly Slavonian (i.e. not Vojvodinan and not Bosnian) performance in terms of both style and repertoire, and in this way reinforce these musicians' perception (from without) of Croatia as musical center.

As tambura bands struggle to remain competitive and profitable, they often find the demand for standard favorites and newly written songs in the standard style difficult to reconcile with the need to set themselves apart from dozens of similar ensembles. Members of working bands, especially those new on the scene, stressed to me the importance of "pioneering" something musically. Yet, they were often hard pressed to find time for experimenting after rehearsing the hundreds of requisite songs in the canon, arranging songs requested in advance by certain clients, traveling and performing internationally, and working fulltime jobs. With inexpensive, local, one-person singer/synthesizer performers as well as Serb and Roma tambura bands (which have increasingly been entering Croatia from Vojvodina in recent years) putting more and more pressure on the market, even some long-established ensembles have contemplated new musical strategies.

Antun *Tonkić* of Berde Band, the most famous group in Slavonski Brod, told me that he thought that they needed to adopt the melismatic style of popular Bosnian singers such as Halid Bešlić (Tonkić 2010). Bešlić rose to prominence in the early 1980s as part of the largely Bosnian "New Wave" of newly composed folk music and *estrada*, and quickly began drawing large audiences throughout Yugoslavia (Rasmussen 2002:117–118). Tonkić noted that, whereas the patriotic song festival "Brodfest," at which Berde Band and other tambura and pop-rock bands had recently played, had only filled Slavonski Brod's *kazališno-koncertna dvorana* (theater-concert hall) to half capacity, Bešlić's upcoming (July 2, 2010) concert would pack the much larger Brod Fortress. Bešlić's concert in Slavonski Brod proved to be as successful as Tonkić had predicted and added to a long list of at-capacity appearances in Croatia, including two performances at the Arena Zagreb

(on October 23 and 24, 2009, a month before the Škoro concert) which claim the highest and second highest attendance of any act at that venue (Lokas and Šimić 2009a and 2009b). Tonkić added that the current recession demonstrated that they were still stuck in the period of hardship that began in the early 1990s and that Bešlić's remarkable ability to nonetheless sell tickets demonstrated the potential that this style of music held for Croatian musicians (Tonkić 2010).

Tonkić also admitted, though, that utilizing a Bosnian singing style reminiscent of newly composed folk music would likely alienate many fans in Slavonia. In fact, the organizers of many Croatian patriotic song festivals—most of which feature tambura music heavily if not exclusively—originally saw these as a chance to offer an alternative to popular Bosnian and Serbian folk music styles. Catherine Baker writes that tamburaš Veljko Škorvaga (who remains a prominent conductor of tambura orchestras) relaunched the Zlatne Žice Slavonije festival in Požega in 1992 in order to promote tambura music "as a functional replacement for NCFM" (Baker 2010:67). Tonkić was well aware of the significance of adopting the singing style of a musician such as Bešlić, which is the most recognizable (and most recognizably "Eastern") element of much newly composed folk music (Rasmussen 1999:4). He reasoned, though, that the money ultimately was going to stars with distinctive voices, and that there was a larger fan base for musicians of this sort than for tambura bands.[27] Tonkić was willing to sacrifice some of Berde Band's established fans for the thousands of concert-goers who frequent Halid Bešlić's performances.

From the Center in the Middle, in Conclusion

When I asked Filip Pešut of the Osijek band Hrvatski Sokol about performing in Bosnia, he spoke eagerly of the opportunities there (particularly of those in Herzegovina) but quoted me a cautionary Croatian saying: "Don't sing through Bosnia, don't play through Serbia, and don't dance through Macedonia" ("Nemoj pjevati kroz Bosnu, nemoj svirati kroz Srbiju, i nemoj plesati kroz Makedoniju," Pešut 2010). For all the interest in adopting "Western" market practices in order to realize a Croatian state and music industry on equal temporal and geographical standing with normative Europe, tamburaši in Croatia also perceived superiority to the south and east in musical ability as well as in commercial musical appeal. Pešut explained that, while skilled, his band's vocalist and Croatian musicians in general could not compete with Bosnian singers, and so they relied on their Slavonian repertoire to distinguish themselves from Bosnian and Herzegovinan performers. Should Berde Band attempt to incorporate Bosnian singing technique into

its performances they would do so at risk of disaffecting not only Croatian fans (who either preferred the original repertoire and style of these bands or would hold them to the high standards of Halid Bešlić), but also Croats in Herzegovina who would expect proper Slavonian performances when paying for bands to come from Croatia.

Pop stardom and commercial success continue to elude all but a few musicians in the tambura scene. Perhaps the one band that was able to build a truly professional music career in tambura music, Zlatni Dukati (now called Najbolji Hrvatski Tamburaši), did so largely by gaining the affection of the Croatian public and army (Bonifačić 1998:138) and the support of president Franjo Tuđman's Croatian Democratic Party (Baker 2010:60). This band's activities have diminished considerably in the past ten years, and the niche that they left open to succeeding ensembles has narrowed considerably. A small number of tambura ensembles such as the band Gazde has combined elements of Croatian pop bands (mainly the use of drums and specific repertoire) with their playing of tamburas. Gazde have achieved noteworthy success playing concerts in Zagreb, though they have yet to rival Škoro and other popular singers who have performed to tambura accompaniment but have staked out individual careers. Other bands are currently experimenting with incorporating repertoire and techniques from Western European, Russian, and southern Balkan classical music traditions (such as the ensemble Opus Trio, based in Otočac near Lika) and still others with jazz and ragtime (such as Zagreb's Kvartet Corona). Their ventures have found more critical acclaim than commercial success, however, and bands that seek steady musical employment still must rely on standard Croatian/ Slavonian repertoire.

Such attempts at hybrid musical styles raise the issue of genre in the reception of tambura music. The tamburaši with whom I spoke about the importance of pioneering new approaches to tambura performance conceptualized their endeavors for me as attempts to "update," "modernize," or otherwise "move on" with their tambura music (Pešut 2010; Škoro 2011b; Tonkić 2010). They did not express a desire to locate within hybridity itself an empowering "third space" for innovation (Bhabha 1990:211) or an opportunity to *curate* the otherwise unknown and unappreciable musics of subalterns (Taylor 2007:142–43, 160). Certainly their emphasis on the tambura and activities associated with it ("tamburanje"—see note 10) over particular canons of songs evinced a preoccupation with a "genre" defined primarily by the use and sound of Croatia's "national instrument." Other instruments or musical styles that they brought to their projects were thus quickly subsumed into the category of tambura music, hence Škoro's continuing tendency to rank in the tambura charts despite "moving on" and utilizing

the instrument relatively very little in his songs since 1998 (Škoro 2010).

However, the tambura's status as a "national instrument" ties it not only to patriotism but to the folk music of Slavonia. As Škoro (2011) noted, many listeners have grown tired of hearing songs (whether old or newly written) "about pigs and cows," and have come to associate the music with a degree of backwardness far more extreme than any "outdated" economic policy. Škoro's fans may join him in singing short sets of well-known patriotic tambura songs from the war years, but many of them attend for his more recent pop/rock hits and are less concerned with "new" ventures in tambura songwriting and performance. Efforts on the parts of tamburaši to pioneer and "move on" with the music, while important for competing for the attention of established fans and patrons in a saturated market, may have little effect on those for whom the mere sound of the instrument connotes a genre that they associate with rural, conservative lifestyles.

The two perspectives that Croatian tamburaši gain through performing in Croatia and its intimates offer no easy insights on how to turn higher profits. The positioning of Croatia in the middle leaves musicians feeling more in stasis than in transition: the current recession has erased many hopes that, in the near future, Croatia can simply continue to improve its economy and fulfill its development upon entering the European Union. Musicians recognize a number of possible musical approaches throughout the territories in which they work but see no clear direction forward toward greater profitability. Performing in Croatia's intimates has fostered constructions of Croatia as a musical center and established reliable networks of patronage for Croatian bands, but has done nothing to urge the state to reward these bands monetarily or otherwise recognize their centrality to its own efforts. In this state of in-betweenness, musicians do what they can do: skirt the law and officialdom, play with the ambiguities of balkanism to continue securing gigs in Croatia and its intimates, enjoy the artistry and comradeship of their practice when they can, and take all the unpaid work accompanying pop stars they can find.

Notes

1. Croatian rock band Prljavo Kazalište reportedly had 22,400 fans in attendance at the hall's first concert on January 17th, 2009 (Ćužić 2009).

2. "Pjesma koja više nije moja, nego vaša" (Miroslav Škoro's introduction of the song as I transcribed it in my fieldnotes at the Arena Zagreb concert on November 20th, 2009).

3. It has been common to translate "tamburaš" (a player of a traditional tambura chordophone—plural "tamburaši") into English as "tamburitzan." However, "tamburitzan" comes from the diminutive term for the instrument, "tamburica," and is largely associated with the Duquesne Tamburitzans (Duquesne University's dance and music ensemble based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that primarily performs traditional music of Southeastern Europe) and the junior Croatian- and Serbian-American tambura ensembles that feed into it. Tambura

players in Croatia often use "tamburica" as a term of endearment for their instrument but see outsiders' use of it as a condescending and belittling term for the system of instruments and musical practice in general. Due to this somewhat negative connotation of the word "tamburica" I have chosen to avoid translating "tamburaš" as "tamburitzan." A suitable English equivalent might be "tamburist," but for the sake of clarity I have used "tambura player" or the original Croatian words "tamburaš" and "tamburaši."

4. He performed almost exclusively with tamburaši from 1989 through 1997, and has performed with his band of drums, acoustic/electric guitars, electric bass, and keyboard since 1998.

5. I am grateful to the American Council of Learned Societies for funding a year of research in Croatia through a Dissertation Research Fellowship in East European Studies. This fellowship allowed me to conduct participant observation and archival research in Croatia as well as in Austria, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Serbia from July, 2009 through June, 2010. I also wish to acknowledge the Association for Recorded Sound Collections, whose Research Grant financed additional interviews (particularly those with Miroslav Škoro) and archival work in Zagreb, Croatia in March and April, 2011.

6. Mihael Ferić's new book on Croatian tambura music is the most current source on the history of tambura orchestras and their spread throughout the Croatian lands (Ferić 2011). See also Andrić (1958) and March (1984).

7. Serbs and Roma played tambura quite actively in Croatian territory up through 1991 but only Roma musicians (many of whom live in Vojvodina and travel into Croatia to perform in bars and restaurants on the weekends) had fully reestablished themselves on the Slavonian tambura scene by the time of my fieldwork. The Serb tambura ensemble Vučedolski Zvuci, which operated in conjunction with the Serbian cultural society Prosvjeta in Vukovar (in Yugoslav-occupied Eastern Croatia until 1998), proclaimed itself the only consistently assembled and active Serb tambura band in Croatia, and although I sought for evidence of others I never succeeded in locating another such ensemble.

8. For information on how politicians and state radio programming constructed the tambura as Croatia's national instrument (to the exclusion of other countries and ethnic groups with strong tambura traditions, as well as of other prominent Croatian traditional instruments), see Pettan (1998). Also, see Bonifačić (1998) on the role of Zlatni Dukati in the war of independence and on their involvement with the Croatian Democratic Party.

9. He also referred to himself as a "Tamburaš koji to nije" ("a tamburaš who isn't one") and a "tamburaš među zabavnjacima i zabavnjak među tamburašima" ("a tamburaš among party-music people and a party-music person among tamburaši") and noted that he straddled dualities such as these his entire life (Škoro 2010:11, 191).

10. *Nacionalist* and *nacionalistički* ("nationalist" and "nationalistic") are highly charged words in Croatia that, when applied to musicians, connote specific repertoires of songs that Ustaša and other Croatian supporters of Germany's National Socialists utilized in their bid for separation from Yugoslavia during World War II. Although nationalism in the more general sense plays a role in the tambura music scenes in which I conducted this research, most tamburaši construct their personae and compositions around the conception of *patrioti* ("patriots") performing *domoljubne pjesme* ("songs for the love of the home[land]"). In order to avoid confusion, I use the word "patriotic" throughout this article to refer to musical practices and ensembles for which support and love of their country are primary characteristics and/or motivations (but which do not incorporate these WWII-era songs).

11. Many tamburaši whom I interviewed during my fieldwork in Croatia boasted of the

tambura's suitability for "all" styles of music. In fact, what many tamburaši claimed to love most was the instrument itself, rather than any particular bands, songs, or song styles. In 2009 and 2010 I heard a number of prominent tamburaši refer fondly and humorously to what they do as "tamburanje," a gerund form of the invented verb "tamburati" ("to tambura"). This verb itself derives from a play on the fact that "-aš" can be both a suffix meaning "one who plays" (thus, "primaš" is "one who plays prim tambura") and the second person, singular ending of verbs with the infinitive ending "-ati" (thus, "sviraš" means "you play," and, by extension, "tamburaš" means "you tambura"). "Tamburanje" ("tambur-ing"), as they explained it, consisted not only of performing in bands or orchestras but of playing for themselves and for/with their friends, of listening to other musicians, of writing songs, and of partaking more generally in the celebrated (if sometimes financially unsustainable) merriment of the tamburaš lifestyle. This emphasis on music as activity, performance, and lifestyle rather than as a static cultural object or text resonates strongly with Christopher Small's (1998) idea of *musicking*.

12. The English term "marketing" has become a part of common parlance in Croatia. Škoro switched often and with evident ease between English and Croatian in the interview, and used the English term "marketing" in both languages (rather than the Croatian equivalent, "tržništvo"). He used the Croatian verb "cijeniti" ("to value") to explain his conceptualization of this term.

13. Škoro added that one reason that he values Homoky and Grcevich (and likes them personally) is that they play for love of the music and not just for money. Indeed, in a phone conversation with Grcevich a few days before he performed in Škoro's February, 2011, concerts near Toronto, Ontario, the Pittsburgh-born tamburaš volunteered to me that he had not discussed payment with the singer, but that he was sure that they would work something out. He emphasized that other matters (accompanying his longtime collaborator and friend, playing with other talented musicians, and seeing other Croatian friends from Canada and Croatia) were more important to him (Grcevich 2011). It was just Grcevich's prioritization of playing over money (the recognition of tambura's non-monetary value) in concerts that (somewhat paradoxically) Škoro would claim six weeks later to value highly enough to reward monetarily. Both musicians were clearly concerned that I understand that their motivations extend beyond personal finances, and one can of course view their statements as deliberate attempts to construct and convey their personae as artistic and not merely entrepreneurial in the context of conversations in which I stated an interest in the economics of tambura performance. While it would be naïve to simply take these statements at face value, the regularity with which these and other musicians repeated such sentiments to me evinced a consistent dedication to these constructs that surely informed their personal and financial relationships with one another (and not only with an American researcher).

14. The difficulty with CD sales extends beyond struggling tambura bands to some of the most popular musicians and bands currently active in recording and performing in Croatia. Škoro himself complained of significant drops in CD sales in his recent autobiography, claiming that the CD, as both a medium of transmitting songs and a musical concept (an "album"), "has died" because fans can simply download songs that they like from the internet for free (Škoro 2010:218-19). That the internet has posed a similar challenge to foreign bands such as the Rolling Stones, however, did not enter into Marko's comparative analysis of Croatian and foreign marketing systems.

15. Butković estimated that they had earned between 100 and 150 euros per person per night on the 2007 tour, whereas, at a private party in Croatia they could each typically earn over 300 euros per night, depending on tips.

16. These figures represent averages based on financial arrangements that I discussed with several relatively obscure bands (those with no recordings or significant concert appearances to their credit at the time of this research) such as Hrvatski Sokol and Graničari, on the one hand, and those of well-established bands (those that have recorded many CDs, had hit songs play on the radio, and appeared with popular singers as Škoro) such as Berde Band and Ravnica. In my experience, the latter bands could often charge twice the fee of the lesser-known groups, although the larger size of ensembles such as Berde Band (with seven members, rather than the more common five or six) often meant that they individually earned about 50% more than a member of an obscure tambura band would for a comparable event.

17. Tamburaši can, for example, deduct expenses incurred while playing, such as the cost of replacement strings. By far the greatest reductions, however, were achieved through illegal actions that I am not at liberty to discuss here.

18. "The children of two brothers," as I once heard Zoran Mileta—a tamburaš of mixed Serbian and Croatian parentage raised in Vukovar but living with his Serbian wife in the largely Croat town of Parndorf (*Pandrof*) in the Austrian Burgenland since the war—metaphorically refer to them (Mileta 2010).

19. Slovenia and Vojvodina (northern Serbia) participate in somewhat similar negotiations of Balkan/Austro-Hungarian status but with much less ambiguity due to their proximity and strong cultural ties to (respectively) the Germanic lands and Serbia.

20. In addition to Marko's comments about finding ways to reduce the percentage of their income that went to taxes, I was privilege to a discussion that Damir Butković led with several members of the city tambura orchestra in Slavonski Brod in which they bragged that none of them ever has to pay for anything related to music (I am not at liberty to provide more specific details) (Butković 2010).

21. It is important to note at this point that the universally non-salaried members of the city orchestra in Slavonski Brod (most of whom also play in semiprofessional bands) as well most tamburaši in Croatia have motivations other than income for playing tambura music. While this article focuses on economic concerns and strategies, it is worth mentioning that most also claim love of the music, artistic excellence, and interacting within a group of peers of their own (almost exclusively male) gender as primary factors.

22. The Croatian Fraternal Union of North America, for example, organized and sent donations of clothing, medical supplies, and money to Croatian victims of the war. By its own estimates, the value of these donations totaled more than $150,000,000. For more information on its activities, consult the "About" link off of the main Croatian Fraternal Union website: www.croatianfraternalunion.org (Croatian Fraternal Union 2011). Also, see Paul Hockenos (2003) on instances of expatriate support of the "Balkan wars."

23. See Kardov (2007) on the role of occupied territories on memory and the social imaginary during the war.

24. This sometimes happens through state-sponsored performances in foreign embassies, although by and large tamburaši perform abroad without either the support or knowledge of the Croatian Ministry of Culture. Hrvatski Sokol in particular has played for a number of embassy events in Spain and Slovenia, work that is indicative of their association with the national sport and culture organization from which they take their name.

25. Music and lyrics used with permission of the author (Škoro 2011a).

26. I transcribed the music for this example from a televised recording of Škoro's Nov. 20th, 2009, concert, beginning at the second verse of the song "Ne Dirajte Mi Ravnicu" (approximately 1 minute and 25 seconds from the beginning of the song). At present, one can view

and listen to this recording online by searching for the title, artist, and venue (Arena Zagreb) and clicking on one of several uploaded versions. Note that this is not a full transcription of the song in terms of either length or orchestration; rather, it presents the lead vocals, bass (berda), harmony (kontra), and the two main melodic tambura parts as played by many of the 20 tamburaši that evening (but excluding some of the individually improvised runs), as these suffice for the argument I develop in this section.

27. It is important to note that newly composed folk music (especially the songs of the "New Wave" such as those of Halid Bešlić) is now well established and enjoys a following by many who disdain turbofolk music, against which the members of Berde Band still vehemently position their music.

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