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‘Hopa!’: Exploring Balkanology in South African Popular culture

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities,
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Music.

Johannesburg, July 2013

Declaration

I declare that this study is my own original work. Where use is made of the work of others it is indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Music at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Johannesburg, 22 March 2013

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I never quite imagined my Balkanology project would be as rewarding as it was.
As a musician and an individual, it has brought me home, to the Balkans, through music and beautiful memories.

I have to thank a few people for this: the Wits Music Department for their encouragement, and Dr Grant Olwage and Dr Susan Harrop-Allin for their amazing research course.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of a popular music culture in South Africa called Balkanology. The research examines Balkanology as a club culture, explores its constituent elements, documents and then interprets Balkanology as a musical scene in South Africa. I examine Balkanology, its complexities and its social relevance, practices and processes. The thesis addresses four main questions: Why is Balkan music chosen in particular? In what ways does the Balkanology music scene imagine 'the Balkan'? Who are its participants and why are they attracted to Balkanology? How is a culture defined by exploring musical and cultural references?

The research is located broadly within ethnomusicology and was conducted using ethnographic research methods, including participant observation and informal interviews. In addition, the research related to my performances as a vocalist, where I explore different aspects of being Balkan and Balkan-inspired music, to see how composers have used Eastern European and Middle Eastern music, as well as how it is appropriated and integrated into western art music, and contemporary popular music.

I first provide background context for post-communist Eastern European popular music, outlining a genealogy of this music and how Balkanology music is sourced, as well as the way in which it draws from these popular music genres. Descriptions of several Balkanology events and analysis of some of the music played, and the semiotics of visual and performance elements of Balkanology form the body of the thesis. The findings from the research are integrated with literature pertaining to the ways in which Balkan music has been interpreted in popular music, and appropriated or re-imagined in Balkanology specifically. In addressing the question of what Balkanology means in South Africa, particularly what it means to its participants, I use the following interpretative categories: Balkanology as "little culture" (McCracken 1997); exoticism and gypsyness; nostalgia and the vibe; and an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983). The findings are that Balkanology represents a space where Balkan musical and cultural origins are transported

and interpreted locally in a South African context. I conclude that this is a unique form of electronic dance music that uses Balkan music to create an "imagined culture" of the exoticised gypsy and their music, combined with theatrical elements and parodies of Balkan images and people.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ..... **VIII**
CHAPTER 1 ..... **1**
HOPA!: EXPLORING BALKANOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICAN POPULAR CULTURE **1**
1. AIM 1
2. RATIONALE 4
3. METHODOLOGY 6
CHAPTER 2 ..... **10**
THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW **10**
1. POPULAR MUSIC AND CLUB CULTURES 10
Popular music 10
Club culture 12
2. WORLD MUSIC AND BALKAN INFLUENCES 13
World music 13
Balkan music 15
Musical hybridity: Balkan pop and Gypsy music 16
3. GYPSIES AND A THEORY OF THE 'IMAGINED' 17
Disco polo, turbo folk and neo folk 17
The Balkan re-enacted: gypsies and exoticism 18
An 'Imagined community' 18
CHAPTER 3 ..... **20**
THE BALKANS AND POPULAR MUSIC **20**
1. DEFINING THE BALKANS 20
2. POST-COMMUNISM (LATE 1980S) 22
3. BALKAN POP MUSIC POST-COMMUNISM 23
4. THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE BALKAN 26
5. NEO-BALKAN MUSIC AND MUSICAL HYBRIDITY 27

CHAPTER 4 ..... **31**
BALKANOLOGY AS AN EVENT **31**
1. BALKANOLOGY AS A SOUTH AFRICAN DANCE PHENOMENON 32
2. HOPA, BALKANOLOGY IS BACK! PARTY ON THE 12TH JUNE 2010, 44 STANLEY AVE JOHANNESBURG 34
3. FIDDLE EAST, 15 OCTOBER 2011 AT CARFAX 38

CHAPTER 5 ..... **40**
THE SIGNS AND SOUNDS OF BALKANOLOGY **40**
1. VISUAL SIGNS 41
2. MOVEMENT AS A SIGN 48
3. AURAL SIGNS IN BALKANOLOGY'S MUSIC 49
CHAPTER SIX **58**
THE BALKAN IMAGINED **58**
1. BALKANOLOGY AS LITTLE CULTURE 59
2. BALKANOLOGY'S APPEAL FOR PARTICIPANTS 59
3. EXOTICISM 61
4. CONSTRUCTING GYPSYNESS 62
5. NOSTALGIA, THE VIBE AND THE ATMOSPHERE 67
6. BALKANOLOGY AS AN 'IMAGINED COMMUNITY' 70
7. PERFORMING BALKAN, AND BALKAN-INSPIRED MUSIC 72

BIBLIOGRAPHY **74**

APPENDIX 84
VOCAL RECITAL PROGRAMMES

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. 'Hopa! Balkanology is back! An online advert for a Balkanology party 31
Figure 2. Balkanology's decor: a hung washing line 43
Figure 3. Gypsy dress: fake moustaches 45
Figure 4. Musical extract: *Ushti ushti baba* 52

CHAPTER 1

Hopa!: Exploring Balkanology in South African Popular Culture

1. Aim

My research is a study of a phenomenon of popular music culture in South Africa, called 'Balkanology'. This research aims to examine Balkanology as a club culture, to explore its constituent elements and to document and interpret Balkanology as a musical scene (Bennett and Peterson 2004) in South Africa. I will examine Balkanology, its complexities and its social relevance, practices and process.

Although the use of Balkan folk music in the contemporary dance music scene is not new, the term Balkanology is a specifically South African creation. The term 'Bakanology' was coined by Israeli born Ma'or Harris (a.k.a. DJ Ma'original) and the first party in South Africa was held in Cape Town in 2006. This research aims to discover what attracts people to these parties as a "musical scene" (Swiss et al. 1998) and then to explore the cultural relevance and meanings for its participants, through undertaking an ethnographic study of the event. The research will further explore Balkanology's historical associations, in order to understand the cultures and their history, as presented in the musical form of folk melody and instrumentation.

The term Balkanology derives from the term Balkan, used to refer to a number of countries in Eastern Europe.[1] Balkanology parties are essentially electronic dance music events and are DJ-based, sometimes with live musicians. This research will interrogate why there is a fascination with Balkan music and culture in South Africa, and what

[1]The Balkans refers to: Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Turkey, and a very small part of Italy. One could also refer to this particular part of Europe as Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe however includes countries such as Russia and Czech Republic as well as the countries designated above as the Balkans (Hammond 2004).

defines this music scene, by exploring a range of music, dance, decor and visual elements associated with the Balkans. Despite their popularity, many of these elements have little to do with the contemporary realities of social and cultural life in the Balkans. Thus, it seems as though Balkanology represents an imagined or created idea of the Balkans. This study uses Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined community" (1983) to explore what is imagined in Balkanology parties, in what way, and with what result.

This study asks four main questions: Why has this scene adopted an interest in Balkan music in particular? In what ways does the Balkanology music scene imagine the Balkan? Who are its participants, and why are they attracted to Balkanology? And how do you define a culture by exploring musical and cultural references? I am hoping to address these questions both through written ethnographic research as well as through a series of vocal performance recitals which I present for this degree.

The research takes two forms: written report in the form of a short dissertation, and a practical demonstration in the form of two vocal recitals. Using these different modes of enquiry I will explore how Balkan and Eastern European music continuums are appropriated and re-imagined. Through performing and researching Balkan and Eastern European music, I will ask how the 'authentic' Balkan folk tune is incorporated and reworked in the hybrid musical forms as well as the 'imaginary' of Balkanology. My research paper and vocal recitals thus use different mediums to reflect on the practice of Balkanology in South Africa, and are thematically linked. My recitals take Balkan sounds and Eastern European music as a starting point for exploring how a range of composers incorporate and interpret Balkan folk tunes, as well as their own idea of the Balkan or Eastern European sound. The choice of programme is designed to examine different ways in which Balkan musical influences are used in a range of genres and styles, from folk songs, to art songs and contemporary pop. The choice of songs further explores different vocal techniques used for these respective genres.

Recital one explores the historical aspect: the use of original folk music in art songs and late Romantic arias. This recital demonstrates the use of Balkan traditional folk music elements in western art music. I perform works by Dvorak, Kodaly, Gotovac, Mussorgsky and Smetana. The programme opens with two folk songs from Monte Negro

and Kosovo, arranged for two voices and sung a cappella. By opening with these folk songs, I intend to demonstrate the "authentic" folk material that these composers have incorporated in their work. The art songs then use certain melodic and rhythmic elements and motifs, as well as poetic ideas and dance forms from these folk songs, interpreting them in different ways. I chose these composers for the way in which they introduced Balkan folk music to western art music. These works allow me to explore different aspects of Balkan sound, both musically and interpretatively.

The second recital explores the imaginary and sampled musical ideas that are appropriated, reworked and revisited in works of contemporary composers. I will include songs of Goran Bregovic (best known for his score of the film *Underground*); South African performer and composer Marcus Wyatt, with lyrics I wrote inspired by a Bosnian folk song *Izvorna* ('From the source'), Fanfare Ciocarlia (a twelve piece Romani brass band) and Marta Sebestyen.[2]

Both recitals also function as a reflection of my own practice as a performer. I am Balkan by birth, am fluent in my mother tongue (Croatian) and I understand most other Balkan and Eastern European languages and dialects. My musical upbringing started early and I have performed a wide range of music, from classical to contemporary music genres. Some pieces were chosen for content; some because of the way the composers used the 'authentic' folk tune; some because of the mood; and others because of specific vocal techniques and use of rhythms specific to the Balkans and Eastern Europe. These multiple interpretations of a Balkan sound continue through to sampled music of the live acts like Balkan Beat Box, Shazalakazoo, DJ Beirut and DJ Shantel, which are played at Balkanology parties.

[2] Sebestyen's mother was a composer and a student of Kodaly. Marta Sebestyen is better known for featuring on Deep Forrest's *Boheme* album, which received a Grammy award for *Best World Music Album* (1996).

2. Rationale

This research arose from my personal involvement and interest in Balkanology, as a Croatian by birth, a musician, and my participation in Balkanology parties as a performer.

My first Balkan party experience was in Johannesburg in 2007, when I was invited to a party by a friend working for 'JHB/Live', the organisers for the event. That evening I walked into a small club near Mary Fitzgerald Square in Newtown, Johannesburg that was full to capacity, with a noisy crowd dancing to Balkan folk music. From my own experience participating in Balkanology parties since then, a number of compelling questions arose about why South Africans were fascinated and drawn to Balkan music.

As a musical scene, Balkanology in South Africa is relatively new. The first party was held in Cape Town in 2006, and the party concept has developed since then with different themes including such as 'The Serbian wedding', 'War and peace' and 'The good the bad and the Balkan'. There are usually six parties per year (in Johannesburg) and participants range in age and racial background. These popular dance party events are mostly advertised on Facebook, through the Balkanology group events.

My work focuses on a local practice of Balkanology in Johannesburg and is limited to examining two parties from an ethnographic perspective. Dance and club culture is significant in South African society and although my research maps out one particular scene, I hope it also opens the pathway for future research and academic coverage of this fascinating field.

Balkanology in South Africa has helped to revive Balkan folklore and music, away from its birthplace, by introducing it to the local party scene. The fact that there seems to be a possible gap, especially in academic writing, on popular dance music scenes in South Africa, opens up a potentially wide theoretical terrain for me to explore and interrogate issues concerning musical re-emergence in hybrid popular cultural forms. Internationally, writers on popular music such as Middleton (1990), Taylor (2001) and Frith (1998) have written and theorised the social influences on music. These authors

also emphasise the necessity to do fieldwork in popular music analysis and to access popular music's meanings for its participants. The fascination with Balkan folklore in the South African popular music club scene is worthy of research and prompts the question in local music practices of the "social, political and economic agendas of those [who] promot[e] them" (Cohen 1993). Most research on South African popular music tends to focus on historical coverage of artists, bands and musical styles as well as fusions of both traditional South African and Western music. South African literature tends to focus on traditional and neo-traditional styles, rather than on different popular dance music forms. Since 1994 however, there has been particular interest and research into the emerging forms of South African *kwaito,* hip-hop and house music (Coplan 1994; Allen 2004; Swartz 2003; and Steingo 2011). This ethnographic research on Balkanology aims to contribute to the body of academic writing on popular dance and club musics.[3]

Dance music and club culture tend not to receive sustained attention in the academy.[4] Although dance and club culture DJs manifest as part of popular music culture and modern society as a whole, they are "not taken seriously" as such (Frith 2007). The lack of ethnographic research on popular music locally therefore justifies the necessity for this research.[5]

My two recitals will explore the Balkan and Eastern European sound vocally and contribute to deeper understanding thereof, and aims to find out how performing music enables a deeper understanding of a particular musical culture. Performance can be a way of research, a way of examining manifestations of the "Balkan" in music (in multiple ways) by exploring sound and content in the continuum that extends between folk and contemporary popular music. Performance as a new form of creative research allows me to relate to the Balkan sound in a way that written research cannot. As a performer, I am able to hear, feel and sing a particular sound, whereas written research can only interpret it. I believe my research will broaden the general knowledge of popular music

[3]After extensive searching, to the best of my knowledge no research has been undertaken on Balkanology in South Africa.

[4] However, the origins and the development of E.D.M, acid house, rave, trance and club music are extensively discussed in Reynolds (1999) and Taylor (2001).

[5] Susan Harrop-Allin's long essay titled *Psychedelic Trance: the genealogy of an electronic dance music'*(2007) is close to my research, as it focuses on a specific electronic dance music scene in South Africa, although not on the advent of Balkan music on this scene.

in South Africa, as well as contribute towards the documentation and awareness of a South African dance scene.

3. Methodology

My research aims to find out how Balkanology as a musical experience is created, within a specific socio-cultural context; therefore it implies using ethnographic methods. Documenting Balkanology parties and examining its meanings for participants will require fieldwork. To do this I attended two Balkanology parties, observing, participating and interviewing participants. I conducted my research over a period of one year, focusing on Johannesburg and two Balkanology parties in particular. To explore the meanings of Balkanology as culture and music, I undertook field research through participant observation; interviews and conversations with participants; as well as documenting and recording the music played at Balkanology parties. I used the audio and video recording data for further analysis as well as fort transcribing some of the music for analysis of instrumentation, melody and rhythm.

Ethnographic research necessitates fieldwork involving participant observation that will result in a "thick description" of a performance (Geertz 1973). Participant observation is a method that concerns interacting with subjects in the field and a direct observation of events. Participating can address the problems of "us and them" that arise from the observation and representation of others in ethnomusicology research (Ellen 1984). Participant observation will enable me to become a "cultural insider", which is necessary to understand Balkanology as a musical culture and a popular music scene. As a participant observer, I aim to gain insight into Balkanology from an "emic" point of view (Qureshi 1987; Fetterman 1989).

To document a musical event as field research, one needs correct preparation. I will base my research design on Clarke and Clarke's sample plan used for documenting vernacular musics in South Yorkshire:

> The plan should sketch the main questions of the research, list known resources, summarize factors that will affect the conduct of the research, and note other conditions that will have to be met for the research to be satisfactorily conducted (2004: 18).

I will apply Clarke and Clarke's research plan to document all aspects of the parties: the décor; visual aspects and dancing; the kind of music being played; the different instruments played by live performers; how DJs produce the music and who the participants are. However, Clarke also underlines one of the weaknesses of field research, and participant observation in particular, saying that "although the field looks [to be] a relatively easy one to gain access to as a participant and observer, its very informality may make it difficult to penetrate deeper" (2004: 18). One of the factors that influenced the way in which my research was conducted, however, was the unpredictability of the attendance of dance music events. Also, I was aware that my own participation in the scene, as well as being a native Balkan, inevitably shaped my interpretation. However, the advantage of being part of this musical culture helped me to describe this scene in more detail than someone without my musical experience might be able to do. My personal involvement also gave me direct access to document these musical events. In some ways, the research was self-reflexive as I am involved in the Balkanology scene in South Africa, and thus contribute aspects of "reflexive-ethnography" (Davies, 1999).[6] Furthermore, my own recitals have helped me to explore the Balkan and Eastern European sound in a way that written data cannot do. Therefore, my practice as a performer forms an integral part of the research methodology.

I undertook a "hermeneutic analysis" of the music played at Balkanology parties (Bent and Pople 2000). I have used this method for its efficacy in interpretative analysis. I will be analysing the Balkan influences, including modes of dance. Focusing on the music's Balkan inflections (in the form of samples or "sonic signs" of what is Balkan), I intended to discover its hermeneutic meaning for the participants of these events. As the pieces are not written down, analysis involved partial transcription in a form of a lead chart consisting of form, keys and instrumentation. To do this I listened to the CDs and other audio sources available to me via the Balkanology DJs, or via other resources available on the internet (for example, DJ Beirut's *Gulag orkestar* (2006), Fangare Ciorcarlia's *BaroBiao* (1999) and Goran Bregovic's *Underground* soundtrack (1995). The focus of observation and analysis was examining the Balkan influence in the music played, as well as dance styles and song texts. The sound analysis of "sound structures with the

[6] See Charlotte Aull Davies' *Reflexive ethnography: a guide to researching selves and others* (1999).

patterns of human actions in specific social situations" (Seeger 1987, quoted in Clarke and Clarke 2004) in my view relates to the "social situation" of my research project, the Balkanology music scene and the two parties under discussion.

A further method I used was interviewing, which, unlike participant observation, provides another person's perspective. In the pre-research stage I conducted a few informal interviews with Ma'or, the party organiser (an Israeli who lives and works in Cape Town), Jasmina (a Bosnian immigrant to South Africa) and two party goers (both South Africans, who work in the creative fields of fashion and film). By asking questions such as: "What is Balkanology?", "What is your involvement in the scene?", "Why do you come to Balkanology parties?'' and "What attracts you to the music?" I was able to gain insight into Balkanology. These interviews confirmed that the Balkanology music scene concerns many different, creative musical identities and is not necessarily rooted in nationalistic feelings for Balkan countries, nor an affinity with the "reality" of Balkan countries. I then conducted more unstructured, informal interviews, with what Merriam describes as "open-ended questions, flexible and exploratory, more like a conversation" (1998: 73). This data helped me as a researcher to understand perceptions, attitudes and feelings about Balkanology as "the imagined Balkan", as outlined in the aim of this research.

Interviewees gave their permission to be quoted in this thesis, for the purposes of research, and gave written consent. Ethics clearance was gained from the Wits ethics committee for the above (ethics clearance number WSOA110806).
Video and audio recordings include aural and visual aspects to be viewed multiple times by a researcher. They also provide data available for future researchers to use. I used video recordings and still photographs for later interpretation and analysis of the parties. "Video and photographs provide an extra swathe of data, allowing the researcher to look repeatedly and in detail at aspects of the music event that might never be captured in notation" (Clarke and Clarke 2004: 27).

The product of this qualitative ethnographic research is designed to be "richly descriptive and interpretative" (Geertz 1973: 9). This research focuses on meaning, description of context, understanding and interpretation of its participants involved in

their activities. In short, this kind of research focuses on how people make sense of the world through music.

CHAPTER 2

Theory and Literature review

This research lies broadly in the field of world music and more specifically it intersects with popular music, electronic dance music and club culture in ethnomusicology. There are three bodies of literature relevant to this research: literature on popular music and club/dance cultures; literature on world music and Balkan influences, including specific literature on Balkan popular music and Gypsy music, and Benedict Anderson's theory of the "imagined community" (1991).

1. Popular Music and club cultures

Popular music

The literature discussed here explores approaches to studying and researching popular music. The first four sources are useful for their focus on methodology and its relationship to understanding popular music as a social practice in its social and cultural context.

Sara Cohen's article entitled *Ethnography and popular music studies* (1993) is an argument for adopting an ethnographic approach in popular music studies. Cohen covers two main issues: the ethnographic method, and the concept of locality, arguing that "the literature on popular music is still lacking in ethnography" (1993: 123). Cohen's study of rock bands in Liverpool explores the concept of "locality through music" (ibid.: 131). Cohen used fieldwork to understand local music, spending time living with musicians, participating in and observing their social activities. In my study on Balkanology, "locality" refers to the Balkans or to urban South Africa, respectively. I use Cohen's work as a method for understanding Balkanology within the South African

popular music scene and its local social context. Similarly, I use fieldwork to gain a deeper understanding of the Balkanology scene.

In *Taking popular music seriously* (2007), Simon Frith also advocates for an ethnographic approach as a method to study popular music, stating that "music is the result of the play of social forces" (2007: x). Following Frith's assertion, my research will explore Balkanology as a "social scene" (ibid.) rather than focusing on the musical performance. I aimed to understand Balkanology as more than a "party concept" (so described by one of its party organisers in Johannesburg). Frith's approach to popular music study informs this research in its emphasis on "how music mattered to people rather than what sort of music it was" (ibid.). My research on Balkanology follows the same path, of discovering what Balkan music and Balkanology means to its participants, organisers and DJs.

A further source, *The cultural experience: ethnography in complex society* (Spradley and McCurdy 1972), is an introduction to field-work in the field of anthropology, consisting of various ethnographies of social scenes covered by undergraduate students. Its content is useful as it gives me an idea of how other people conducted their research project. According to Spradley and McCurdy, "the aim of ethnographic semantics is to discover the characteristic ways in which a people categorize code and define their own experience" (1972: viii). Chapter Two of the book introduces the concept of a "cultural scene" (ibid.). As the "focus of ethnographic research", the authors agree that "cultural scenes are closely linked to recurrent social situations" (ibid.). This term is applicable to Balkanology as a vibrant and popular scene in South Africa today. The research asks how Balkanology links to the social dynamics of South African society today and the Johannesburg popular music scene in particular.

In *Kojak: 50 seconds of television music (towards the analysis of popular music),* Philip Tagg focuses on researching popular music and methods of analysis (1979). Tagg's work contributes to an understanding of popular music and tries to improve methods of popular music analysis, distinguishing it from Western classical music analyses. He acknowledges that one of the main problems facing the popular music researcher is the question of source material (scored music for example). This literature provides a

methodological guide for the current study due to the fact that it provides detailed methods and models of musical analyses such as "model of the musical communication process" and "visual message analysis" (ibid: 46,173).

Club culture

The following literature belongs to a body of work on electronic dance music within popular music. *Mapping the beat: Popular music and contemporary theory* (Swiss et al. 1998), is important as it offers a theoretical basis for understanding dance and club music. This book talks of "musical scenes" as being a field in which the search of meaning and identities within the "rituals of everyday life" (ibid.) becomes possible. The Balkanology scene centres around Balkan music, away from the mainstream. The Middle Eastern scales (as well as other modes) used in Balkanology's music are recognised and shared as "sonic signs" among its participants (ibid.). The essays of Swiss et al. document the ways in which popular music is experienced, used and represented.

Bennet and Peterson's *Musical Scenes: Local, translocal and virtual* (2004) distinguish between three types of musical scenes, as the title suggests. They use the term musical scene "to designate the contexts in which clusters of producers, musicians, and fans collectively share their common musical tastes and collectively distinguish themselves from others" (Bennett and Peterson 2004: 1). The authors' further identification of a "local scene" can be applied to Balkanology in South Africa, particularly because of its the emphasis on social activity and specific places where the music happens, as well as the mention of musical signs and dancing that help to distinguish the local scene from others. A local scene they define as:

> a focused social activity that takes place in a delimited space and over a specific span of time in which clusters of producers, musicians and fans realize their common musical taste, collectively distinguishing themselves from others by using music and cultural signs often appropriate from other places but recombined and developed in ways that come to represent the local scene. The focused activity we are interested in here, of course, centers on a particular style of dancing … style of dress, politics and the like (Bennet and Peterson 2004: 8).

I apply the concept of a "local scene" to my research, because the literature sited above s suggests that the music, combined with dancing and musical signs, plus the desire to distinguish the scene from others, are features that create a musical scene. Balkanology musicians or participants share a fascination with the Balkan sound and culture, which binds them in a "musical scene". This suggests that Balkanology is a scene in the same sense as applied by Bennet and Peterson (2004) and Swiss et al. (1998).

2. World music and Balkan influences

A further body of literature relevant to my research relates to world music and the Balkans, that is, on musical studies specifically focusing on music, cultural and historical studies of the Balkans. This research assists with an examination of how and why Balkanology is located within world music literature.

World music

World music is loosely defined and understood as music that is non-Western. However, its definition and genre boundaries are unclear and contested. On one side are academics who, in the early 1960s, circulated the phrase "world music" to "promote the study of musical diversity" (Feld 2000). Steven Feld for example called it a "friendly phrase" (ibid.). The term "world music" was later introduced by the record industry, who saw the commercial potential in marketing "third world music" and sold it as "primitive, exotic, tribal, ethnic, folk, traditional or international" (ibid.: 147). Balkanology and Balkan-influenced music is located in the world music literature as it falls under non-Western musical forms, but is also not 'pure" folk music, because it is often mixed with popular and other forms of music.

World music as a genre and topic of academic attention developed during the 1960s and its mission was to "oppose the dominant tendency" of Western European art music (Feld 2000: 147). Within the different discourses of world music, I use Steven Feld's article *A sweet lullaby for World music* (ibid.: 145) as a basis for approaching Balkanology as "world music". The article describes two aspects, or manifestations of world music: as a discourse and a "contact zone of activities and representations" (ibid.:

154). One of the issues Feld addresses are questions of authenticity or "authentic traditions" and "commercial potential" (ibid.: 148-149). Feld acknowledges the commercial success of 'Sweet lullaby' by Deep Forest (1992) based on a Baegu tune from Northern Malaita titled 'Rorogwela' and sung by Afunakwa. This song became popular once it was sampled to a dance beat (in a 1992 release by Sony). Similarly, most of the folk tunes sampled or re-worked in Balkanology repertoire and Balkan-inspired music would not have gained as much popularity or play if it wasn't for technology and sampling. In this sense, Balkanology may be considered world music, as it follows similar patterns of musical appropriation and reworking as that used by groups like Deep Forest.

In *World music, politics and social change* (1989), Frith and other authors discuss musical hybridity. In her chapter entitled 'Tradition and acculturation', Barber-Kersovan analyses Slovenian youths' fascination with post-Beatles pop, as well as local musicians' attempts to copy the sound:

> The appeal of particular (international) sounds to particular (local) audiences can be explained in terms of homology: music represents the experience and (imaginary) identity of certain social groups not because it is necessarily created by them but because its aural qualities are heard as 'homologous' to their values (1989:71).

The appeal of global sounds to the local audiences whom Barber-Kersovan discusses, speaks directly to Balkanology as well. This source enables me to explore ideas about the social relevance of popular music in non-Western countries in terms of the concept of "acculturation" (Barber-Kersovan cited in Frith 1989: 77). For young Slovenians for example, the lack of public performances for local musicians and the mass media dominated society opened up possibilities for new genres of music and what musicians called "music you make yourself'" (ibid.: 74). Most importantly, two creative avenues took shape from this idea: "traditional" (newly composed Slovenian folk music) and "acculturated musical forms" such as Anglo-Saxon music: beat, rock, and punk (ibid.: 77). I position the Balkanology scene and its music in particular as an "acculturated music form" for reasons Barber-Kersovan mentioned earlier in describing "the appeal of international sounds to local audiences" that it evidences. This research applies Barber-Kersovan's notion that the representatives of acculturated musical forms: "are from

urban, higher social and economic status, more highly educated, media literate, [with] loose family ties, tighter peer groups, [who are] non-conformist [and] in favour of social change" (ibid.). Balkanology's participants as well as its organisers and DJs are the representatives of "acculturated musical forms" and in this sense Barber-Kersovan's work is close to my project.

Balkan music

Peter Manuel's *Popular musics of the non-Western world* (1998) is relevant to this study as one of the chapters specifically focuses on traditional folk music from ex-Yugoslavia. This book provides a general overview of popular musics and therefore provides a historical background. The author describes the developments of popular music in Europe after World War II along with the mixing of traditional styles with Western features. Manuel links this phenomenon to the "transformation of Yugoslav society since 1994" (1998: 136). Manuel's overview provides valuable content regarding this Balkan music's history and character and is comparable to the manifestation of Balkan-inspired music in South Africa.

The literature most closely related to this research includes Mariana Lausevic's *Balkan Fascination: Creating an Alternative Music Culture in America* (1994) in which she explores the world of a group of people (mostly Native American) that call themselves "Balkanites". Her research covers major cities in the U.S.A. and questions America's sense of self in the form of ideas about "cultural identity, ethnicity, art, politics, and social practices in a new nation" (1994: 9). Lausevic studies a similar musical scene as Balkanology, although her work is in large part a historical study. Through her research, Lausevic discovers that most Balkan scene followers are American natives, with hardly any connection to the Balkans, apart from their fascination with its music and folklore. The Balkanites call this experience "virtual tourism" (ibid.), as they feel like they are able to visit Balkan countries and folklore through their music and dance styles. I use the concept of virtual travel through musical experience and apply it to Balkanology in South Africa, examining the extent to which participants consider Balkanology in similar terms.

Musical hybridity: Balkan pop and Gypsy music

In a Balkanology context the idea of "the Gypsy" is applied to people who are free spirited, passionate, nomadic and colourful. I believe Balkanology's success lies largely in their "Gypsy party" concept and its free-spirited ethos. Gypsy music is usually associated with any traditional music from the Balkans, although its specific sound spreads beyond geographical boarders. Ioana Szeman argues that "there is no Gypsy music, the Gypsies merely perform the music of the majority population where they live" (2009: 110). The argument claims that Gypsy music is a "style" characterised by improvisation and virtuosity (Malvinni 2004, cited in Szeman, ibid.: 110), rather than a specific music performed by a specific group.[7] DJ Shantel in Lynskey agrees: "Gypsy music does not exist, you can only talk about traditional music from different regions of south-eastern Europe" (2006: 6). What is fascinating is the attraction to the Gypsy sound within popular music trends and the art of electronic sampling and borrowing.

In his article 'There is no such thing as gypsy music', Dorian Lynskey observes: "From Basement Jaxx (house music producers) to Beirut ("a nine- piece Balkan band" from America) to Gogol Bordello (a Gypsy punk band from New York), bands are looking to the Balkans for inspiration" (2006). One of the questions I explore in my research is: "In what way, why and how was this Balkan music used or sampled?" Is the reason for using Balkan folk music in popular dance genre the search for "exotic"? (Sell, cited in Lynskey 2007). Lynskey's article explores a similar idea, asking "is this genuine new musical hybrid or just cultural tourism?" (2006: 6). Lynskey goes as far as to conclude that "there is no such thing as Gypsy music" and that "it has always been a hybrid… for the centuries the underdogs (the Roma) assimilated the music of dominant societies" (ibid.). I use Lausevic's and Lyskey's ideas in relation to Balkanology, to examine exactly what Balkanology is, and its possible multiple meanings, weather cultural or musical. Is it "gypsy" and if so, in what ways?

Further literature that reinforces my understanding of popular music hybridity is the book *Analytical studies in world music* by Michael Tenzer (2001), and specifically the

[7] See David Malvinni (2004). *The Gypsy caravan: from real Roma to imaginary gypsies in Western music* (Current research in Ethnomusicology: outstanding dissertations). New York: Routledge.

chapter titled *How to spin a good Horo*, which is particularly interesting because of the Balkan content. In this chapter, the author describes how an originally traditional Bulgarian music form, Horo, became "increasingly predictable and symmetrical" (2006: 68). The reason for this was that "urban Bulgarian musicianship had fallen under the influence of Western European trends" (ibid.). My research paper explores Balkanology as a conglomerate of many musics, cultures and images. Although the question of whether Balkanology's music is a good or bad hybrid is not the focus of my research, it is worth mentioning.

3. Gypsies and a theory of the "Imagined"

The following literature explores the exotic gypsy music, a common feature of a number of musics, such as the musical hybrid genres disco polo, turbo folk and neo folk.

Disco polo, turbo folk and neo folk

In *Listen: a momentary history of pop music again* (2007), the chapter titled *Dancing, democracy, and kitsch: Poland's disco polo* is relevant to my research because the music sampled and played at Balkanology parties is similar to what post-communist ex-Yugoslav countries have called turbo folk.

Daphne Carr explores the manifestations of a music style that emerged from a post-communist/post-socialist country in the transition to capitalism (1990s). Disco polo is "folk in origin and folk in use" but "urban Poles recoil at the thought of it as an expression of a national identity" (2007: 272). Musically, disco polo is a hybrid of *italo* disco and Polish folk music. The genre is compared to the Turbo folk (Neo folk) music popular in Serbia. Characteristic of both genres is the traditional music it mixes with current European dance music trends, supported by "peasant urbanites" (ibid.), not those who support Western and American music genres such as Jazz and Rock. Music played at Balkanology parties falls within the same genre because of its hybridity.

The Balkan re-enacted: gypsies and exoticism

The following sources talk about Balkan fascination and the imagined idea of the gypsy. 'Re-enacting Balkanism' as described by Maria Todorova (1997), seems to be underway on the South African Balkanology scene. As Todorova in *Imagining the Balkans* (1997) puts it:

> The marketing of the authentic Gypsies (bands) is based on Western managers' discovery narratives that re-enact Balkanism, grounded in Western travellers' discoveries of the exotic, yet not so distant part of Europe (cited in Szeman 2009: 100).

Mike Sell, in 'Bohemianism, the cultural turn of the avant-garde, and forgetting the Roma' (2007) focuses on the attraction and fascination with the exotic, particularly a Bohemian lifestyle. While Sell's article debates the issues of race and racism and the Roma, I will use his writing on Bohemia and the gypsy to examine gypsy exoticism and theatricality evident at Balkanology parties.

In 'Gypsy Music and Deejays - Orientalism, Balkanism, and Romani musicians' Ioana Szeman criticises gypsy musician stereotypes and is concerned about the future of Romani musicians. Szeman contends that: "As long as the Gypsy stamp remains a way to exoticize any music from the Balkans it will continue to perpetuate the romantic gypsy stereotypes, ultimately failing to bring either the Roma or the Balkans closer" (2009: 98-116). Szeman also believes that Kusturica's films and Bregovic's music "represent another reason for the Balkan" association with the wave of gypsy music (ibid.). I use Szeman's article to explore relationships and concepts of the Balkan as manifested in the parties, as well as her idea about "exoticizing" the gypsy and "the Gypsy" as a construct.

An "Imagined community"

Benedict Anderson's concept of an *Imagined Community* (1983) is a theoretical framework emanating from the field of culture and history, nationalism in Europe and political science. Anderson explores the reasons for the development of nationalism in Europe and although his work does not belong to musicology, but to political science and history, it is relevant to this research due to the analytical efficacy lent to the study

of music cultures by his concept of imagined community. He defines an imagined community as "different from an actual community. Members will never know one another face to face but will have similar interests" (Anderson 1983: 6). This research explores the nature of and the link between Balkanology's ideas of the Balkan. I will argue that this idea is imagined through the dance music scene to create a virtual musical country. Anderson's theory helps me explain Balkanology in these terms. The "imagined" relates to a particular concept of what is Balkan that may not be rooted in the reality of contemporary Balkan culture and society. Anderson's theory will aid in answering two main questions, namely: How does Balkanology imagine the Balkan and what is imagined? What is the 'language' of this new scene and what impact does it have in South African popular music field?

CHAPTER 3

The Balkans and popular music

1. Defining the Balkans

In order to understand how Balkanology emerges, I am placing it in its historical context. This chapter gives a brief overview of Balkan culture, looking at the role and development of a traditional folk music in relation to specific forms of popular music, post-communism. I also explore technological developments and pop musical trends globally and broadly in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. My focus is on two Balkan countries, Romania and Serbia, linking the influences of these two musical traditions to the music played at Balkanology events. Balkanology plays 'Neo-Balkan' music, a new genre, which I explore later in this chapter. Ultimately, the chapter traces a genealogy of Balkanology in terms of its Balkan popular music roots.

In order to understand Balkan musical identity, I highlight two important facts that bind and define it: similar cultural practices, and the "problematic Balkan" (Todorova 1997). Ristelhueber's study *A history of the Balkan peoples* (1971), provides a historical background of the Balkan Peninsula and its troubled past. Situated between Asia and Europe, the Balkans have always been ruled by another, more powerful force. As a result, they have had to endure and resisted invasion from the Ottoman Turks, Nazi Germans and the Soviet inspired Communists.

The term Balkan refers to more than just a geographical area. It includes a long and complicated history of people's identity and Western perception. On the one side, we have the historical context of "Balkan wars, political intrigues and irrationality, nationalist hysteria, senseless fragmentation into weak small states, governmental chaos, and poverty, economic and intellectual backwardness" (Kiossev 2003: 12). Balkan is a phenomenon of the "other" and the "exotic" (Said 1978). Kiossev calls it a

"power-play…which reproduces the archaic sign of mock, shame and nausea against the "semi-other" who prevents the completeness of the Occidental self" (2003: 12).

The Balkans are as much culturally similar as they are different, from the language to music. For example, Eastern Europe and Balkan countries speak dialects that belong to the Slavic group of languages. However they also have negative associations as uncivilized, and unwilling to conform to the standards of the west (ibid.: 3). This "frozen image", as Todorova calls it, has been associated with the Balkans after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, respectively (ibid.: 32).The term Balkan has since begun to be used with political, social and cultural connotations, rather than being a geographic signifier (Todorova 1997: 21).

The Balkans occupies a part of South Eastern Europe and geographically refers to: Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Turkey, and a very small part of Italy. The terms Balkan and Eastern Europe are often used inter-changeably to refer to the same region. Eastern Europe however includes countries such as Russia and the Czech Republic, as well as the countries mentioned as the Balkans. So, geographically, and culturally, the Balkans brings together a set of similar characteristics. Historically, most of these parts of Europe were under the rule of either the Ottoman or the Austro-Hungarian empires (Jelavich: 1983). Inevitably, Balkan countries adopted the cultural and musical characteristics of their colonial powers.[8]

In spite of their cultural similarities however, the Balkans have never been able to find common ground nor to sustain successful relationships of any kind amongst one another. This estranged relationship was also a result of an unspoken rivalry among the countries, as to which country is more developed, and more Westernised.

[8] Musically, Balkan is similar to Turkish music, for example, in its use of modes and irregular time signatures. Instruments like Turkish *Saz* and Serbian *Gusle,* which are very similar, are common to most Balkan music. *Cimbalom,* a type of a chordophone, is used in most ex-Austro-Hungarian countries, including Romania. There is also evidence in the 'borrowings' from languages and even cuisine, as seen for example in Balkan versions of Turkish.

2. Post-Communism (late 1980s)

My focus is on Balkan popular music genres, specifically those that emerge post-communism, as it is relevant to the development of the music genre played at the Balkanology parties. Balkan post-communism has seen mixed after-effects. On the one hand, independent countries gained their democratic freedom, on the other, a "fractious mood" was created (see Bunce and Csanadi 1993; Grzymala-Busse and Jones Luong 2002) caused by asserting nationalism. This new post-communist freedom resulted in a war in Yugoslavia (1991), which caused a split of its six countries, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo. The split created an aggressive nationalism and assertion of cultural independence. Yugoslav countries saw a war and Bosnia and Herzegovina became a victim of Croat and Serbian armies, asserting cultural and religious dominance over a smaller country (Gallagher 1997). It was after the split of Yugoslavia in 1991 that the term 'Balkans' came to be associated with fragmentation (Jelavich 1983). The split resulted in new cultural, music and popular culture forms. It gave rise to new popular music and film forms ('Neo-Balkan' music and 'Neo-war').

Furthermore, Serbian and Romanian popular music was during, and after communism, (early 1980s) influenced by the musical trends from the West. Barber-Kersovan calls this "appeal of international sounds to local audiences", "acculturated musical forms" (1989: 77). Many band such as Yugoslav's *Bijelo dugme* ('white button') whose lead guitarist and a composer was Goran Bregovic, copied international sounds, styles and images.[9]

Even though it was not always easy to travel in and out of the Balkans, (Ristelhueber, 1971), the acculturated musical forms developed outside its borders. [10] We see the influence of the Balkan sound in other musics, such as a Romanian song called *Blood and gold*, adapted by Irish folk musician Andy Irvine (Mardimitriou. 2008. 'Romanian song

[9] Bijelo Dugme's *Zažmiri I broj* from the 1980s (nidzon. 2010. 'Bjelo dugme- Zazmiri i broj' (Video. YouTube. 25th February. Last viewed July 2012). Their sound is a combination of European rock music styles but always sung in Yugoslav. The eccentric looks and behaviours of their front man is somewhat reminiscent of the late Freddy Mercury.

[10] The Iron Curtain was the boundary, after WWII, surrounding the Balkan states, which thus became satellite states of Russia. For westerners, it was difficult to travel behind the Curtain during the time of the Soviet Union (Ristelhueber 1971: 346).

(Blood and gold) Andy Irvine'. (Video, YouTube. 24th October 2008. Last viewed July 2012).

The early 1990s saw a rise of a "Balkan popular (counter) culture, in all the Balkan countries" (Kiossev 2003: 16). Kiossev calls this "a new type of arrogant Balkan intimacy" and a "new old type of music" (ibid.) which was, most importantly, not "wannabe Western".

In order to understand how the Romanian and Serbian folk tune found its way into the West and then to South African Balkanology parties, I trace the musical genres that helped shape the Neo-Balkan musical genre typically played at Balkanology events.

3. Balkan pop music post-Communism

In *Popular musics of the non-Western world* (1998), Peter Manuel describes the developments of popular music in Europe after World War II and mixing traditional styles with Western features. Manuel links this phenomenon to the "transformation of Yugoslav society since 1994" (1998: 136). This transformation, marked by a migration of rural working class into the cities, gave birth to new music genres (in Bosnia and Serbia). Speaking of Balkan identities, Kiossev explains "a new mass taste for the old belly dance developed, new-old small taverns and *kafanas* (coffee houses) opened" and with these "new types of amusement", a "new Balkan cultural industry" (2003: 16).

Musically, this new democracy follows a shift from acculturated music forms (Western music sung in Croatian) to new musical hybrid genres. We now hear music that sounds local, not only by its language but its distinct musical features (such as syncopated rhythms and compound time signatures, as well as brass ensembles and the usage of folk songs). With the fall of communism and the rise of nationalistic sentiments, new musical forms emerge, such as Serbia's turbo folk and Polish disco polo (see Carr 2007 and Hudson 2007), 'Chalga' and folk music in Bulgaria and 'Manele' in Romania (see Kiossev 2003). In Bulgaria for instance, Chalga music replaced English and American rock and Disco music in clubs and pubs. Most importantly, this development "converted

a (negative) stigma into a joyful consumption of pleasures forbidden by Europeans norms and taste" (2003: 16).

The identity of the Balkans, musically and culturally, can now be seen to belong to each state separately. Nationalist sentiments begin to shape new musical genres. Biddle and Knights call this development a "national dimension in music" (2007) and Hudson (2007) calls this national identity in popular music, a "sense of uniqueness" (ibid.). These new popular music genres also gave the separate nations an aggressive individual alibi (assertive nationalism).

I focus on Serbian and Romanian pop, tracing its influence in contemporary Balkanology in terms of its specific sound. Elements of Romanian and Serbian pop, in particular, inform and influence what comes to be known as a "Neo-Balkan" sound in Balkanology.

Turbo folk

Serbian ethnologist Ivan Colovic claims that Serbian politics is saturated folklore and that "every political battle in Serbia has made reference to folkloric texts" (cited in Hudson, 2007). In this particular instance, Serbian national identity was asserted through folklore and music. The name turbo folk was coined in the 1980s by a Montenegran artist Rambo Amadeus, who says:

> I didn't invent Turbo folk... I gave it a name…Turbo folk isn't music... it is a darling of the masses, a cacophony of all the tastes and smells. Alcohol is Turbo folk. Coca cola is Turbo folk. Nationalism is Turbo folk. (bedem23. 2009. 'Rambo Amadeus-Turbo folk'. Video, YouTube 7 March 2009. Last viewed July 2012).[11]

Turbo folk has an explicit military connotation as it was popular during and after the Yugoslav war with Serbian soldiers and is "ethnically Serbian in content" (Monroe cited in Hudson 2007: 173). Turbo is a type of music that may be described by a non-nationalist Serbian as 'music of the devil' (ibid.), because it is associated with heavy drinking and rowdiness.

[11] Rambo Amadeus' musical style is a hybrid of musical styles: folk, opera, humorous lyrics and guitar riffs. His songs combine satirical lyrics on the nature of common people and silliness of local politics (Ramboamadeus.com).

Manele

Romanian Manele is a genre associated with Romani (Gypsy) minority in Romania and is stylistically similar to Serbian Turbo folk. Manele is similar as it is musically simple and also relies on a visual aspect, rather than simply on musical content, of a music video showing for example, beautiful ladies, the latest fashion trends and images of wealth. There are two types of Manele; the 'classical' and 'modern', of which modern form is relevant for my study. Modern Manele is described as Romani music with Turkish, Greek, and Middle Eastern rhythms, set to electronic instruments and beats (sarahinromania.canalblog.com).[12] Modern Manele is musically similar to the music played at Balkanology.

In Romania, Manele never had a political connotation, although it has been associated with 'antiziganism' (Pillai 2012).

Both Turbo folk and Manele are hybrid forms of 'traditional' folk melodies and Western rock musical influences. Turbo also fuses Turkish rhythms and irregular time signatures (Hudson 2007). Both genres were then, and arguably still are today, in their native countries, liked and supported by less-educated listeners, often villagers, who move into the cities. This music thus became associated with the working class. Turbo folk and Manele rely on the beat and repetition of a particular phrase, much like in any popular music genre.

Another musical genre similar in sound and historical circumstance to Turbo folk and Manele is Polish disco polo. In *Listen: a momentary history of pop music again* (2007) Daphne Carr explores the manifestations of a music style that grew out of a post-communist/post-socialist country in the transition to capitalism (1990s). Like Turbo folk, Disco polo is "folk in origin and folk in use" but "urban Poles recoil at the thought of it as an expression of a national identity" (2007: 272). Both genres have a rural 'backward' conflated with the" folk" and folk music, as in Balkanology. These musical forms came from a displaced people, who were ruled by others for so long, trying to find their own culture and identity.

[12] Listen to Manele party mix by ddrakula (ddrakula. 2012. 'ROmanele big dance party megamix by ddrakula'. Video. YouTube. 15th June 2012. Last viewed July 2012.)

4. The Good, the Bad and the Balkan

The Balkan's negative image is often associated with satire of the nomadic and 'primitive' life of the gypsies that find their home all over Europe. On the bridge between the West and East, "going to Europe", the Balkans have been described as "rich in everything but money, simple, superstitious, thoroughly medieval" (Herbert Vivian describing Serb peasants, cited in Todorova 1997: 43).

Perhaps this pejorative image comes from the region's own poor perceptions of its people. To quote Brainier "Johnny" Stolid, front man of one of the most popular rock bands in Yugoslavia in the 1980s, Zara: "My Balkan, stay powerful, stay well […]We are a people cursed by the fate of gypsies. Always someone around us comes to threaten us. The bands are not what they use to be, my amateur one is preparing to play." (*Balkan* from the album *Filigranski plocnici*. 1982).

The satirical depiction of the Balkan and the Eastern European is exemplified in Sacha Baron Cohen's film *Borat: Cultural leanings of America for make benefit glorious nation of Kazakhstan* (2006).The film features a Khazakh television journalist traveling through the United States. Cohen's character is a naïve, uneducated person who comes to a big city, New York, from a small village in the Eastern Europe and doesn't fit in. Although the film was awarded several awards including a prestigious 2007 Golden Globe, *Borat* was banned in all Arab countries except Lebanon, and Russians discouraged cinemas from showing it (see *Facing the East in the West: Images of Eastern Europe in British literature*, Barbara Korte 2010). [13] This was because it was believed the film ridiculed Khazakh culture.

Musically, many people assume that any music emanating from the Balkans is gypsy (see Todorova 2009). Bosnian filmmaker Emir Kusturica and composer Goran Bregovic's work, helped to show this (gypsy) part of Balkan culture to the West. Their films, such as *Underground* (1995- a story about Yugoslav war) and *Black cat, white cat* (1998- a farcical comedy set in Romany settlements) have been an inspiration for

[13] Today however, the Khazakh government is grateful to Cohen as tourism has blossomed since the advent of the film (BBC Newsbeat. "Khazhakstan thanks Cohen for 'boosting' tourism."http://skimthat.com/1810/bbc-newsbeat-kazakhstan-thanks-borat-for-boosting-tourism (Page last updated 24 April 2012).

Balkanology events. Even though Romani people (the gypsies) are a minority in the Balkans, I believe Balkan identity is similar to that of the gypsies (due to their travelling nature), because of the Balkan history of emigration to non-Balkan states, its domination by other empires and its multiculturalism.

Kusturica's films have started a new trend and a fascination for the gypsy music has arisen globally. Anything from a Serbian brass ensemble to a Romanian wedding band became the "new" sound to listen to. Working closely with Bregovic, Kusturica has inspired a new musical genre, which has come to be known as Neo-Balkan.

Even though the Balkans and the rest of Eastern Europe have aspired, and still do, to the West, and each state has its own cultural heritage and "authentic" national folklore, the Balkan image is still that of being somewhat disorderly (see Ristelhueber 1971).

In the concluding chapter of Réne Ristelhueber's *A history of the Balkan peoples,* the author, Sherman D. Spector, argues that the wars that occurred in the Balkans were nationalistic, but that most of them were instigated by the larger imperialistic forces and not by the Balkans themselves. He concludes by saying that the possible solution for peace in the Balkans would be "the adoption of a policy of disinterestedness by the great powers" (1971: 416). Turbo folk, Manele and Neo-Balkan music are the result of such an idea: the return to the Balkan musical roots and the 'little people's' folk.

5. Neo-Balkan music and musical hybridity

Ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl writes that the musical hybrid "demonstrates a new sound, one that cannot be compartmentalized according to land, language or political boarders" (1992: iv). It is essentially a result of a cultural relationship of the colonists (emanating from the West) and the colonized (in the non-West). This argument is debated in the discourse on cultural imperialism or what Featherstone elects to calls 'Westoxication' (quoted in Biddle 2007).

Music from both Yugoslavia and Romania has been influenced by the acculturated musical forms, or trends. Furthermore, Michael Tenzer (2001) in 'How to spin a good

Horo' describes how an originally traditional Bulgarian music form, Horo, became "increasingly predictable and symmetrical" (2006: 68). The reason for this was the fact that "urban Bulgarian musicianship had fallen under the influence of Western European trends" (ibid.).

The early 1990s, however, have seen the rise of "new-old type of music", Turbo folk and Manele, and a new scene (Kiossev 2003). This new type of music also created a "sense of nostalgia" (ibid.), especially for many immigrants who left the Balkans in search for a better life abroad.

Neo-Balkan

The term "neo-Balkan" was coined by Todd Burns in 2007. Burns recognized an entirely new genre of Balkan-inspired music. Around the same time, with the first Balkanology parties in Cape Town in 2005, "Balkan-inspired music has seen a resurgence globally" (Burns 2007).The leading global artists of a Neo-Balkan genre are: Beirut, Shantel, Balkan Beat Box, Boom Pam, DJ Click and Gogol Bordello, to name a few.

These artists create music characterized by Balkan musical tradition, namely "Romanian style dances, peasant tunes, clarinet led Greek pieces, and music from the Ottoman-Greek cafes" (Burns, 2007). Some of these artists are the DJs, who sample the 'authentic' Balkan track/motif, and some are musicians whose style of playing includes Balkan idioms such as particularities of rhythm and texture (brass band/instruments for example).

Most importantly, in the context of the Balkanology party at least, "music from this part of the world combines brawling energy with unfathomable sadness. It could be the sound of the wedding or a wake" (Lynskey 2006).

The term 'authentic' can be interpreted in two ways. In the context of Neo-Balkan music and its appeal, authentic means: from the original source, but also real (emotional), as well as not restricted and conformed by Western music genres. Gogol Bordello's Eugene Hutz believes that "the whole movement was about getting people thinking about

authenticity rather than the ironic plastic crap we've been forced for generations" (Lynskey 2006: 2).

The new hybrid forms of popular music of the Balkans "replaced English and American rock and disco music in clubs and pubs" (Kiossev 2003: 16). Kiossev explains, "This music took elements from "orgiastic" Balkan festivities, from obscene folklore, from Turkish and Gypsy music and combined them with the postmodern electronic synthesizers. The result is less music of protest and trauma" (ibid.).

Furthermore, Hutz points out another dimension, when describing that "then, of course, there are people who are simply in it for fashion" (cited in Lynskey 2006: 2) So, Balkan gypsy music became the latest music trend globally, and eventually in South Africa.

There are no "musical secrets" in the world, and as a result we have new hybrid genres such as Neo-Folk and Neo-Balkan (ibid.). It is also a reason why we often find it difficult to describe hybrid music genres, such as the type of music played at Balkanology.

In concluding, Neo-Balkan music's secret ingredient, and its 'magic' appeal for the Balkanology participants, is the fact that it presents itself as an emotional experience of togetherness. Togetherness in a Balkanology context is a dance gathering and a celebration. Regardless of culture, participants respond equally to the festive, upbeat and somewhat comic nature of Balkan gypsy music played at the Balkanology party. These emotions, nostalgically, took me home (to the Balkans), along with other Balkanology participants, to some far away exotic gypsy land.

The Neo-Balkan genre developed later and perhaps not directly out of Turbo folk or Manele, but as a result of a stronger Balkan identity, or "Balkan inspiration"(Lynskey, 2006: 1), as well as to technological developments globally. Musicians such as Serbian Goran Bregovic, Hungarian gypsy band Taraf de Haïdouks, Romanian DJ Shantel, and American Beirut have helped in developing and 'reviving' what Todd Burns calls Neo-Balkan music (2007). This genre tends to be more instrumental (as opposed to Turbo folk or Manele) as it captures the essence of the Balkan sound, by either sampling the

traditional instruments (DJ Shantel) or using 'authentic' gypsy brass bands (in a case of Taraf de Haïdouks or Goran Bregovic).

The music played at Balkanology is a result of global technological developments. The reason this music is so widely popular in and outside South Africa is because it is so easily accessible and easy to transport via internet. In this way, today's music does not only belong to the privileged few but to the whole world.

Count Hermann Keyserling's statement "if the Balkans hadn't existed, they would have been invented" (cited in Todorova 1997) sums up the 'Balkan' in post-modern light. It also suggests the scope of the term that is not only defined by its geographical borders, but also socially. For me personally, the Balkans represents a lost identity (the 'reality' of the West) mixed with a strong perception of togetherness and brotherhood among its people.

Chapter 4

Balkanology as an event



Figure 1. 'Hopa! Balkanology is back! An online advert for a Balkanology party, Facebook, 12 June 2010. https://es-es.facebook.com/events/113022995400360/

1. Balkanology as a South African dance phenomenon

The online advert for a Balkanology party above is indicative of the atmosphere and flavour of the parties. It contains the 'signs of the Balkan' that help to interpret Balkanology as a unique series of dance events, where Balkan music is played. Although the use of Balkan folk in contemporary dance music is not new, the term Balkanology is uniquely South African. Talking about the initial idea for the parties, DJ and event organiser Ma'or explains:

> Back in 2005, I was listening to the music and loving it. I was working at a restaurant in town and occasionally I used to play that music. People used to bob their heads to it while eating their steaks. I used to play it a different occasions and noticed that most people would really light up when they heard it. I strongly believed it was in everyone's blood (Author's interview, 2010).

The term Balkanology was coined by its originator, Ma'or. The name fuses a sense of technology – representing the aspect of electronic dance music involved – and the Balkan music. When asked where the name originated, Ma'or said that "it just came into my head". The inspiration and the themes for the events come largely from the Yugoslav post-war films such as *Black cat, white cat* (1998) and *Underground* (1995). Some of the first Balkanology events were named: *War and peace, Wedding*, and *Funeral*. Ma'or describes himself as 'Nu World DJ'. His musical styles include "Balkan beats, Jazzy traditional Turbo folk and World beats Dubbed-out-with-a-moustache" (Beanstalk. 2012).

Balkanology represents exciting new musical terrain to be explored, because it is a new dance scene for South Africans that crosses racial and generational barriers. It is a public, themed event where participants are encouraged to dress up in order to listen and dance to music alternatively labelled Balkan, gypsy and Middle Eastern. Their venues are carefully chosen and the events are almost always held at Johannesburg locations, such as 44 Stanley Avenue in Milpark or The Alexandra Theatre in Braamfontein. Balkanology events also include live performance acts, usually international artists, such as Boom Pam and the Balkan Beat Box.
The initial idea for the research was partially personal, being Balkan-born. This, I thought, gave me resources to work from - knowledge of the culture and music.

However, I have found myself not quite being able to describe this Balkan music, which reminds me of home. I have questioned which musical elements remind me of home, in which way and how, and have wondered why is Balkan inspired music the latest trend in South Africa, and globally, and why not something else, say, Scandinavian for example?

It seems as though in South Africa, anything musically Eastern European is called "Balkanology music". Ma'or explains,

> It's pretending that the parties are a study of the Balkans, a term to define the parties. It has become the only name people associate the music within South Africa. When someone hears music that is vaguely Balkan they say: that's Balkanology music (Author's interview 2011)

That the parties are a 'performance of the Balkan' became very clear during my participation and observation of these events. Here I describe two party events and aim to detail the signs and sounds of the Balkan in Balkanology. The description forms the basis of interpretation, drawing on Clifford Geertz's notion that "the concept of culture is a semiotic one" (1975: 4).[14] The description is also underscored by Geertz's notion that "culture is a context within which social events, behaviours, institutions, processes – can be thickly described" (ibid.).

I have chosen two Balkanology events for my ethnographic research in order to compare the elements of the different party themes, as well as the music played, as well as to help me discover the popularity of the event. The "thick descriptions" are based on my own participation in, and observation of, several Balkanology events and aims to evoke the place, participations, behaviour and performative elements of two of these: the 'Gypsy Party' at 44 Stanley, which is compared to a Balkanology *Fiddle East* party at Carfax, a year later (15 October 2011).

[14] 'Semiology', according to Ferdinand de Saussure in his 'Course in General Linguistics', is a science that studies the life of signs within society (cited in Wollen, 1969: 116).

2. Hopa, Balkanology is back! Party on the 12th June 2010, 44 Stanley Avenue, Johannesburg

Dressed up in my gypsy outfit I arrived at the trendy 44 Stanley venue one hour before the event, knowing I would meet some friends and like minded people there having attended Balkanology events before.

Two bouncers in black suits welcomed me at the entrance and Ma'or, one of the organisers, came outside to meet me. He introduced me to another organiser, and we chatted briefly about what I was there to do. Both of them were very excited before their event. Ma'or, with whom I have quite a close relationship, knew a bit about my research on Balkanology and was fascinated that someone was actually writing about it. I got my two free tickets from Ma'or and went in.

The entire 44 Stanley inner courtyard was decorated in the vivid colours of flags with images of a rooster, Balkanology's logo. I was surrounded by a multi-coloured sea of décor. There were more visually decorative images of gypsy and rural life as I walked around, such as hung laundry on washing lines drawn all over the courtyard. This image did remind me of home. I remember the old block of flats back in Croatia that were always decorated with people's washing lines, or something hanging off their balconies. There were old-looking photographs of gypsy women randomly hung in between the washing. One that caught my attention depicted a woman in a bathtub, painting her nails. The DJ booth was decorated with flowers, roosters and an old accordion.

The gypsy décor, as presented by Balkanology, was colourful, decorated with props, from flags to lanterns, an old accordion, washing lines with hung laundry, and a tent with a tarot reader. The dance floor is partially covered, so the place looks like a big tent, which is widely associated with a village life of a gypsy traveller.

Balkanology as an event is theatrical and carnival-like, indicated by the sets, costumes, actors and the lighting. Balkanology's performance is a complex mixture of the imagined, the parodied and the authentic signs of a Balkan culture.

As I walked around I heard a pseudo-Eastern European accent. There were actors (hired by Ma'or), mingling around, dressed gypsy style and talking 'in character'. The accent is pseudo-Russian, I noticed, rather than Balkan. It can be read as a *performance* of Balkan-ness. I noticed an actress, who was dancing around a water fountain, throwing coins into the 'wishing well'. So the set was ready for the guests to come and play!

The venue was still empty, just a few minutes before 8pm, and the DJ Toby2shoes from Cape Town was playing a down-tempo Eastern European tune. Toby and Ma'or are the only two DJs that play at the Balkanology parties. I heard a tambourine and a very prominent bass line, while Toby manipulated the sound by making it loud or soft at seemingly random moments. The few guests that had arrived by then, including me, are chatting and admiring each other's costume attempts at 'a gypsy'.

As the guests start to arrive, I continued exploring the venue. I noticed a musician (I am sure he was an actor), lying in an old bath playing the tuba (rather clumsily blowing random notes). Two characters were selling Camel cigarettes at a nearby table. There was commotion around another character though. A 'moustache lady' was selling fake moustaches (R5 for two). Many people were wearing them; in fact the guests had all made the effort and dressed up. The moustache lady was sold out of stock within the first hour. The moustache is another Balkan sign at these parties, a reference to an Eastern European man or perhaps even the figure of *Borat*.

People started arriving, including teenagers, fifty-year olds, even two pregnant women. It was a gypsy village, where everyone was welcome. There was a sense of village gathering, as thought people were about to discuss some important matters within the community. In Balkanology's case this was a gathering to participate in a social event and in a dance.

A live band set up at the other side of the courtyard: kit drums, guitar, accordion, bass, and knee guitar. The band was surrounded by bales of hay, all in front of a big screen showing Emir Kusturica's film *Black cat, white cat*. Further down the courtyard, 'Joburg live' had their own scene set up. They had created their gypsy set in front of which people could have their photos taken, as mementos of the night's party.

By 8.45pm the place had filled up. I remember going to house music parties where the first DJ only starts playing at 10pm, so this is unusual. People gravitated towards the dance floor and start dancing. My feet followed too. Familiar sounds and nostalgic feelings coming from the speakers have taken me home for a while. The music is uplifting and unpretentious. I heard a brass band, soaring violin passages ascending and descending modal scales, stomping bass lines and drums, following irregular time signatures (1-2-3, 1-2, 1-2…) and minimal lyrics. Whilst moving to the beats I instinctively lift my hands in the air. Most people around me have theirs up, too. I recall a friend noting that the music at the party reminded him of Middle Eastern, Arabian dances.

If house music is felt more in the bottom layer of the music, because of the way the bass is emphasised and foregrounded in texture, Balkan music is felt on the top texture.

Participants' hands and shoulders movements suggested they were following a trumpet, or a violin melodic line. Given that most of the phrasing did not start on the first, heavy, part of the beat, that the music is simple in form and chordal structure, and depends on improvisation, it shares notable characteristics with jazz. The more ornate the melody line, the better. Its modal content, the virtuosity displayed in the performance of a soloist, and an occasional DJ scratching are some of the elements which make this music exciting and fun to dance to. Since the accents of the beats are less predictable than in a common 4/4 time, moving to this music was inviting and impulsive. Musically, it contained elements of electronic dance music (E.D.M), mixed with modal melodies reminiscent of Turkey and the Middle East.

Balkanology's participants were attracted to the theatrical element of the party, specifically the opportunity to dress up like a gypsy (unlike some other dance music events, which might be more about the latest technological gadgets and samples). Ma'or explained, "The idea was to create the 'ultimate space' in the right environment, for people to lose their inhibitions and let go. The aim was to create a gypsy farm environment, complete with hay and chickens" (Nevitt interview 2010).

The place was now filled with 'rivers' of people finding their way through the party, some dancing, and some chatting. The crowd gathers around a 'fire lady' who danced, blowing fire as though at a circus. Most people were dressed up gypsy style and some were speaking to each other in fake Eastern European accents. Some wore Bafana Bafana shirts in support of the World Cup Soccer event.

By 10.30 the band started their first set and the guests moved closer, anxiously. Their music reminded me of Tom Waits, and seemed not to have much to do with the Balkan. The band interacted with the audience; at one point a band member gave a microphone to an audience member. Above the band was an image of Britney Spears with a shaved head and an unsettling facial expression, which added to the absurd imagery that made up the theatrical, circus-like atmosphere.

DJ Toby was playing some thumping Balkan beats and the dance floor was full. It was entertaining to watch him as, unlike many DJs, Toby2shoes danced to his own tunes, fully immersed in the music he was playing and watching the crowd enjoying itself. The sound was set up unusually well. Often I find at the outdoor events the P.A. is not set up correctly, and one doesn't really get the true essence of the music. By midnight, the 44 Stanley courtyard was full to capacity.

I decided to leave the party around 1 am. At the exit, a queue of people still desperately wanted to go in, but they were stopped by the organisers as the venue could not accommodate them. While leaving, I heard Serbian spoken among a few guests who were trying to get in. It was the only real Balkan language I heard at the party. I found out from Ma'or the next day that there were 2500 people there.

It is clear that the Balkanology experience concerns more than the music. Rather, it is a more holistic experience of entering into an imaginary world, in which one participates and not only observes. Balkanology also has an 'offspring'. These are a series of events called *Fiddle East*, or *mini-Balkanology*, as Ma'or explains. It was one of these events that hosted an Israeli Punk/Balkan band called Boom Pam, and I went along to Carfax in Newtown for their performance on 15 October, 2011.

3. Fiddle East, 15 October 2011 at Carfax

Carfax were full when I arrived to meet Ma'or, even though I was early. The neighbouring streets were busy as there was an Indian festival just next door to a *Fiddle East* party, laid out in the street and covered with a tent. The venue was decorated in a Mediterranean theme for the evening. The bars were ready for the evening, as well as a food stall, selling delicious smelling stews. The guests were dressed up in a bohemian style, some barefoot, dancing to gentle beats from DJ Ma'or. I sat in a chill out area chatting to friends, observing and anxiously waiting to hear the band. Soon enough I was on the dance floor, with my hands in the air, dancing to some Balkan and other world music beats.

Boom Pam's musicians play electric guitar and vocals, a tuba and drums. Their first song had an easy 2/4 feel that soon progressed to a fast 2 or 4 beat, sounding much like a Punk or Metal/Rock groove. The lead guitarist's solos had an old school rock flavour, the tuba player's accents on every second beat made the music sound Balkan and the drummer kept it hard and steady.

The music sounded modal (based on Turkish modes as well a gypsy scale), the guitarist's solos referencing a hybrid of different kinds of musical traditions, from 'Romanian-style dances, wedding songs, peasant tunes to Klezmer music' (Burns, 2007).[15] Speaking of Neo-Balkan music, such as that played at this party, Burns remarks that, "Shantel, Balkan Beat Box, DJ Click and others are bringing gypsy and dance music together" (ibid.).

Speaking to participants about why they attend Balkanology events, a participant called Grant said, 'There is nowhere to go if you want to go out and have a good time, or to dress up'. The opportunity to perform and participate as audience, not only to listen or dance as one does at house or trance music parties, is what appeals. Another appealing element is the sense of celebration, as my friend Magdi says, 'It's so festive, like the wedding!' Weddings are rituals where participants (not an audience) celebrate an

[15] Klezmer is a secular Jewish music genre. It originates from Eastern Europe (Romania, Greece, and Turkey) and is associated with Eastern European immigrants to America in the late 1800s. The main characteristic of Klezmer music are dance tunes and instrumental displays at wedding celebrations (borzykowski.users.ch/EnglMCKletzmer.htm, accessed February 2012)

occasion; there are repeated sequences of events, which are planned around the gathering, the community. Thus, participation is a key element of the Balkanology party.

Another key element is that the parties are visually and aurally exciting and stimulating. In the next chapter I examine and analyse what aspects of Balkan music and cultures are depicted, and how.

Chapter 5

The signs and sounds of Balkanology

This chapter is an analysis of the visual and musical components of Balkanology, experienced at Balkanology parties. For the purpose of my analysis, I will use aspects of social semiotics, as proposed by Theo Van Leeuwen (2005). In *Introducing social semiotics,* Van Leeuwen explores different means of communication in a modern society. He observes that "social semiotics is itself a practice, oriented to observation and analysis, to opening our eyes and ears for the richness and complexities of semiotic production and interpretation" (2005: i).

I frame my analysis in terms of Van Leeuwen's approach, because Balkanology carries both denotative and connotative signs. Van Leeuwen speaks about "semiotic resources" and what one can say with a sound or a code like a language (1999). Most importantly, to find out exactly what can be expressed, or what analysis reveals, we need to "put the system in its social, cultural and historical context" (ibid.: 7), which in this case, is the Balkanology party. In this analysis I focus on all sensory aspects experienced at parties, described in previous chapter.

Visually, Balkanology seems to be interpreting certain aspects of the Balkan culture. The gypsy décor and dress code captures a single vision of its interpreters (ibid.: 193), who in Balkanology are the party organisers. Van Leeuwen compares the "vision of the interpreter" to that of the jazz musician, noting his/her ability to improvise by "taking the ideas from everywhere to create something new" (ibid.: 195). Party organisers play with visual and aural signs, creating what they feel is a Balkan setting, atmosphere, and mood.

The visual signs of Balkanology only operate in the context of the party. Thus, its participants come to understand their function and meaning and accept them as such,

as they become a part of Balkanology. However, Balkanology's musical signs work outside the party as "Balkanology music" (Ma'or, 2011). Balkanology music embodies the experience of an electronic dance party. The music is there not to "*represent* seduction" [emphasis added], but to rhythmically and melodically "seduce" (Van Leeuwen, 179). Balkanology's music seduces the South African revellers, and creates a "musical communion" (ibid.: 196).

The analysis focuses on the two events described in chapter four, specifically denotative and connotative visual and aural signs, which define the Balkanology experience. In order to understand the use of these visual and aural signs, I employ Van Leeuwen's theory of modality. Modality "refers to the degrees of truth assigned to the given sound event" (1999: 180). In Van Leeuwen's view, modality manifests itself either as "representation, a true representation of people, places and things, or presentation, which is true to the spirit of the genre and the values" (ibid.). I explore the extent to which signs of the Balkan culture are represented or presented in Van Leeuwen's sense. I examine the "degrees of truth" of both visual and aural signs at the Balkanology party (ibid.: 180).

Van Leeuwen lists three important questions to be addressed in my analysis: What has been done with the sound/visual signs? What is the modality of the work? What aspects are depicted?

1. Visual signs

As a participant observer at several Balkanology events, I have noticed visual signs that each event had in common, and that define the overall visual content: gypsy dress code; the image of a rooster (on decorative flags around the venue); fake moustaches worn by the guests and an old accordion (usually placed by the DJ booth). Here, I ask how these images reference a whole culture and how visual signs operate in context of Balkanology as a party event. For the sake of clarity of the analysis, these images are separated into themes.

Theme 1- Rural life

The first of these are images associated with rural life in the Balkans. The material and visual objects create an impression of 'the rural Balkan', portraying it as simple, naïve, underdeveloped and backward. These images resonate strongly with the way the Balkans are depicted in the film *Black cat, white cat*. Similarly, Balkanology satirises rural and gypsy nomadic life. For example, the advertisement for the 44 Stanley Avenue party described in chapter four mentions "choirs of gypsy kids juggling", "farm games and squealing piglets" and exhorts party goers to "prepare your caravans for the reverse racing", in a humorous parody of farm or gypsy life.

Balkanology's logo is a rooster, which together with live animals at their parties reiterates the visual signs of a Balkan rural scene. The rooster logo is a black outline, framed by a red background, in a shape of a heart. The rooster is printed on flyers, posters and little flags that are usually put up all around the venue. According to Ma'or, this logo represents "gypsy farm lifestyle", and is associated with Balkanology parties and has come to signify the spirit of the party.

As a cultural sign, the rooster in the Balkan and Eastern European setting is a common animal known to every rural household. The animal represents rural living for many, but in the Balkanology party, it operates as a caricature of Balkan life. As a sign, the rooster references rural life and is also a symbol of the Balkanology party. According to Angela, a rooster represents "a farm or a country side":

> I think of country life and working on a farm. Maybe living a bit rough but living "wholesome/organic", if that makes any sense. The meaning it carries for me would be freedom and tranquillity, because of the farm image as contrasted to city life. It's also fun because I've always thought roosters are quite comical getting up so early in the morning to wake people up with a funny *cock-a-doodle-doo* sound. It's just generally a bit of a crazy animal running around the farm. Ya, so: freedom, tranquillity and fun [laughs]. (Author's interview, 2012)



Figure 2. Balkanology's décor: a hung washing line. Picture taken at a party in Cape Town, April 2010

A further sign of rural life is a washing line hung with washing across the venue. At the parties, the washing is randomly hung and there are more underwear items and socks hung than any other clothing items. The guests are free to use them as props as well. In fact, I saw a guest who had put on a pair of red knickers over his jeans. The humour implied by having underwear hung at a party and guests trying it on, signifies the sense of parody integral to Balkanology. Again, the references are drawn from films like *Borat, Black cat, white cat* and *Underground*. Balkanology parties reference a caricatured Balkan or an Eastern European man, the free and passionate life of Balkan gypsies and the absurdity of 'Balkan mentality', as explained in chapter three.

The rural signs operate not as direct depiction of Balkan life but as a 'signifier' of an idea of 'Balkan-ness', and 'gypsyness'. In Van Leeuwen's sense, Balkanology's rural life signifies an idea, rather than a real place or the way of life. So, specific visual signs, as seen in the two films, are transferred to Balkanology. Another image that presents this setting is an accordion, usually associated with folk music. Although it was used by some classical modern composers such as Alban Berg, the accordion is widely used in the folk (traditional) music of many countries around the world. In the context of Balkanology party, it is used as a symbol of the folk and of gypsies.

Its rawness is juxtaposed with the modern, E.D.M setting. The accordion is usually placed on top of a DJ booth, as a decorative prop. An accordion, as a symbol, functions as

a reminder of the folk spirit of the party, the spirit of country living and of togetherness. It signifies old tradition and its presence takes on a strong meaning, almost as a religious symbol.

To Angela, the accordion has a strong gypsy reference:

> Here I obviously think of fun music but also once again poverty of the moving gypsy caravan that has someone in it playing an accordion. So Hungarian and Romanian music and their feel come to mind when it is played; so even if it just deco I can imagine it playing as one very often hears it played in music played at the Balkanology parties. So, the meaning of it for me would be dancing and fun and celebrating even if in a poor context and very Eastern European (Author's interview, 2012)

An accordion signifies the integration of acoustic versus the electronic, an old folk accordion (the "raw" sound) with the new, contemporary sound (DJ), as Ma'or explains:

> The instruments are the virility of the music. It's almost raw; music that is created by instruments which have been around for many years and are still used in the modern interpretation of the music. The music is also originally played by the people who taught themselves to play with no real schooling. Every musician has his own technique, which works for him. Much like the music and the personal love everyone shares for it (Author's interview 2012)

Thus, the rooster signifies rural life while the accordion signifies traditional folk music. Most importantly, Balkanology participants come to recognise these as signs through their participation in the events. These signs operate *internally* within the culture of Balkanology.

Theme 2 – East European Masculinity

There are a number of signs that signify masculinity associated with Balkan and Eastern European men. One of these is moustaches.



Figure 3. Gypsy dress: fake moustaches. Picture taken at a party in Cape Town, June 2010

Men at the parties wear fake moustaches in a comic way, as a sort of a parody of what moustaches represent in the Balkans. The reference I notice is that of Borat, who himself wears thick, prominent moustaches. For Ma'or: "Nothing is too cool and nothing is too stupid. In fact, the more stupid, the better!" (Nevitt interview, 2010)

In films such as Sacha Baron Cohen's satire, classified a 'mockumentary', Cohen's character is an individual who comes from a rural village in Kazakhstan. In the film *Borat: Cultural leanings of America for make benefit glorious nation of Kazakhstan* (2006), the thick moustaches Borat wears are particularly exaggerated, in a mockery of Balkan masculinity.

In the Balkans and some Arab countries, moustaches represent masculinity and authority. Many Arab men were raised to see the moustache "as a sign of manhood and the groomed moustache has become a distinctive part of Arab culture" (Harris: 1). According to Wendy Bracewell (2005), Eastern Europe, especially the Balkans, is a

"museum of exaggerated masculinity". Within the culture "physical toughness and violence, sexual conquest and subordination of women, guns, strong drink and moustaches feature heavily" (ibid.: 88). Bracewell finds that this masculine image of the Balkans is not only known outside its borders, but within the region as well (ibid.). Most importantly, she concludes that, the "travel writers contrast a Balkan model [with] western models of manliness."

Moustaches worn by the Balkanology participant operate as a parody of Eastern European masculinity. For Ma'or, "fake moustaches make men of children" (Author's interview, 2012), and for participant Angela,

> I guess this represents fun and dressing up as well as a bit of a masquerade, which I think all fit well in the setting of a Balkanology party. Obviously, it also makes me think of a middle age Eastern European man. So, yes, meaning is freedom of expression and masquerade, because it has that dressing up element to it, and emulates a certain image of people that live in places where Balkan music comes from, I suppose. (Author's interview, 2012)

There is a 'moustache lady' who sells the fake moustaches at the party. These are black, are made out of light plastic and are easily applied. Both male and female guests wear them. Buying a pair of moustaches may signify the "fakeness" and the comedy of a stereotyped image of an Eastern European man, operating in much the same way as *Borat*, through a process of parody.

Theme 3 - Gypsies

Another prominent visual element of the Balkanology party is a gypsy dress code. Items that reference the 'gypsy' are: large loop earrings and long floral skirts worn by women and fake moustaches. The 'gypsy' also represents a western perception of freedom that involves a romanticised idea of poverty. Angela confirms:

> This represents creativity that springs from poverty, and constantly being on the run. I find it very beautiful, colourful and full of patterns and [it] can be quite flamboyant. So, even though it represents poverty to me, there is a certain beauty that comes from being creative with what you have [been] given. The meaning, for me would be creativity and even femininity; a celebration of different patterns, colours and materials albeit in a context of limited resources; as if the restriction of resources forces this abundance of creativity and beauty. (Author's interview, 2012)

"Gypsyness" also functions as a sign. To Ma'or, it represents "the gypsy spirit… the way it moved when they dance represents the freedom that the music gives you on the dance floor… and your mind" (Author's interview, 2012). Gypsy skirts are usually worn seductively, lowered at the waist, worn barefoot, with a tiny body vest on top. The floral gypsy skirt in a Balkanology context presents the gypsy spirit, which is sensual and free. Thus, Balkanology's presentation of a gypsy skirt is aesthetic, rather than spiritual.

In the rural Balkans, and among the gypsy community, a skirt, or a dress, is worn by a woman and a pair of trousers by a man. The gypsy skirts worn by Romani women are long and often decorated in a floral pattern. Their bodies are usually well covered and they always wear a scarf on their heads. Big floral prints and loop earrings both come from an Indian tradition, via the Romani people's journey from India to Europe.[16]

The gypsy dress signifies a gypsy quality and references Balkan culture. For Serbian society, for example, the gypsy and the gypsy-ness presents the "stranger within: what one is in spite of what one ought to be" (Van de Port, 1999: 292). Many of the gypsy signs communicate freedom, mystery and the exotic otherness. Dressing up as a gypsy is an important part of Balkanology, as an alternative dance party event: one where participants have the creative freedom to express being a gypsy externally (through dressing up) and internally (through dance). On a social level, it allows the participants to become a fictional character, for at least the one night. Dress up events serve as a form of release from a fast paced urban lifestyle. Here is what some of Balkanology's enthusiasts have to say:

Participant 1: "I love the music, the vibe and the people…but most of all I love the chance to dress up and act like a complete fool for the evening!"

Participant 2: "Balkanology rocks the balls every time. Balkan music and rakija for everyone!"

Participant 3: "Every band should have a tuba for bass. *U Petak igamo i pijemo do zore*! (On Friday we drink and dance till dawn)."

[16] Tony Gatlif's documentary *Latcho drom* (1993) portrays this journey.

Participant 4: "The energy of a Balkanology party is different to that of a Rock or a House party, as it has a certain quirky/youthful nature to it."

2. Movement as a sign

A striking element of Balkanology parties is the dancing, which also functions semiotically in Balkanology. There is a specific way of dancing seen at the Balkanology event: a gentle sway with lifted arms. The arms are in a 'U' shape, framing the head and the hands move in a circular motion (as though one is fitting a light bulb). However, not all the guests are dancing this way, and some find the 3+2+2 rhythm difficult to dance to. In fact, most of the dancing is a vague attempt to present the traditional Romani dance, which has a similar hand movement, although is a lot more intricate, choreographed and skilled (especially when it comes to the foot movements).[17]

The hand movement operates as a visual sign in Balkanology parties. Mattijs van de Port, who studied the musical relationship of Serbians and the gypsies, describes the hand in the air as an "intimate musical experience" (1999: 292). "When the gypsies start to play, the customers' arms are raised in the air, always the same movement: arms in the air, total surrender "(ibid.). Balkanology's presentation of a gypsy dance concurs with De Port's description of "a total surrender" to the spirit and the freedom of music. One of the participants, Jasmina, expresses this sense of letting go of inhibitions, as "a new way of celebrating; your whole body language is like this", she says, holding her hands in the air.[18]

Both the hand movement and the gypsy dress work together as signs for the gypsy freedom and carefree living. Gypsy freedom, the mysterious gypsy and romanticized rural living all signify the "other" in the Balkanology party. Added to the mix is a parody of an Eastern European, Balkan man. Together, they constitute a South African 'Balkan gypsy party' (Balkanology promotional material, 2007).

[17] Charbaxgv1. 2012. 'Roma fest gypsy dance group promo DVD'. Video. YouTube. 5th July 2012. Last viewed August 2012.
[18] Video footage of a 2007 Balkanology party in Cape Town, 'The great Balkan wedding'. Unpublished raw data.

Balkanology's perception of Balkan culture seems to be a mix of parody, and a romantic idea of a rural gypsy. According to Van Leeuwen, the "sign producer" (in this case the Balkan tradition with its 'fixed meaning') and the "sign interpreter" (the party's organiser) are "making meaning using the same semiotic principles" (1999: 193). These interpreters then use unique and recognisable moments of the sign interpretation (ibid.). In the context of a Balkanology party, the rooster, for example, symbolises a party, and for a rural Balkan person, it is simply a source of food.

One needs to distinguish between an 'authentic' Balkan culture with its own set of rules and customs and the Balkanology's imagined presentation of the Balkan. In other words, some aspects of Balkan tradition and their (the visual signs) 'fixed meanings' are transported to another setting, in the case of this study. In this way, signs adopt another set of rules that are only recognisable to Balkanology participants.

A presentation of visual signs in Balkanology depicts aspects of Balkan gypsy life as seen in films such as *Borat* and *Black cat, white cat* and *Underground*. These are moments of capturing the spirit of a particular culture, as seen through subjective eyes. In Van Leeuwen's terms, signs in Balkanology are a "presentation" rather than a "representation" of people and places.

3. Aural signs in Balkanology's music

'Neo-Balkan' music played at Balkanology's parties is a hybrid of folk material and technological music trends. The folk material belongs to Balkan Romani (gypsy) musicians, while technological trends include DJing and sampling. In this section, I analyse different elements that are aural signs in the typical track played at Balkanology. In order to understand what the producers of the neo-Balkan music played at Balkanology, what they have done with the authentic Balkan sound, and the depth of its "modality" (Van Leeuwen: 157), it is necessary to examine the elements that represent its authenticity. To find out what the degree of truth (modality) in relation to exotic Balkan sounds might be, I use the three main questions, as proposed by Van Leeuwen: What has been done to the sound? What is the modality of the work? And what aspects are depicted? (ibid.).

Aural signs of Balkan gypsy music include the use of: a melismatic, ornamented melody (played by a high pitched clarinet, trumpet, violin or sung), syncopated 2/4, 6/8 rhythms, and brass bands.

Melodic signs

Melodically these pieces are simple, tending to stay in the main key, without modulation. In this way, the typical Balkan gypsy tune is reminiscent of a standard pop song or an E.D.M. tune. Keys used follow a simple I-IV-V chord progression and the emphasis is on improvised melody on top of the texture, rather than complex chords and voicing, or chord progressions. Improvising is particularly important, as it has always been a feature of gypsy music. McHenry calls it "sliding in and out of major and minor scales" (2007). These improvisations have been a big influence on jazz as a genre. A French gypsy musician Django Reinhardt, for example, influenced a whole way of playing jazz guitar. This style is improvised and ornamented and the solos are played furiously fast.[19]

The melismatic ornamented melody is also a typical idiom of Turkish music. Risto Pekka Pennanen, in his research on Balkan folk music, finds that "Balkan music's modal characteristics share, among others, Ottoman modal systems called *makam"* (2008: 130). Turkish music is monophonic, "founded on the principle of *makams*", which work as melodic progression patterns (www.turkishmusicportal).

A typical Balkan gypsy tune is usually polyphonic. The main melody on top of the texture is often fast, high pitched and almost comic sounding. Van Leeuwen associates "humoristic sounds" like this with the modality sound of a Disney cartoon. The 'genre' of a sound which emerges is associated with "the truth that cannot be said straight, it must clothe itself in humour" (1999: 171).The parody that is prominent in Balkanology parties, is an aspect of Balkanology's presentation of Balkan culture.

[19] I will include a typical Django Reinhardt song in my second recital program.

The main melody is either modal or based on a harmonic minor or "gypsy scale" (a harmonic minor scale with a raised fourth).[20] As a sign of the Middle East, a harmonic minor scale has a specific musical meaning outside the Balkanology. Whenever I play the scale to my students, they all say: "it sounds like something from Aladdin!" The harmonic minor scale thus has a wider significance, as it operates as a sign of the Orient, or the Middle East, not only internally at Balkanology parties.

Many writers on Balkan folk music have debated its Oriental, Turkish music legacy (Pennanen 2008: 127). Their research demonstrates musical influences that range from classical Indian raga scales to Greek modes. According to Pennanen, one of the main "Orientalist devices" is the interval of an augmented second, used by composers to represent the "other" (ibid.: 133), and which he says is a "musical emblem of the Orient" (ibid.: 130). As a sign of the Middle East, the "Turkish augmented second" is also a feature of Balkan and Eastern European folk music (ibid.: 129). Genres such as Macedonian *Čalgiska muzika,* Bosnian *Sevdalinke* and Bulgarian's *Gradski pesni* carry idioms and musical influences of the Ottoman Empire. However, "the augmented second denoting the Orient has very little to do with Turkish music" (ibid.: 131).[21]

According to Franjo Kuhac, the augmented second in a harmonic minor scale "lends itself to courting and expressing melancholy" (cited in Pennannen: 131). In the context of Balkanology's music, the augmented second, harmonic scale and modes are used as to present the exotic musically. Interestingly, the augmented second is "not omnipresent in Ottoman classical music" even though it represents the Orient in Balkan music (ibid.). *Ushti ushti baba* is a typical Romani song, often played at Balkanology, which uses augmented seconds throughout its melismatic melody.[22] For a classical Turkish melody where the augmented second is not omnipresent, listen to Abdullah Yüce's *Bu ne seugi Ah*.[23] Both examples are vocal compositions.

[20] 'Your guide to jazz guitar' www.jazzguitar.be
[21] A typical Bosnian, *Sevdalinka* formed part of my recital, and I adapted the song to a South African Jazz ballad style.
[22] *Ushti ushti baba/Ramo Ramo* is performed by Rumelia (Sitara Schauer. 2012. 'Ushti,ushti baba/Ramo performed by Rumelia'. (Video. YouTube. 7th March 2012. Last viewed October 2012). This song is included in my recital.
[23] www.turkishmusicportal.org/. Accessed October 2012.

Syncopated rhythms

Repetitive rhythms and constant beats that enable dancing are not only a feature of the music played at Balkanology, but of any E.D.M genre. The rhythms are usually either in a simple two beat division of 2/4 or a compound of 5/8(1-2-3/ 1-2, 1-2). Both rhythms are usually dotted or syncopated with a strong emphasis on the first beat. Irregular rhythms are a feature of Balkan traditional folk music, in particular.

Below is an example of a typical song played at Balkanology. This excerpt is a Romani song called *Ushti ushti baba*. The song encapsulates all the musical idioms of a typical Balkan gypsy sound, including the signs of the exotic, such as the augmented second and the harmonic minor scale. All of these signs 'stand for' a specific Balkan sound.

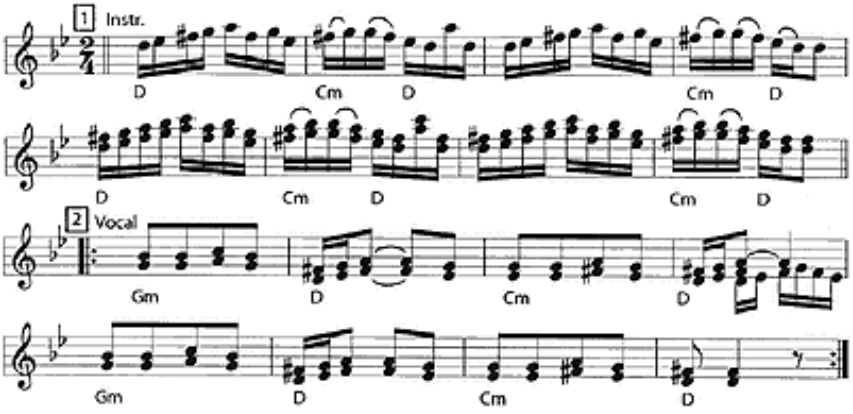


Figure 4. *Ushti ushti baba.* Musical example taken from balkanarama.com/charts.htm, accessed August 2011.

Timbre

For the West Indies' Zouk musicians, "specification of timbre is essential in describing the music" (Guildbault 1993: 134). For percussionist Daniel Kissoun: "The same rhythmic pattern w [ould] be perceived as extremely different from one song to the next in relation to the timbres, the tonality, the tempo, the volume and the mixing" (cited in Guildbault 1993: 134).[24]

Timbre is an important musical feature, as it is able to signify a specific style and musical idiom or tradition (Van Leeuwen 1999: 140). Sound quality can also signify

[24] Zouk music has important similarities to that of Balkanology: Zouk parties are a musical scene, Zouk music is classified as world music and its success is owed to technological developments.

place. For Van Leeuwen timbre "is about the listener's attitude to the place" (ibid.: 141). In the context of Balkanology, sound signs operate as gypsy Balkan construct, particularly the timbres of the brass band that a DJ mixes into the dance track.

In a typical Balkan gypsy song, the brass band starts with an introduction. The metre is a two beat bar which counts as 'one-and- a' (a crotchet and two quavers), in a fast tempo. The piece usually has a strong drum section, accompanying the bass, and sometimes a tambourine. Above this solid, simple structure moves a very bold and ornate melody line, either sung or played by a high-pitched clarinet or a trumpet. The melody line is full, or runs up and down a harmonic minor scale.

The Balkan gypsy brass band sound is typically rough in quality, but very confident and solid sounding. Their compositions are usually fast, played with great vigour. The Balkan brass sound is described by Orr thus:

> The Ottoman Turkish military's brass style, regimented but melodically strong and graceful, was translated into civilian terms by Balkan bands (often with a dozen or more members) that tailored it for entertainment purposes. Harmonic elements from Western Europe were added, and Balkan brass music evolved into a dizzying sonic experience unlike any other. Flugelhorns, tenor horns, saxophones, tubas, clarinets and more are employed (depending on the band and the country), creating a top, middle and bottom sound that shifts and sweeps above hyped-up, marching-style percussion (2012).

Gypsy brass bands are popular worldwide and play at major world festivals: Romania's Fanfare Ciocarlia, Macedonian Maleshevsky Melos and Serbian Boban Markovic Orkestar, are representative examples. Emir Kusturica's 1995 film *Underground* has contributed significantly to the Balkan brass band's global popularity, for which Goran Bregovic wrote the musical score.

The brass band samples mixed into a dance track by a Balkanology DJ adds to a Balkanology party's "dizzy sonic experience" as well as its "festive mood" (Orr, 2012: i). The brass timbre is so prominent; it almost commands you to dance and "entertain" (ibid.).

The *Fiddle East* party at Carfax (2011) hosted an Israeli trio Boom Pam. The trio consisted of electric guitar, drums and tuba. The tuba plays a marching 2/4 rhythm to

support the guitar and percussion, and is reminiscent of an Eastern European gypsy band. Boom Pam's sound is a hybrid of Balkan idioms and punk. When the guitarist added heavy rock solos on top of a strong, marching 2/4 rhythm, this produced more of a punk rock sound. When the band's guitarist played a more chord-based accompaniment with occasional solos (reminiscent of a violin or a trumpet solo in a gypsy band), the sound had an Eastern European flavour. An electric guitar, with its own characteristic texture, doesn't feature as a sonic sign in the 'authentic' or the 'neo-Balkan' sound. Boom Pam's sound thus represents its own musical hybrid form.

The kind of voices used in a typical Balkanology track would either be a deep male voice, speaking a repeated phrase, rather than singing. In a typical Turbo folk song for example, a music producer uses a recorded vocal sample that is looped and repeated throughout the track. A "throaty", chesty singing from both male and female vocalists is a feature of an "authentic" Romani track. Both male and female sound timbres are bold and confident, with little dynamic nuance.

According to Van Leeuwen "the sound helps us directly perceive what is deeply hidden" (2005: 196). All the above aural signs signify the "authentic" Balkan musical idioms. These are: the melismatic melody line (and a gypsy scale), along with brass band and syncopated rhythms. These all add to a specific timbre that produces a Balkan sound. Unlike the visual signs, which mean a specific thing to a Balkanology participant at a party (such as parodied moustaches or the hung washing line), musical signs work as signs outside the Balkanology setting, as either Eastern European or 'Balkanology music'.

Balkanology, as a dance music event, operates like other E.D.M. genres in the sense that it uses many aural signs. Similar to Psy trance, aural signs carry "multiple representations" (Harrop-Allin, 2004). Balkanology participants' responses to the music reveal how the music functions in terms of aural signs: from "it sounds festive, like the wedding" to "it sounds familiar, because of my Jewish heritage"' (Author's interviews, participant Sam 2011). Balkanology thus has similar multi-layered meanings, as Psy trance, where aural signs represent the exotic other and nostalgia for specific times and places.

Returning to Van Leeuwen's concept of "modality": What has been done with the Balkan sound?

According to Van Leeuwen, the "sign producer and the sign interpreter use interpretative resources to create something unique" (1999: 193). Using aural ideas such as brass bands, syncopated rhythms and a harmonic minor scale, music producers (sign interpreters) have created music which stands as an aural symbol of a Balkan sound. It is a presentation of this musical tradition. The "authentic" sign producers (such as Romani and Serbian Gypsy brass bands) would thus represent the 'true' sound (ibid.). Balkanology as a dance music event is a sign interpreter, rather than an "authentic" producer, which has interpreted their vision of a Balkan dance party.

Balkan and technology

During my first interview with Ma'or and a party enthusiast Jasmina, on the subject of defining Balkanology, Jasmina answered, "It's Balkan and technology". Balkan-inspired music is not just about its Balkan influence though but technological advancements too. Because this music genre is electronically produced, it is located with E.M.D genres more broadly. Technology is what enables sampling musical ideas and putting them together. In Balkanology, the use of technology such as downloading music from the internet is particularly significant. The sampling enables DJs and bands to use the aural signs from the Balkan folk, mentioned above, and to include them in the music.

Sampling is a technique where producers are able to manipulate bits of sounds from various sources, using music program software and hardware. "In the production of electronic music, the sampling process encompasses selecting, recording, editing and processing sound pieces to be incorporated into a larger music work" (Rodgers, 2003). For Rose, "aural fragments are used for perceived 'exotic' effect, without investment in, or engagement with the music culture from which the sample was gathered" (cited in Rodgers 2003: 318).

Sampling is a means by which the aural signs can 'work with' the music. One can sample a brass band sound for example; whose melodic elements and texture denote the Orient and the Middle East. The way sampling works in a Balkan-inspired dance track is by

using a motif, looping this over a dance beat. This motif would either be a phrase played by a brass band, or a single instrument like trumpet or a violin, and sometimes a voice. Another way of sampling is to use a gypsy band track and add sounds like an occasional clap sound or a squeaky sound (from a sampler disc) associated with E.D.M. The neo-Balkan music played at the Balkanology parties also uses tools such as delays to manipulate the sounds and the computer to create dynamics on a single note, as well as sounds such as the squeaky scratching of vinyl on a turntable.

What is the "modality" (the degree of truth) of the DJ's work at the Balkanology party? (Van Leeuwen 1999: 180). The role of DJs at parties is mixing, similar to that of any E.M.D event. The amount of mixing and manipulating, however, is very different to house and trance music DJs. House and trance music DJs tend to play around with tempo and dynamics somewhat more, whereas the Balkanology DJs play the track as it is, mixing the track one after the other, with an occasional slowing down of tempos. I have noticed however that Balkanology DJs tend to start their set with slower tracks, which are played softer. As the evening progresses, they tend to play the faster and louder tracks, in line with the festive mood of the party. House, trance, and Balkanology's DJs all plan their sets, so as to enhance the participants' experience and to keep them on the dance floor.

Technological developments have helped this new music to reach global E.D.M trends, as well as popularity. The popularity of Balkan music in the South African Balkan party may have other similarities to its global counterparts, such as the choice of repertoire.

Balkanology's choice of music, the sound (its aural signs described in this chapter) carries the elements of Romanian and Serbian pop (the neo-Balkan sound) as well as elements of world music (Balkan gypsy band). Thus, it is a hybrid musical genre, which marries E.D.M features, as well as Balkan folk and gypsy sounds.

Conclusion

Visually, Balkanology 'depicts' the stereotypical aspects of the Eastern European and Balkan cultures such as moustaches and gypsy wear (Van Leeuwen 2005: 180). Therefore, it evinces a "solitary" (Western) perception (ibid.: 196). Musically, Balkanology uses the aural signs ('authentic' as well as manipulated), in order to signify a sense of Balkan culture.

All the signs work together to convey Balkanology's theatrical presentation of Balkan culture. Combined aural and visual signs in the Balkanology event operate like a form of theatre. It is theatrical in a sense of containing physical key elements that characterizes the theatrical: characters, costumes, the narratives (stories and themes), comedy and sets.

After analysing the party's "presentation" and the "modality" of the work, Balkanology can be understood as a South African 'Balkan gypsy party' (Author's interview, 2007). The Balkan sound and Balkan scene in Balkanology is constructed by the participants' association with the spirit of a region, through the knowledge of its music and films. In Van Leeuwen's terms, Balkanology is "presenting" an aspect of a Balkan culture - an imagined representation.

Chapter 6

The Balkan imagined

This chapter interprets Balkanology as a South African "music scene" (Swiss et al. 1998) and a new world music genre. I interpret the ways in which Balkanology presents the Balkan and why. Specifically, I ask what the meaning of Balkanology is in South Africa today, using the following interpretative categories: Balkanology as "little culture" (McCracken 1997); exoticism and gypsyness; nostalgia and the vibe; and an imagined community (Anderson 1991).

1. Balkanology as little culture

Balkanology parties represent a space where Balkan musical and cultural origins are transported, and interpreted locally in a South African context. Balkanology's appeal can be conceptualized in terms of two ideas: the exotic other (which is a feature of world music) and parody (evident in the themes of Balkanology parties).

In his research on the subcultures of teens in America (b-girls, punks and goths), McCracken highlights three characteristic of the world today, that "there is difference everywhere; it's a dynamic world and a creative world" (McCracken, 1997: 1). McCracken calls this world of many possibilities "plenitude" (ibid.). The teenage subcultures McCracken studies he calls "little cultures", within which "the look is a language, a statement of the world", the dress code, behaviour, and beliefs within a particular group (ibid.). Balkanology can be understood as a "little culture", because it is followed by a small group of people with similar beliefs and is also rooted in popular music, and is not as big or commercially popular as the house music scene in South Africa.

According to McCracken, little cultures are social group formations under the umbrella of teenage subcultures. Balkanology, as a little culture centring on Balkan music, is constructed socially around music played by a DJ, much like any other E.D.M genre. Referring to trance, for example Taylor asserts that

> The young people in this scene cultivate a music and a "little culture" that facilitates their momentary loss of self in the collective effervescence of the group, all accompanied by electronic dance music, provided by a DJ (2001: 13).

Balkanology's participants are specific. They are attracted to the fun, light and humorous nature of Balkanology events and its music. Some participants distinguish Balkanology from the "dark" sounds of a rock or trance party (Tanya, Author's interview, 2012).

2. Balkanology's appeal for participants

Ma'or expresses Balkanology's inclusiveness and the importance of "creating the right environment" for participants. When asked who goes to these parties, he said:

> A wide range of people. On our flyer we have "discounts for students and pensioners", that's the vibe. It all comes to the same thing, I really believe it's for everyone; everyone will be able to enjoy. That's a part of everything. That's why we have to build the right environment, for people to come and kind of let go of their inhibition. It's not about cool and slick, none of that (Author's interview, 2010)

What binds Balkanology's participants seems to be the fascination with the "curious and mad" world that is Balkanology party (Nevitt, 2010). The appeal for most of the participants of this little culture is its theatrical, humorous elements and danceable music.

Through my participation at Balkanology events, I have learned that most of its participants are middle class creatives working in advertising, fashion, music and other similar fields. Balkanology's participants are of different age groups and races, but their similar taste in music binds them together. One of the participants says that what

appeals is "…the music, the vibe and the people. But most of all, I love the chance to dress up and act like a complete fool for the evening!" (www.facebook.com).

Similarly to trance party goers, Balkanology parties are collective experiences. This experience manifests itself through participant's identification with the music, dancing and performance aspects of Balkanology. The participants know what to expect from a Balkanology event: to dance and to perform as someone else for the night, within a unique, festive atmosphere that is created through both visual and aural elements.

Since this 'little culture' is fairly new, I have attempted to find out who the participants are in terms of their musical tastes. I have noticed a group of psychedelic trance listeners for example, dancing and enjoying the Balkan party. They are easily recognised by their tie-die clothing and dreadlocked hair. My close group of friends, and their friends (all in late thirties and older), are all ex-clubbers. Our choice of dance events in the 1990s was drum 'n bass, or house music parties. However, in the contemporary Balkanology scene, most of these participants no longer attend house music parties, but are regulars at a Balkanology event.

The younger generation of dance music goers enjoy the Balkanology event as an alternative to a trendy, and what is perhaps regarded as 'superficial' house music parties, in the affluent suburbs like Sandton in Johannesburg. Balkanology parties are seen as more meaningful, less commercial and more "authentic". What distinguishes Balkanology from commercial parties such as house music parties is its specific blend of musics, identified as 'Balkan', with Eastern European or Middle-Eastern roots.

Participant Tanya (an ex-Rocker), describes the appeal of Balkanology's music:

> Balkanology parties are fresh on the Johannesburg party scene, so for one, I enjoy the parties, because they are not of the norm and are something new and different to experience. House and rock parties have certain darkness to them, and the music is very deep, whereas Balkan music is more upbeat and festive (Author's interview, 2012).

Balkanology as a 'little culture', means various things to its disparate participants. For a Psy trance participant, it is about the communal, unpretentious gathering. For ex-clubbers, it represents a quirky new trend (and a reason to go to a dance party again).

For a participant from a younger generation, it is an escape from the known, the rock or house music parties. What binds these experiences together is the Balkan music. Balkanology participants are a small number of people, who have branched out of their own social groups to form a 'little culture' called Balkanology. As part of a 'little culture', they are bound by their mutual interest in world music and new musical trends, and a love for communal dancing.

Balkanology is an inclusive, not an exclusive party, like other E.D.M parties tend to be. "It's a place to lose your inhibitions, a place to be away from cool, to let go, to celebrate life. Not to be better than anyone but to be together with everyone" (Ma'or, Author's interview, 2010).

Dressing up is a part of enjoying a whole experience of an exotic, imagined Balkan gypsy land that Balkanology parties are designed to create. The exotic appeal of Balkanology's music is one of the reasons for the party's success in South Africa, as it is for American DJ/producer 'Beirut': "It's about fantasising about being from somewhere else" (Lynskey 2006). His debut album consists of remixes of the folk music from the Balkans, although he has never been to Lebanon or the Balkans. Music has the ability to perform this kind of imaginative leap, to transport one to another place.

Part of the appeal of this music is its non-commercial nature. This is not commercial music liked by a worldwide market, but a specific "subcultural, communal market" (Frith, 2001: 94). For Ma'or, the Balkanology concept was born out of the love for the Balkan music. In an interview with a journalist, Ma'or explained that:

> I love the music so much. Balkan and Eastern European music is so big in Israel. Inspired by a band called The No Smoking Orchestra, I started checking out the music. I joined with friends like Kyla (Freshly Ground), in order to remix and make the sounds more palatable for the Western ear (Nevitt interview 2010).

3. Exoticism

A large part of Balkanology's appeal is the exotic: encapsulated in the music and the gypsy dress-up experience. According to Edward Said, the idea of the exotic Orient is an

"imaginary of the West" (1978: 1). It represents the West's perceptions of "other", particularly "Oriental" cultures. Said's concept of 'us' and 'them' originates in colonial attitudes that European culture is superior to others. The Orient is seen as unequal to the West, backward and degeneric (ibid.: 1). According to Said, the "exotic Orient" is an "idea that has given it reality and presence for the West" (ibid.: 1).

In Balkanology however, the exotic and the gypsyness is a representation of the exotic in the Balkan and Eastern European cultures, through their Middle Eastern and Indian origins.

4. Constructing Gypsyness

In my aural and visual analysis, I concluded that Balkanology is a presentation of a stereotyped aspect of the Eastern European and Balkan cultures through concentrated aural and visual signs (Van Leeuwen, 1999: 180). Balkanology's idea of the Balkans is presented as the West's fascination with the other. One of the exoticised stereotypes is an image of a romantic gypsy. In the context of Balkanology, it is the exoticised image of the Balkans, via the constructed gypsy image that is most prominent.

Many writers have theorised why the Balkans are exoticised via the gypsies. Szeman for example, argues that migrant Balkan audiences (and the musicians themselves), living and working in the West, are "advertising gypsy music to further Orientalize Balkan identities, via the gypsies" (2009: 100). Maria Todorova calls this "re- enacting Balkanism" and Milica Bakić-Hayden, "nesting Orientalism" (cited in Szeman, 2009: 100). Bakić-Hayden describes the exoticisation as the "application of Orientalism to nationalities from former Yugoslavia" (cited in Szeman, 2009: 100). The Oriental Balkan in fact represents its own identity, according to Todorova. It is a "metaphor for the forbidden, and a refuge from the alienation of a rapidly industrializing West" (1997: 13). Gypsies tend to represent the 'exotic' inside the Balkans. They further signify the "metaphor for the forbidden" of which Todorova speaks. When transfigured into Balkanology in South Africa, gypsy sounds and visuals are further displaced, to become signs of one's own idea of gypsyness.

As Van de Port confirms, the "gypsyness of gypsy music is a construct on the perceiver's part, their Serbian friends – the stranger within" (1999: 292). De Port highlights the difference between the "authentic gypsy music for the gypsies" and a projected image of a gypsy music as a construct for others (in this case their Serbian listeners). Balkanology's construct of gypsyness is an idea created by Ma'or and his team for South African listeners, via visual and aural signs.

Szeman calls this process of exoticising the gypsy, "gypsification" (2009: 113). She uses DJ Shantel's song and a music video for *Ţiganizaţia* as an example. Like the Gypsies in the Serbian songs Van de Port discusses, DJ Shantel's "gypsyfication" has less to do with the Roma and more with the orientalist perspective in Romania toward gypsies and manele.[25]The video takes place in Istanbul, the music is from the Balkans, and gypsification represents the link between the two.

The influence of film

A further mechanism of gypsyfication and constructing the exotic is via films and the other media. Much of Balkanology's inspiration draws from Emir Kusturica's films. Bosnian film maker Kusturica's films such as *Underground* (1995), *Black cat, white cat* (1997), and *Time of the gypsies* (1988), have been an inspiration for some of Balkanology party's themes, such as: 'War and peace' (2007), 'The Wake (a funeral theme)' (2009) and 'The great Balkan wedding' (2007). Ma'or explains that

> Kusturica's movies were very important. It was the music – and then we tried to emulate the feel of the villages in his movies: the feel of the unbridled freedom encaged in drinking and poverty (Author's interview, 2010)

Emir Kusturica's films and Goran Bregovic's music represent another reason for the "Balkan association with the wave of Gypsy music" (Szeman, 2009). In Kusturica's films, Gypsy culture is acknowledged as a part of Balkan culture. Kusturica was both praised and critiqued for this work.[26] The criticism of his work was based on the fact that he

[25] See Chapter Three on Manele and other popular music forms from the Balkans.
[26]The film was awarded Palme d'Or at Cannes film festival in 1995. www.imbd.com.
See Cédric Housez's article 'The betrayal of the scholars: Alain Finkielkraut and Bernard Henry Levy, two propagandists of the clash of the civilizations' on Kusturica critique (2005).

portrays the Balkans as "backward and Oriental, corporeal and semi-rural, rude, funny but intimate" (Kiossev 2003: 16). In his comedy *Black cat, white cat*, Kusturica brings to us the Oriental, exotic, gypsy and makes us laugh and cry with him. Most importantly, his story centres on gypsy life, which the Westerners who attend these parties know very little about. The gypsies are still seen as the 'exotic other' in most European countries. This community is foreign, unknown and hidden, which is part of its ultimate appeal.

The romantic gypsy

According to Suresh Pillai, the term "gypsy" was invented by British anthropologists (2012: 1). For most people, a gypsy represents individuals and communities who lead a nomadic way of life (ibid.). Historically, gypsies are Romani people who, although Europe's largest minority, have been some of the most marginalised and underprivileged communities in Europe (ibid.). In Sweden for example, Roma racism has been an ongoing problem. The gap between "us" and "them" had been addressed in the recent years, to close the divide between the Roma and the mainstream society (Slavnic 2012).

Balkanology's romantic gypsy is a more positive Western perception associated with freedom, beauty and flamboyance. For participant Angela, [the concept of] 'gypsy' "represents creativity that springs from poverty and constantly being on the run" (Author's interview, 2012). Angela continues to explain a Westerner's idea about gypsies, noting that "the meaning, for me would be creativity and even femininity" (ibid.).

Visual signs, as described in the previous chapter, represent the "mysterious gypsy" (Luca 2008), which is part of the Western perception of gypsyness. For Balkanology, the music's gypsyness is the participant's imaginary relation to it. Musical signs enable this imaginative leap to happen. Tanya, a participant, calls Balkanology "a mini foreign gypsy land". Musically, Balkanology interprets its gypsyness as a feeling or as the "stranger within" (ibid.). In an interview with Sam, a participant at the Carfax Balkanology party,

she describes Balkanology music as Eastern European thus: "I feel it because of my Lithuanian background" (Author's interview 2011)

Balkanness and a mixed musical mosaic

Largely due to Kusturica's films, Balkan gypsy music and culture are conflated at Balkanology parties: the Balkans as the rural gypsy land and the gypsy who came from the Balkans. Szeman argues that the "non-Romani works featuring Roma, such as Kusturica's *Time of the gypsies* and *Black cat, white cat*, have created a whole field of signifiers that continue to be quoted, recycled and perpetuated" (2009: 103). Kusturica admits he "projected his own vision of what it is to be gypsy" (ibid.), which is similar to what happens at Balkanology parties.

Balkanology's 'Balkanness' is communicated through sampled Balkan Romani music elements and visual signs. Different themes and dress codes serve the purpose of enhancing Balkanology's "foreign twist" and by extension the Western fascination with the exotic other. This idea came to South Africa, and the rest of the world, via Kusturica's films and Romani music, sampled by DJs. Balkanology quotes one musical heritage of the Balkans in particular, that of the gypsy. Thus, the Balkans and the gypsy in Balkanology are purely a musical and not a cultural connection, and gypsy music is itself a hybrid. The kind of music played at Balkanology is a representation of gypsy music from the Balkans. Dorian Lynskey argues: "there is no such thing as gypsy music" (2006: 1). Gypsies and their musical tradition have always assimilated the music of a particular dominant society (ibid.: 2). Gypsy music is a style of playing rather, characterised by "syncopated Arab rhythms and elaborately ornamented virtuosic and improvisational melodic passages" (Szeman 2009: 102). Thus it would be expected for this kind of music to be described as a hybrid.

Nevertheless, Balkanology does not only play 'gypsy' music. Since Balkanology's first parties in Cape Town (2006), parties have become less and less Balkan. The choice of music includes World music, particularly folk music, and the themes draw inspiration from various other sources: the Greek party, Country Western and Mexican.

Balkanology's compilation CD for example, suggests a wide range of musical genres played at the parties. 'Balkanology Volume 1' CD compilation (a 2007 release) lists: Electronic, Hip Hop, Jazz, Blues, Folk, World and Country. Under style there is: Gypsy Jazz, Experimental, Folk and Neo-Folk. These, very different genres and styles, Balkanology lists provide insight into mixed flavours.

As a Serbian participant at a Balkanology event called it, the music played at the party a "mixed pot". Balkanology is now a mixture of different folk influences in the music, from Balkans, Eastern European, to Mediterranean and Middle East. DJs sets, as well as live music played, captures an exotic flavour that sets Balkanology apart from other dance events. Ma'or explains:

> We started off playing remixes by Shantel to traditional as in folk songs, the kind that no one knows who wrote them, and now its current music that is inspired by Balkan music. I think that the music we play as the years go by is less and less Balkan. It's more the feel of the music that is left opposed to the real Balkan melodies, played by Balkan people (Author's interview 2011).

The music played at Balkanology is a "mixed pot" from more than one perspective. Looking at it from a "Balkan party" perspective, the music played is anything from Romani gypsy band's wedding music, to Serbian turbo folk. From the electronic dance event perspective, Balkanology includes both the live (acoustic bands) and electronic acts (DJs).

Balkanology's choice of music might be wide-ranging, but there is one common thread: the music is always upbeat and up-tempo, containing elements identified as the other, the exotic, the non-South African. Balkanology's music is a multilayered party music which includes Balkan traditional folk idioms and instruments. What is interesting is that the borrowed musical ideas are always kept in their 'authentic' form – a chorus or a solo passage might be looped over a dance beat, but the actual sample is taken from the original source, a recording of a Romani gypsy wedding band for example. Balkanology's style of playing and performance, combined with the visual and aural signs make up 'gypsy music'. This music is connected to Balkan folk, as well as to Middle Eastern and Oriental (Turkish) musical idioms.

Whatever Balkanology is as a "mixed pot", and what its "feel" is, it has a strong presence on South African party scene. As an advertisement for the *Fiddle East* party (October 2011), Ma'or writes:

> Ambush life's struggles and dance them to pieces. A mini Balkanology to remind us that life is worth living! Come, lose your inhibitions and let go to Electro Balkan, Yugoslav house, Folk step and Bell Funk.

More importantly, Balkanology as an event is a style. At the local outdoor music festivals such as the annual *Oppikoppi* music festival, you might find a Balkanology tent, next door to the house, trance and love music dance floors. The choice of repertoire played by the DJs at Balkanology is generally described as "Balkanology music" (Author's interview 2010).

5. Nostalgia, the vibe and the atmosphere

A common thread in the perception of this music, among both the South African and Balkan listeners is the idea of nostalgia – nostalgia for something lost perhaps, in the case of immigrant Balkans and nostalgia for the exotic other. For a South African Jewish participant Sam, "It is Eastern European music. I feel it because of my Lithuanian background." (Author's interview 2011). Jewish folk living in South Africa are mostly of Balkan and Eastern European descent. Kayla, the violinist from *Freshly Ground* confirms, "Somehow deep inside me there is this connection to the music. I just feel it automatically".[27]

Alexander Kiossev recognizes "nostalgia for such counter-models of identification" (2003: 16).[28] Kayla's feeling of nostalgia is related to her family roots. Nostalgia and our South African, musical identity, acts in a similar way. We tend to "feel" the African traditional music because of our musical heritage.

Serbian musician Slobodan Trkulja explains:

> One of the characteristics of traditional music is that the sentiment of the songs is so familiar. It is not necessary to know the language to understand the song. This music communicates on the basis of

[27] Balkanology video footage. 2005. Unpublished raw data.
[28] It is important to stress the fact that musical genres such as Turbo folk, Yugo rock and Manele helped pave the way for the new global genre, Neo-Balkan (the genre played at Balkanology).

> emotion, through some old language, the language of a higher force, known to all. This is why it is so respected. The songs I play and sing have equally been accepted in Holland, France, Germany, and other countries (Vmiletin 2012)

According to Stokes, music has the power to evoke "collective memories" and thus we are able to "relocate" ourselves to our past experiences of a particular place (cited in Hemetek, 2010: 118). Balkanology music evokes the place and memory for me personally, and shares the elements of nostalgia that is a strong feature of other E.D.M genres. In Psy trance for example, there are "multiple representations of nostalgia," for 1990 raves, 1960s hippie cultures, Goa trance and the ancient rituals of indigenous peoples such as the San (Harrop-Allin 2004: 61). Balkanology shares a similar nostalgia for early 1990s house music parties. However, Psy trance is also not directly connected to the San's trance dance, but rather to a construct of its communal and spiritual characteristics. The similarity between these two "little cultures" is the communal aspect which happens on the dance floor, dancing to a DJ set, feeling transported into another world. Timothy Taylor calls this "the vibe" (2001: 172). For Psy as a trance participant, the other world is "a journey of transcendence" (ibid.), whereas for Balkanology participants, it is a form of "cultural tourism" (Lynskey 2006: 3). Lynskey describes an American DJ Beirut as "a cultural tourist holidaying in the colourful otherness of old Europe before moving on to the next thing" (ibid.). Balkanology's cultural tourism has a significant meaning in South Africa today, as it transports us to an exotic land, Balkan and beyond, thus creating a reality of its own.

Why Balkan?

Balkanology is a metaphor for a South African Balkan party. Having been involved in Balkanology for some years now, both as a participant and as a performer, I look forward to their themed parties. My Balkanology journey has made me aware of how multicultural South African society really is, and how curious and hungry it is for learning and keeping up with the global trends. Most importantly, for the South African participant, Balkanology represents an opportunity for having alternative or imaginary musical/dance experiences that runs counter to mainstream dance culture.

In Lausevic's *Balkan fascination: creating an alternative music culture in America* (1994), the author links the "Balkanites" (the Americans involved in Balkan cultural practices, music and dance) to "American creativity, lack of community and multiculturalism" (1994: 52). The people she interviewed could not articulate why they were fascinated with the Balkan culture in particular.

These kinds of musical experiences are able to evoke past memories and experiences, which we use to "relocate" ourselves (Stokes, cited in Hemetek 2010). Some participants at the Balkanology party identify with the music as something to do with them, some ancestral connection. Others have no connection but are attracted to the music and perhaps its ability to transport us to a foreign, "exotic" world.

Neo-Balkan music represents the "exotic other" to South African Balkanology participants and listeners and can thus be understood to be part of world music that works on binaries between the West and non-West. The term 'world music' was invented by record labels, in the early 1960s, to describe any music which is non-Western. They marketed it and sold it as "primitive, exotic, tribal, ethnic, folk, traditional or international" (Feld 2000: 147).

In 'A Sweet Lullaby to World Music', Steven Feld interrogates notions of authenticity or authentic traditions and "commercial potential" (2000: 145). Feld acknowledges Deep Forest's commercial success of *Sweet Lullaby*, which is based on a Baegu tune from northern Malaita titled Rorogwela, sung by Afunakwa. This song became popular once it was sampled to a dance beat, in a 1992 release by Sony. Following Feld, Balkanology can be understood as part of world music, as it follows similar patterns of musical appropriation and reworking as groups like Deep Forest.

In the Balkanology context, the choice of music could have easily been any world music genre from anywhere else in the world. It is not surprising that the choice of music was Balkan for two reasons: South Africa followed the growth of neo-Balkan music from the late 1990s, and the originator of Balkanology, Ma'or', was personally connected to it. The fact that this music carries so much of the oriental and Middle Eastern musical

idioms must have appealed to Ma'or, who is Israeli born. Furthermore, many South Africans have Middle Eastern, Balkan and Mediterranean roots.

Besides the musical connection, Balkanology participants are joined together socially, as a "little culture" which can ultimately be described as an imagined community.

6. Balkanology as an 'imagined community'

Keyserling in Todorova stated, "If the Balkans hadn't existed, they would have been invented."(1997: 1).

According to Todorova, the Balkan image is one of not willing to "conform to the standards and behaviour of the civilized world" (ibid.: 3). More than its geographical borders, the Balkan came to symbolize a social behaviour. In the case of Balkanology, it is a synonym for an alternative music scene that is non-conformist and thus different from other mainstream, hip-hop or house dance music scenes. The Balkans are imagined and constructed by Ma'or and the participants with whom he shares his events, as an exotic one-night experience at music dance event.
Based on my evidence and the interpretation, I use Benedict Anderson's concept of an "imagined community" to further interpret Balkanology (1991). I argue that Balkanology may be interpreted as constituting an "imagined community" because of its interpretation of Balkan culture and because its members are connected by similar musical interests. Anderson's concept of "the imagined community" is based in the discipline of political science, in which he explores his views on nationalism. Although Anderson refers to imagined communities in terms of nations, the concept can be applied to Balkanology, because Balkanology is a "little culture", a small group of people joined together at an imagined place. Their group works only in the context of a Balkanology event.

Anderson's imagined community is "socially constructed" (Anderson, 1983). The Balkanology music scene is socially constructed, through music. Balkanology participants do not necessarily know each other outside the context of the party. They share similar interests, world music and communal dancing, which creates a sense of

collectivity through sharing the same "qualities" and, most importantly, a mutual feeling of "belonging" (ibid.). Balkanology participants' feeling of belonging happens on the dance floor, through performance, dress and dance moves share the fascination.
For the American DJ/producer, Beirut, it's about "fantasizing about being from somewhere else" (Lynskey 2006: 1). Imagining you are from "someplace else", i.e. role playing and performativity, is part of the appeal of a South African Balkan party.

In Stokes' *East, West, and Arabesk*, the author talks of the "largely imagined musics of the East" as a feature of Orientalism, but which can produce "significant innovations" in Western music (1994: 214). Balkanology does this musically.

The West's fascination with exotic music is a known fact, and has been documented and debated academically on many occasions. Stokes, for one, speaks about "the Turkophilia in the eighteen century Vienna" and "the taste for musical exotica in late eighteenth and nineteen-century England" (ibid.). For Stokes, these are all Orientalisms. In a Balkanology context, Orientalism manifests itself through the music and the exploration of exotic musical idioms.

What does Balkanology mean in South Africa today?

Ma'or and his team initially began with a concept for Balkanology as: "the idea to create the ultimate space for people to let go" (Nevitt interview 2010). This idea has taken many different shapes over the years, from party to party. The event at 44 Stanley was a gypsy party, whereas the *Fiddle East* party at Carfax was a Mediterranean-themed one. Balkanology is trying to reinvent itself with every new event, in creating the most innovative idea. Tanya confirms this saying, **"**I went to a Balkanology party where chickens and goats were running around and women were dressed up in Grecian attire, giving it a foreign twist" (Author's interview 2012).

My research followed Balkanology at the peak of its popularity. What will happen to this party scene a few years from now may be of interest to future research.

The multi-layered face of Balkanology can be divided into two main categories: (exotic) world music, and theatricality. Balkanology welcomes participants with Balkan folk music, surrounded by the images and icons of an intimate gypsy village. Balkanology stands for a uniquely South African Balkan party.

In concluding, I ask: what is imagined in Balkanology? Balkanology transports you to an imagined gypsy land via its exotic music. As a social gathering, Balkanology provides a space to dream and explore one's own creativity, both socially and musically.

What "processes of innovation" can we see in South African dance music scene? (Stokes 1994: 214). One can say that the South African Balkan dance music scene has been balkanised. The term "Balkanisation" always stood for the process of fragmentation. Today it has a new, more positive, meaning. This term can be used to describe a division of South African popular music into many different genres and styles. Balkanology's choice of music could have been any other folk, or exotic kind. The choice was a Balkan folk because of the influence of Kusturica's films, as well as the latest musical trend, the neo-Balkan genre, which followed.

7. Performing Balkan, and Balkan-inspired music

As a musician and a performer, I am able to hear, feel and sing a particular sound, whereas written research can only interpret it. Choosing the repertoire for my two recitals was equally as exciting as it was difficult. My search led me to new repertoires I had never sung before. I believe that in the end, I chose pieces that were not only Balkan and Eastern European, whether imagined or "authentic!", but were also suited to me vocally.

My two recitals encompassed a range of periods and styles, from late Romantic arias to neo-Classical pieces, ending with my kwela adaptation of a Bosnian folk song. Musically I found myself in a sea of exotic scales (the gypsy, the Oriental) with which I was not altogether familiar with. Also, singing my classical repertoire required a warm sound, while the contemporary one stayed in a bold, chesty sound. At the same time, as a jazz singer, I enjoyed the improvisatory nature of some gypsy folk compositions.

The common thread that binds this repertoire together is the folk-song nature of the text. The songs talk about country life, marriage, superstition and God. The challenge for me musically was to give each piece the simplicity as well as depth it deserved. I found that Balkan and Eastern European music carried a certain boldness and honesty, which you don't always hear in Western music. It is either very happy or very sad, hardly anything in between.

The real challenge was learning to perform gypsy music. The simplicity of these compositions lies in the structure, but the aesthetics of the style of playing takes years of mastery to accomplish. Learning how to sing gypsy music was a real discovery for me personally, as I grew up listening to some of these compositions and never took them seriously as I thought they were easy.

As a performer, the Balkanology research project has opened my ears to a whole new body of repertoire, which I plan to explore further. What does Balkan music and Balkanology mean to its participants, organisers and DJs? Both the creative, performance aspect and the written research component lead me to conclude that Balkanology is an exotic escape for those who partake in it, mediated through the language of music and dance.

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Appendix: Master's voice recital programmes.

Ziza Mhlongo, Masters recital (1), 21st March 2012

Piano: Ilse Myburgh and Aukse Trinkunas (Mezzo-soprano)

1. **Anton Dvorak.** *Zigeunerlieder* (Gipsy songs), Op.55
   Mein Lied ertönt (My song resounds)
   Ei, wie mein triangle (Hark! How my triangle)
   Rings is der Wald (Silent woods)
   Als die alte Mutter (Songs my mother taught me)
   Reingestimmt die Saiten (Tune thy fiddle, gipsy!)
   In dem weiten, breiten, luft'gen leinenkleide (Garbed in flowing linen)
   Darf des Falken Schwinge (The hights of Tatra)

2. **Jakov Gotovac.** Djula's aria from *Ero s onoga svijeta*.

3. **Zoltán Kodály.** *Epigrams* Nine songs for medium voice and piano.
   The Fields
   Spring
   Lullaby
   The dream

4. **Bedřich Smetana.** Mařenka's aria from *Bartered bride***.**

5. **Stevan St. Mokranjac.** *Song- wreaths No.9*, Songs from Monte Negro
   Dusan Maksimović. *Serbian love song from Kosovo*
   Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Duet No.7 from *Pikovaya dama* (Queen of spades)

6. **Sergey Rachmaninoff.** A dream (from *Six songs*), Op.8 No.5.
   The lilacs (from *Twelve songs*), Op. 21 No.5.
   In the silent night (S. Fet), Op.4 No.3.
7. **Modest Mussorgsky**. Khivria's song and hopak from *The fair of Sorochinsk*

Programme notes and translations

Zigeunerlieder Op.55 -Anton Dvořák

(Mein Lied ertönt- My song resounds)
My song sounds of love
when the old day is dying;
it is sowing its shadows
and reaping a collections of pearls.

My song resonates with longing
while my feet roam distant lands.
My homeland is in the distant wilderness -
my song stirs with nationalism.

Dvořák, a Czech composer, wrote the Gipsy song cycle for voice and piano in 1880. The songs are set to poems by Adolf Heyduk in both Czech and German.

Djula's aria from *Ero s onoga svijeta***-** Jakov Gotovac
Gotovac is a Croatian composer known for his use of national romanticism and folklore. His most famous comic opera *Ero s onoga svijeta (Ero the joker)* is a perfect example of his nationalistic orientation in music.

Epigrams Nine songs for medium voice and piano- Zoltán Kodaly
Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodaly originally intended these nine pieces for solo voice and piano as part of his choral method. They consisted of vocalises intended for reading at sight, to improve musicianship and literacy. The words were added later by Melinda Kistetenyi.

Mařenka's aria from *Bartered bride* **–** Bedřich Smetana
Smetana's comic opera *The bartered bride (Prodana nevjesta)* is considered to have made a major contribution towards the development of Czech music because of the use of traditional folk dances such as polka and furiant.

Song- wreaths No.9, Songs from Monte Negro**-** Stevan St. Mokranjac

Serbian love song from Kosovo- Dusan Maksimović

Duet No.7 from *Pikovaya dama* (Queen of spades) **-** Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

By choosing the first two duets I wanted to demonstrate the usage of unwritten folk material into organized art. Tchaikovsky's duet was chosen for its aesthetic appeal. It's simple yet charming melody and harmonies describe an evening in the countryside.

A dream (My native land I once enjoyed, H. Heine), Op.8 No.5.-Sergey Rachmaninoff

The lilacs (At the red of the dawn, E. Beketova), Op. 21 No.5.

In the silent night (S. Fet), Op.4 No.3.

Rachmaninoff's songs for solo voice and piano are rich in colour and are representative of romanticism in Russian classical music. Composer's beautiful melody lines are accompanied by intricate piano parts which are not always easy to play. These songs are vocally challenging for a singer because of their demanding vocal range as well as broad phrasing.

Khivria's song and hopak from *The fair of Sorochinsk***-** Modest Mussorgsky

Mussorgsky's comic opera *The fair of Sorochinsk* was unfinished and unperformed upon his death in 1881. It is based on Nikolay Gogol's collection of Ukrainian stories. First completed version was performed in 1917 and the best known piece from the opera is Gopak which was also arranged by S. Rachmaninoff. This piece demonstrates the use of an original folk material, 'hopak', in a classical art music form, an opera. This song is demanding because of its fast rhythmic passages in the hopak.

Second Masters recital.

Ziza Mhlongo: **'Balkan Imagined',** 23rd March 2013, 7pm.
The Music room, 8th floor, University corner
Musicians: Paul Ferreira- piano
Theo Erasmus- accordion
Nippy Cripwell- upright bass
Raoul Roux- guitar
Jean- Louise Nel- viola

My journey of exploring Balkanology has been by far the most enriching experience for me as a person and a musician. It has truly taken me to musical as well as spiritual places I never thought I would get to. Firstly, I would like to thank my mentors: Eugenie Chopin, Judy Page, Dr Susan Harrop-Allin, Theodora Drummond and Prof. Malcolm Nay. Thank you to musicians for their time and passion. Thank you to my family and friends for their unconditional support and my husband for his patience.

The following program continues to explore Balkan and Eastern European musical idioms, however 'authentic' or imagined. My first recital focused mostly on the late Romantic Balkan and Eastern European compositions while the second one is contemporary, starting with a neo- classical compositions of Stravinsky's and ending with my adaptation of a Bosnian folk song.

Through my research on Balkanology as a music scene in Johannesburg I learned that there is no deeper connection to the Balkans and their tradition rather than the music itself. Big part of Balkanology's appeal is the exotic Balkan gypsy music played at the parties. Balkanology music scene is about exploring the new music trends in terms of folk music in general, rather than the conventional Western, mainstream, music.
My pieces were chosen on the basis of the ideas which have developed out of the research on Balkanology: the folk tune, the exotic gypsy and nostalgia.
I will introduce each item personally.

Part one

1. Igor Stravinsky
   'Die Novize' (Spring), Op.6, No.1
   'Der heilige Tau' (A song of the dew - mystic song of the ancient Russian flagellants), Op.6, No.2
   'Pastorale'

2. Dmitri Shostakovich (from *Six Spanish songs*)
   'Farewell Granada!'
   'Starlets'
   'First meeting'

3. Samuel Barber
   'With rue my heart is laden' Op.2, No.2
   'Bessie Bobtail' (Op.2, No.3)
   'Promiscuity' (Op.29, No.7)

4. Bela Bartok: 'Tears of autumn' Op. 16

5. Vjekoslav Rosenberg- Ružić; 'Chanson d'automne' Op. 26 c

6. D. Ivančan: Bagrem i jablan'

Part Two

7. Béla Bartók (arranged and re written by Z. Mhlongo)
   'Silver moonbeams' (Hungarian folk song)

8. 'Ushti, ushti baba' (traditional Macedonian Romani song)

9. Moj kraj' ('My land'). Music: Marcus Wyatt.
   Lyrics: Z. Mhlongo, from *Takatakatak* film soundtrack)

10. ‘Ntjilo Ntjilo (in style of Django Reinhardt)

Words and music: Allan Silinga, Croatian translation: Z. Mhlongo

11. ‘O paraiso (‘Heaven’) By Madredeus

12. ‘Elohai’ (‘My God’)

Words: Bezal’el Aloni and Ofra Haza

Music: Goran Bregovic and Ofra Haza

13. ‘Ne klepeci nanulama’ (Bosnian folk song)

Husain Kurtagić, re arranged and re written by Z. Mhlongo