

Article received on 11th October 2012

Article accepted on 24th October 2012

UDC: 788.91(497.11)"19"

316.722:784.4(497.11)

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MARGINALITY AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES: LOCATING THE BAGPIPE MUSIC OF SERBIA

This doctoral dissertation examines the *gajde* (bagpipe) music tradition of Serbia in the context of the increasing marginality of such cultural identities (i.e. musician, performer) over the period of rapid modernisation since 1945.¹ It is ar-

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¹ Doctoral dissertation *Marginality and Cultural Identities: Locating the Bagpipe Music of Serbia* was made at the University of Durham, United Kingdom, under supervision of prof. dr Max Paddison and dr Simon Mills. The *viva voce* defense was held on March 19th 2012 at the Department of Music in Durham, with members of the Examiners Committee prof. dr Martin Clayton, prof. dr Kevin Dawe and dr Simone Tarsitani.

gued that the process of marginalisation of *gajde* music in the second half of the twentieth century reached a critical point where social and ideological developments intertwined and resulted in radical changes to the cultural and musical identity of this tradition. The gradual decline in the number of the *gajde* performers, contextual changes, political influences and the dissolution of traditional values led to a stage where a once central and popular musical practice became marginalised and relocated to relative cultural obscurity. In the author's endeavour to base the research on empirical facts, such as sound and archival materials from 1912 (*Béla Bartók, Laura Boulton, collections from the Institute of Musicology SASA etc.*) up to the present day, and on his fieldwork materials, the problem of marginalization required a radical view and survey of other contextual and sociopolitical factors which highly influenced this cultural practice and identities within. The research into the process of marginalisation itself, as a dynamic category, served to generate a theoretical dialogue between ethnomusicological and sociological discourses, the individual experiences of the performers of *gajde* music, fieldwork data, and other relevant sources that include archival materials and personal statements. The articulation of distinctive features of this musical tradition, such as the technical

features of the music-making process itself, performance practice and its function in different localities, formal characteristics of the music, its expressive potential, and the kinds of meanings attributed to it, provide a space for discussion and understanding of the fundamental characteristics of this music and its context. This also serves to raise a wider range of issues regarding musical identities and their location within culture. The theoretical framework consists of central variables such as marginality, identity, location, moving to more delicate questions of nature and culture, mediation and case-specific and music-oriented concepts and matters. The binding tissue represents an intervening variable, the interchangeable voice of an author and of his informants or subjects (defined as enunciation). Therefore, the dissertation itself extends the limits of exclusive ethnomusicology and builds a dialogue in a complex theoretical framework, following sociological discourses – from Robert E. Park and Everett Stonequist to contemporary theories of the postcolonial studies of Jung Young Lee and Homi Bhabha, the cultural theories of Richard Sennett and Michel Foucault's epistemology. In the given terms, this study represents a multifaceted plateau where ethnomusicology and conventional research procedures meets complex narratives of current culture theories and the performative identities of the research subjects as well, resulting with an authentic discussion of music anthropology.

The study opens with a general introduction which draws on key guidelines for research after which the chapter *Locating the Marginal* is designed to review the essential sociological literature on marginal-

ity, to provide a clearer spectrum of the interpretation of this term from the source studies, and to propose protocols which will be followed as a result of adaptation to music material that also differs from the current research on musical marginality. The next chapters investigate music in various conditions and contexts. Firstly, chapter 3, entitled *The Servant* takes a more theoretical perspective focusing on *gajde* music in a ritual context, and at the same time provides some of the main features of *gajde* music identities, such as relations to belief, nature, music identity, authority, ethnicity, gender, etc. through a specific historical perspective. The next step, in the chapter *The Craftsman*, discusses the facts, identification and engagement with music, proposes the concept of the musical craft, examines experience and music content under the notions of knowledge, all placing music in a central position and interpreting it with a more analytical approach. The last two stages of the process of change, *The Artisan* (Chapter 4) and *The Artist* (Chapter 5) empirically argue the conditions in which *gajde* music began to shift from a central position, and eventually became a marginalised cultural form. Furthermore, the last chapters also bring interpretations into a more anthropological focus. The main cause of that interpretative position is the current, actual state of this musical tradition and fieldwork was done to investigate this actual condition. The last mentioned chapters are also significant for the study because they deal with individual perspectives and point out some of the main factors that caused change and marginalisation on a larger scale.

It is the argument of this dissertation that the concept of marginality offers a way

of understanding identities that are in a state of flux, particularly in the collision between tradition and modernity. It examines the kinds of fundamental meanings that traditional music creates, for example in relation to nature, and it follows significant aspects of the music-making process as a distinctive type of human creativity, regarding music as a specific craft. This study also provides a space for understanding the broader social, cultural and political conditions in which *gajde* practice devel-

oped, identifying the polarities that arise between the traditional and the modern, the shifts between centres and margins, and the politics that have informed these processes. However, while the debate itself follows *gajde* as one of the most distinctive music instruments in the Balkans, it also uses the same as a metaphor, trying to capture the broader and complex social and cultural processes of one specific location and development of local cultural identities.