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## World Music festivals and tourism: a case study of Serbia's Guca trumpet festival

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From its foundation in 1961 until the present day, the Guca trumpet festival has undergone significant transformations. Setting out as a small-scale cultural revival of Serbian brass orchestra tradition held annually in the village of Guca in the Dragacevo region of western Serbia, the festival has evolved over time into a great World Music spectacle. Disputes about the interpretation and representation of the national past and musical heritage have long been induced in public by the unsettled political situation in Serbia and by the festival's gradual integration into the global music industry and cultural tourism market. In consequence, the festival's relationship to issues of authenticity, tradition preservation, globalization impact, and representation politics continues to be viewed and discussed through familiar dichotomies. Using the interrelated theoretical models from World Music and cultural tourism studies, this paper aims to explore the reasons for the festival's prominent status in national cultural policies, as well as the contradictory meanings that it has generated in a variety of discourses.

**Keywords:** World Music; national heritage; globalization; representation politics

### Introduction

The Guca trumpet festival is held annually in the village of Guca in the Dragacevo region of western Serbia from 1961 with the aim of promoting what is regarded as authentic Serbian traditional music and other Serbian 'brands' with national costumes, customs, food, drink, and textiles. The festival program consists of a competition and a manifestation part. The former is focused on the Serbian folk brass orchestras (within the senior, junior, and pioneer categories) that are competing among themselves for a range of awards, with the *First Trumpet* and *First Orchestra* being the most significant ones.<sup>1</sup> The latter is organized around a display of overall national folk production (within music, visual arts, literature, crafts, customs, etc.), including several concerts of both national and international brass orchestras and popular musicians. Although the festival time frame has largely varied over time (from 2 to 10 days, and from mid-October to early August), nowadays it is held in the first half of August, with the program highlights being delivered within the last four days of the designated festival week and on two official stages, one before the Guca Culture House and the other at the local stadium. However, a great deal of the festival fun also takes place in the streets and numerous tent restaurants and bars scattered all around the village.

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The 51-year-long development of the festival from a local, small-scale event into a globally recognized World Music spectacle within ever-changing political, socioeconomic, and cultural circumstances in the country has generated various and very often contradictory public discourses on both the festival's local and global meanings, as well as on its prominent status in national cultural policies. The aim of this paper is to unpack some of the meanings circulating in this complex discursive field by the use of the interrelated theoretical models from cultural tourism studies and related disciplines, such as ethnomusicology, popular music studies, and sociology.

To begin with, this paper seeks to investigate how the festival has come to gain such a great popularity at home and worldwide, and how it has succeeded in establishing itself as a distinct Serbian brand. Setting out from a brief historical overview of Serbian brass orchestra practice in the years prior and after the festival's foundation, this strand of inquiry provides the context within which the Guca trumpet festival has been developing and changing to meet the demands and needs of the present.

The main body of the paper is concerned with the issues of tradition, authenticity, globalization, and representation politics, which all play a significant role in the construction of the Guca trumpet festival's multiple and contradictory meanings. Informed by the interconnected theoretical concepts from World Music, cultural tourism, and globalization studies, and carried out through a discourse analysis of various media texts and monographs on the festival, the discussion on the above issues aims to examine the extent to which the festival fits into the existing interpretations of World Music and cultural tourism practices.

In this paper, discourse analysis is understood and exercised in a Foucauldian way, pointing to the bounds of the *episteme*, or *discursive formation*, within which opinions are formed and identities articulated. Applied to the Guca festival's case, discourse analysis aims to shed light upon the epistemological assumptions and hidden motivations lying behind the discursive formation surfacing across a range of texts on the festival and operating at different institutional sites associated with the festival.

### **The historical background of brass orchestra music in Serbia**

Serbian brass orchestra music can be interpreted as an 'invented tradition' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) in the sense that it was initiated during the country's revolutionary national and social movements leading to the liberation from the Ottoman occupation and the formation of a constitutional monarchy and modern nation state in 1804. The first brass orchestra (called *Knjaževsko-serbska banda*) was formed in 1831 during the rule of Prince Milos Obrenovic, adopting a tonally based Central European orchestra music style, and serving mainly military purposes.<sup>2</sup> From the 1840s until the end of the nineteenth century, this practice flourished first in Serbian towns and then, at the turn of the twentieth century, it penetrated musical life in Serbian villages as well (Golemovic 1996). Having been spread into villages and integrated into the pre-existing folk music practices,<sup>3</sup> Serbian brass orchestra music evolved into three distinctive and territory-bound musical styles: (1) Zlatibor-Dragevo style (in the southwestern region), (2) Vlach style (in the northeastern region),

and (3) Vranje style (in the southeastern region) (see, for instance, Devic 2000 in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, pp. 229–231, Babic 2004).

Thus, from its introduction into Serbian musical practice as part of the modernization project in a newly established Serbian nation state, and then through its repetition and further development according to the needs and demands of each moment in the history that followed,<sup>4</sup> Serbian brass orchestra practice came to signify the authentic national musical tradition giving Serbian history a sense of continuity and coherence. The invented tradition hence became well established and consolidated.

### ***The Guca trumpet festival: from a local cultural revival to a globally renowned World Music spectacle***

The new momentum in the development of Serbian brass orchestra music should be sought in the foundation of the Guca trumpet festival (originally known as the Dragacevo Assembly) in 1961. Due to the comprehensive political, economic, and sociocultural transformations which were taking place after World War II in the newly established Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a group of Serbian intellectuals and academics initiated the organization of the festival with the idea of reviving the vanishing musical tradition and collective cultural life and production in villages (Milovanovic and Babic 2003, pp. 135–139). As Livingston (1999 cited in Kirkegaard 2001, p. 64) argues, apart from reactivating invented traditions, the cultural revival provides ‘an alternative to mainstream culture’ and aims at ‘improv[ing] existing culture through the values based on historical value and authenticity expressed by revivalists’. Indeed, the organizers of the Guca trumpet festival saw in it an opportunity to confront industrially produced popular music and ever more ‘imitative and reproductive’ folk art, highlighting simultaneously the significance of folk tradition for the preservation of continuity, essence, morality, and vitality of every single nation (Milovanovic and Babic 2003, pp. 135–139).

Because of its association with the Chetnik movement (with its nationalist and royal paramilitary connotations which were subdued by the Yugoslav socialist rule), the Guca trumpet festival was often scrutinized by the ruling political party but tolerated altogether. Moreover, the revival of Serbian brass orchestra music through the foundation of the Guca trumpet festival can be thought of as part of a larger Yugoslav project to represent Yugoslav national identity through the select folklore repertoire made of musical traditions of many nations and ethnic groups living under the same political roof. This was evident in several instances of the Guca trumpet festival’s development under the socialist rule – namely: (1) in the newly introduced contents within the festival official program that were celebrating the ruling communist party and its ideology, especially in the 1970s and 1980s<sup>5</sup>; (2) in the Serbian trumpet players’ participation in various folklore events held throughout the country and abroad, as well as in their recordings and promotion by Yugoslav recording companies; (3) in the very festival’s official anthem *From Ovčar and Kablar* whose lyrics were altered so as to glorify Josip Broz Tito’s military leadership of western Serbian partisans in World War II instead of the previously celebrated Serbian royal and military national(ist) leaders; and (4) in three encounters between Tito himself and the members of Milovan Babic’s brass orchestra, the Guca trumpet festival’s winners several times in a row, in the Serbian Zlatibor and Tara mountains during the course of the 1970s (Babic 2004, Timotijevic 2005).

The rise of nationalism in ex-Yugoslavia which resulted in several ethnic wars and in the disintegration of the country in 1991 gave rise to the further popularization of the Guca trumpet festival in the region. Evoking the 'glorious' national war past, the Serbian brass orchestra tradition suited well the nationalist goals of the ruling elite in the first half of the 1990s. The festival's official anthem *From Ovčar and Kablar* was sung again with its original lyrics, symbolically removing the traces of the recent communist past.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the great international success of several movies made in the 1990s by the Serbian director Emir Kusturica, in which he promoted Serbia's Gypsy brass orchestra music, drew foreign audiences' attention to the Guca trumpet festival. Given the huge popularity of World Music trend, which had already developed into the well-established global music network during the 1990s, the ever-expanding global music market accommodated eagerly Serbian trumpet players who were perceived as a great commercial novelty.

Serbia's political transition from the 1990s' dictatorship to the 2000s' democracy marked the next key factor contributing to the further popularization of the Guca trumpet festival worldwide. Advocating officially the politics of EU integration, the country has opened up to Western countries and has improved economically thanks to their significant financial support. The government could accordingly secure more funds for both the national and international promotion of Serbian tourism with a special emphasis on music events, with the Exit<sup>7</sup> and Guca trumpet festivals being the most prominent.

The Guca festival has been bitterly criticized for being prioritized in the Serbian Government's politics of national identity representation (*B92* 3 September 2006, Bojović 2009), and for being misused by the Serbian political elites for the purposes of their self-promotion and supposedly increasing popularity with the populace. Such criticism is primarily triggered by the great financial and promotional support that the Guca trumpet festival has been receiving from the government, as well as by the heavy presence of Serbian politicians at the festival, coupled with their often controversial statements about the festival's importance for the nation. This is, though, a very typical characteristic of Serbian society, which has failed to achieve a consensus on the meaning of its national past and heritage.<sup>8</sup> Taking into account Serbia's permanent state of flux between retrograde and progressive tendencies, the discourses on the Guca trumpet festival clearly form a significant portion of the ongoing public debate on the meaning of Serbian national heritage. In spite of that, it must be admitted that the festival started as a small-scale local event with 10,000 visitors (Timotijević 2005, p. 23) and has meanwhile evolved into a globally well-known World Music spectacle with up to 600,000 visitors (Tadić *et al.* 2010, p. 372).

### **The issues of tradition, authenticity, globalization, and representation politics**

#### ***Defining Serbian brass orchestra music as a World Music practice***

One way of approaching an analysis of the issues surrounding the Guca trumpet festival is to place it within the context of World Music debate.<sup>9</sup> Such an approach is well justified not only because the dynamics between the local and the global contribute significantly to the ways in which the festival is understood and represented, but also because World Music discourses have been internalized to an extent by the Serbian public. The latter is especially true for those Serbian brass

orchestra musicians who have carved out a successful international career, as well as for the Serbian cultural elite that is keeping up with intellectual and cultural Western trends and that is promoting Serbian World Music both at home and abroad.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, in local vernacular discourses, Serbian brass orchestra music, especially when associated with the Guca trumpet festival, is rather thought of in terms of traditional musical heritage than in terms of World Music.

The expression World Music itself bears multiple meanings due to the relatively long history and great dynamics of its circulation in a variety of discourses (i.e. academy, recording industry, everyday practice, etc.). This has been convincingly illustrated by Feld's (2000, pp. 146–151) comprehensive 'genealogy' of the term from the mid-1950s onwards. For the purpose of this paper, however, I employ those definitions of World Music that fit the particularities of Serbian brass orchestra music the most.

Serbian brass orchestra music, as we know it today, can be defined as a *polygenre* because it encompasses 'geographically different influences, styles and traditions' (Nenic 2006, para. 1), and because it 'point[s] to many directions of moving from non-Western musics to Western music, as well as from Western music to non-Western musics' (Suvakovic 2006, p. 361). Following the distinction between World Music and World Beat (Taylor 1997, pp. 2–3), that is, between World Music and World Music Fusion (Ramovic 2001 cited in Golemovic 2004, para. 2) – where the former puts an emphasis on the traditional origin of musics across the globe while the latter implies their incorporation into Anglophone popular music styles – Serbian brass orchestra music belongs to both categories.

Furthermore, by its context of production, distribution, promotion, and consumption, Serbian brass orchestra music also falls under the commercial label of World Music which was invented in 1987 by several British independent record companies and DJs so as to facilitate the emerging commercial discourse on the further production, classification, and representation of non-Western musical styles to Western audiences (see, for instance, Brusila 2001, pp. 155–156, Nenic 2006, para. 1).

Finally, it is worth mentioning Golemovic's (2004, para. 10) definition of Serbian brass orchestra music as a distinct form of Serbia's World Music production that originates in subculture.<sup>11</sup> According to his analysis, the musical content of this particular type of Serbian music is diverse ranging from traditional round dances and *čoček* through to 'those [pieces] that have nothing folkloric in their basis but nonetheless belong to World Music as they are performed by a traditional folk orchestra'.

### **'Celebratory' and 'anxious' narratives on the festival**

The academic discourses of World Music are tightly interlaced with those of globalization and cultural tourism in terms of both the contextualization and topicality of their studies (see, e.g. McGrew 1992, Kirkegaard 2001, Nenic 2006, Smith 2009). A majority of them provide comprehensive insights into new media, technology, and transport developments, reemerging ethnic conflicts, and the restructured global balance of power relations whose asymmetry inevitably generates an uneven experience of globalization across time and space. These discourses are also concerned with the dialectic nature of globalization – as expressed by binary oppositions such as *traditional vs. modern, local vs. global, homogenization vs. differentiation*, etc. – which has in turn produced two opposing interpretative theoretical models, or what Feld (2000) calls 'celebratory' and 'anxious' narratives.



The major source of anxieties surrounding the Guca trumpet festival lies in the inevitable transformations that the festival has undergone since its establishment in 1961. Hence, much of the discourses concerned are dominated by the narrative of loss and nostalgia, asserting that the festival 'lost its soul' and came to resemble the 'Serbian Disneyland' (Bojic in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, p. 163). A great deal of criticism directed against the professionalization and commercialization of the festival and Serbian trumpet music respectively began as early as in 1963 (see Markovic 1963 in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, pp. 154–158). Tightly linked to such criticism are also public discussions which continue to put the authenticity of the tradition into question.

In fact, the concepts of *tradition* and *authenticity* are of crucial importance for the World Music discourses and can be broadly defined as '*music legacies* of different peoples that are part of the World Music culture' (Nenic 2006, para. 7). The notion of tradition, therefore, suggests the qualities of 'continuity, antiquity, collectivity' (Ristivojevic 2009, p. 123) and is very often interpreted in terms of 'fixed' ethnic origins. Serbian brass orchestra music, which is being promoted through the Guca trumpet festival, has been constructed in both academic and media discourses as an authentic Serbian tradition with a large number of corresponding features, such as: antiquity, collectivity, rural origins, purity, simplicity, spontaneity, naivety, sensuality, playing from the heart, musical diversity, variant and improvisational principles of musical construction, amateurism, playing by ear, and transmission from one generation to another – from father to son (see Milovanovic and Babic 2003, Babic 2004).

A gradual modification of the brass orchestra music repertoire has prompted the anxious glorification of all above-mentioned features, in particular among Serbian ethnomusicologists. They have called attention upon the ongoing unification of Serbian trumpet music styles brought about by the music market pressures that urged trumpet players to favor the southeastern musical idiom (celebrated for its oriental elements) and more hybrid, pop-oriented forms at the expense of others (Golemovic 1996, Tirmanic 2000 in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, pp. 177–178, Golemovic 2002 in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, pp. 237–240; Vasiljevic in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, pp. 227–228).

Indeed, all the aforementioned have been confirmed by Serbian trumpet players themselves (see Babic 2004). They agree that the Guca trumpet festival did impose high standards of performance and did elevate brass orchestra practice to a serious profession with an opportunity for solid income. A majority of Serbian trumpet players are still musically illiterate but are nevertheless being instructed by professional, mainly military musicians – which has been the case from the very inauguration of this practice in Serbia.

Trumpet players also acknowledge an emerging scarcity of Serbian folk tunes within brass orchestra repertoires but, in general, they do not seem to be upset about this tendency. Even though this might appear alarming in terms of the preservation of Serbian musical tradition, it can be understood as a logical continuation of trumpet players' regular practice to combine the elements of traditional and modern music into their brass orchestra music arrangements.<sup>12</sup> Many trumpet players' desire to continue with further modernization and hybridization of their brass orchestra repertoires resulted in their official appeal to the festival's organizers against the festival's rule book by which trumpet players are obliged to adhere to the 'authentic' Serbian tradition. As Boban Markovic, one of the most – both

globally and locally – acclaimed Serbian trumpet players, stated, ‘Like many of my colleagues, I’d like to play attractive music that is in line with the current world ethno-trends and for that reason I will no longer be adapting my orchestra’s repertoire to the festival’s rule book’ (Stamatovic 2001 in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, p. 187).

To sum up, the Guca trumpet festival, as a global World Music event, can be interpreted in light of both ‘celebratory’ and ‘anxious’ narratives.

On the one hand, the Guca trumpet festival offers a great opportunity for both the region and Serbian brass orchestra music to participate and be represented in the global entertainment and tourism industries. The positive effects of these trans-cultural encounters are evident in the production of new hybrid musical forms which, by implication, challenge the very notion of fixed and essentialized local identities. From an economic perspective, the festival surely helps in broadening the market and in boosting sponsorship and revenue opportunities for regional tourism and Serbian trumpet music practice.

On the other hand, the Guca trumpet festival can be viewed through the lenses of anxious narratives as a site for the ‘commodification of ethnicity’ (Feld 2000, p. 153) and for exercising the hegemonic power of the West, which manifests itself in both economic and cultural spheres.

Although the Guca trumpet festival does participate in the global flow of capital by attracting numerous foreign tourists, it is hard to imagine that the opposite might be the case – that is, that any of World Music festivals across the globe could be visited by such a great number of Serbs. Thus, Westerners are those with the economic power to travel around the world, including Serbia. This is neither to say that all Westerners are equally interested in traveling abroad, nor is it to say that all Serbs are condemned to reside strictly and eternally within their homeland’s borders. Yet, an asymmetrical distribution of resources on the global level does imply that the role of Serbia in the global tourist market is largely confined to that of a host nation which is subservient to Western tourists’ needs.

The same can be said about the status of Serbian brass orchestra music in the global music market. More specifically, the Guca trumpet festival undergoes the effects of Western hegemonic power through the processes of homogenization or standardization of Serbian trumpet music practice. Moreover, the Western production, dissemination, and representation of Serbian brass orchestra music in the World Music format point to the exploitative nature of global music industry practices that often tend to make a profit at the expense of Serbian trumpet players. One example of this was a total exclusion of Serbian trumpet players from the negotiations on the agreement made in 2001 between the Berlin agency *Trueschool* and the Guca festival’s organizers about the global trade of the anthological release of the festival’s brass orchestra music (Stamatovic 2001 in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, p. 189).

The other example of the exploitation of Serbian trumpet players is more straightforward and concerns the cooperation between the Salijevis brass orchestra and the globally acclaimed Serbian director Emir Kusturica and the international Serbian soundtrack artist and World Music pop star Goran Bregovic. Namely, the Salijevis participated in Kusturica’s Golden Palm award-winning film *Underground* (1995) both as musicians-extras (‘extras’ with the meaning of performers hired to play a minor part in the movie) and as soundtrack authors supervised by Bregovic. The two best-known hits *Kalashnikov* and *Moonlight*, both originally created for



the movie by the Salijevis (apart from the Moonlight lyrics which were written by Bregovic), made a breakthrough in Bregovic's World Music career. Even though the credits on his albums have been regularly given to the Salijevis, it is Bregovic who capitalized in the first place on their joint collaboration both in artistic and economic terms. As Slobodan Salijevic stated once, 'At the end of the day, Goran Bregovic travels [and performs] around the world, the Salijevis are nowhere. There is no single mention of them' (Babic 2004, p. 240).

The story of the Salijevis calls to mind similar controversies surrounding World Music production, such as Paul Simon's *Graceland* or Ry Cooder's *Buena Vista Social Club*. They all exemplify a highly asymmetrical structure of power relations within the global World Music industry which clearly favors those with the privilege and power to make use of their contacts with various local musical cultures. In Feld's (2000, p. 167) words, 'The inability of pop music "royalty" to examine their privilege [...] is a stunning act of narcissism for an industry so invested in a democratic image of collaboration'.

### ***Representations of the Guca trumpet festival in public discourses***

As mentioned earlier, the Guca trumpet festival has been largely constructed in various discourses as being the guardian of Serbian (musical) tradition but also as being continually subjected to modernization. This tension between tradition and modernization is manifest in the production of both celebratory and anxious narratives on the festival's meaning and future prospects. However, what I have identified as a recurring theme underlying all these narratives is the festival's importance for national identity (re)construction and representation. This is not surprising, though, considering that all Central and East European postcommunist countries have resorted to 'nationalism as the primary mode of identity and [to] national heritage as a principal means of delineating and representing that identity' along with the processes of their EU integration (Graham *et al.* 2000, cited in Smith 2009, p. 66). And, this tendency is even more prominent in Serbian society due to the recent ethnic wars in the region. In consequence, the narratives surrounding the Guca trumpet festival resonate very well with Hall's (1992) proposal of five discursive strategies by means of which the nation is usually represented in late modernity. These are in short: (1) *the narrative of the nation*; (2) *the emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition, and timelessness*; (3) *the invention of tradition*; (4) *the narrative of a foundational myth*; and (5) *the idea of a pure, original people or 'folk'* (pp. 294–95).

As shown before, Serbian brass orchestra practice was produced as an 'invented tradition', into which many narratives of the nation have been subsequently inscribed. Due to its military origins, the trumpet has been hailed as a symbol of Serbia's numerous liberation wars from the nineteenth century until the end of World War II. The liberation war political culture that takes wars as part of the glorious past of any one nation is very common for the Balkan and, in particular, Serbian cultural memory, consolidating what Kuljic (2006, p. 302) calls 'war-centric memory'. It does not come as a surprise then that the Guca festival's organizers have included in the official festival program museum exhibitions in which the Serbian 'glorious' war past could come to the fore (covering, for instance, the topics from the First and Second Serbian Uprisings, Goracic upheaval, etc.). Nor is it surprising that the festival is over-flooded with various commodified national

symbols,<sup>13</sup> including *šajkača*, a national hat with strong military, in particular Chetnik, connotations.

The glorification of the Chetnik iconography that is notable at the Guca trumpet festival can be understood as a logical consequence of the ideological agenda behind the very concept of the festival – which was to pay a tribute to the Serbian peasant-warrior whose great deeds for the country, both at war and peace, could always be easily integrated into the celebratory narratives of the nation (Timotijevic 2005, pp. 156, 159–160). The prominence of the Chetnik iconography at the Guca festival can be associated as well with the so-called ‘Chetnik nationalist antifascism’ which has been introduced into Serbian official politics since 2004 with the aim of bridging a gap between liberals and conservatives in their mutual opposition to leftist partisan antifascism (see Kuljic 2006).

By the same token, the honor of the Guca festival’s hosts (i.e. the people chosen to welcome the festival visitors at the very opening of the event) was given from 2004 through to 2011 to the leading political figures from the conservative nationalist parties.<sup>14</sup> In 2004, the festival organizer and president of the Municipality of Lucani, Slobodan Jolovic, made a public invitation to the prosecuted Serbian war criminals<sup>15</sup> to attend the Guca festival. Such an attempt at the trivialization of war crimes that are traumas for a certain ethnic group (such as Srebrenica for Serbs) is called ‘de-traumatization’ and its function is to relativize the national past so as to preserve its positive/glorious image (Kuljic 2006, pp. 293–298).

Furthermore, in the narratives surrounding the Guca trumpet festival, the trumpet has also been associated with the 1389 Kosovo Battle, which marked the very beginning of the Ottoman Empire’s invasion of the Serbian principalities, and which came to attain the status of a Serbian foundational myth over the course of the nineteenth century. For instance, Marinkovic (2002 in Milovanovic and Bacic 2003, pp. 23–25) mentions the epitaphs dedicated to the Serbian warriors – ‘the Kosovo’s revengers’ – whose morale was being boosted by the heroic trumpet sound in the First Balkan War (in 1912), whereas Zivulovic seeks the cause of the lost Kosovo Battle in the fact that ‘[t]he Kosovo’s warriors could not hear the Dragacevo trumpet’ (1967 in Milovanovic and Bacic 2003, p. 140).

Apart from the Kosovo battle, the growing influence of Orthodox Christianity and the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) as an important marker of Serbian national identification after the collapse of Yugoslavia can be, for instance, traced in the Guca trumpet festival’s program. Namely, from 2000, the festival regularly features the concerts of Serbian sacral music. The great importance of religion manifests itself as well in the power of the SOC to impinge on the festival time frame as the old one coincided with the fasting period. In 2004, Serbian priests even gave a blessing to the entire event in a local church just before the festival’s opening (Timotijevic 2005, p. 141).

Beside the trumpet, as a visual and auditory trademark of the festival, and various national commodities, the representation of Serbian tradition and nationhood respectively is carried out through the festival’s diverse traditional folkloric program including reenactments of old national customs. Bojan Dimitrijevic, the former Serbian Minister of Trade, Tourism and Services, described once the festival as ‘a symbol of traditional values’ (B92 30 August 2006), although it has remained unclear what these values stand for. Being an insider researcher of Serbian culture, I would suggest the following list of the meanings that have tacitly come to be understood as ‘traditional values’ in Serbian society: the patriarchal and agrarian culture, Ortho-

dox religion, family values, collectivity, gastronomy, a specific way of life, and mentality (hospitality, friendliness, gaiety, hot-blooded temperament, and so on).

Not only has the Guca trumpet festival been deemed as a means for preservation of the Serbian tradition, but it has also come to be identified with the very essence of Serbian folk (see Milovanovic and Babic 2003). More than once it has been stated that those who do not understand the Guca trumpet festival do not understand Serbia either.<sup>16</sup> This tendency toward the essentialization of national identity through the Guca festival is a commonplace for World Music practices, where it has been exercised by both insiders, ‘who can view music as an incarnation of the national being’, and by Westerners, who tend to ‘attribute the “exotic” quality to “native” musical cultures’ (Nenic 2006, para. 12).

What is, however, a common feature for both *emic* and *etic* representations of the Guca trumpet festival is the construct of *madness*. The local festival’s label ‘Serbia’s Woodstock’ corresponds very well with the descriptions provided by Westerners, as follows: ‘the Europe’s biggest, wildest and craziest party’, ‘the Balkan trance party’, and ‘a manic, exhilarating experience’ (see, e.g. Prodger 2005, *Politika* 2007, Cartwright 2009, *The Guardian* 2010).

Yet, whereas the Western tendency toward the exoticization of the Other, in this case of Serbs, supports their traditionally negative stereotypes about Balkan people as ‘raw barbarians’ (Timotijević 2005, p. 186), from a local point of view, a compliance with this image, if not a tendency toward self-exoticization, has generated contradictory reactions in the Serbian public. On the one hand, the demonized Balkan characteristics continue to be reassessed and reinterpreted in an affirmative way – as somehow more authentic, real and true-to-life than those that are associated with Europeanization (Timotijević 2005, p. 349). Moreover, it is often believed that ‘the Balkan liveliness, freedom, temperament, passion, beauty’ evoke a sense of envy in a rigid, sterile, lifeless, and anemic Westerner for whom the Guca trumpet festival represents ‘a sort of nostalgic reminder of distant but lost vitality’ (Timotijević 2005, p. 320). Such a self-perception is reinforced by a number of the festival reports, as the following quote by Herman, a festival visitor from Switzerland, may illustrate:

You are a crazy people! Absolutely crazy! You made confusion out of the entire system of existence! I wanna be crazy, too! I’d like to be like you! I’ve found here the meaning of life! I’ve found myself! (Tadic *et al.* 2010, p. 355)

On the other hand, there are Serbian voices that are critical of this ‘tamed savage’ image of Serbs as being constructed and fostered in the Guca festival reports by both insiders and outsiders (see, for instance, Pancic cited in *B92* 3 September 2006). In this case, an approach to the national self-identification is negative, given that the notion of the Balkans or Balkanization is associated with the experience of violence and intolerance in the 1990s, and that the Western discourses of the Balkans as barbarian and primitive are internalized. In this approach, Europe is clearly understood as an ideal that should be admired and aspired to, whereas everything Balkan seems to hinder the processes of further modernization and urbanization of Serbia and needs to be eradicated (Timotijević 2005, pp. 191–192, 348–349).

The contemporary theory of culture has long been critical of World Music industry practices which have arisen from the concept of *difference* and the Western search for *an exotic Other*. Not only do these underlying concepts of World Music

bear neo-colonial and racist connotations, but they also reflect well the logic of the global music industry which readily adheres to the Western listeners' ideas of the Otherness in music. According to Brusila (2001, p. 153):

The search for 'primitivism', 'direct expression of fundamental emotions', 'sincerity', 'playing from the heart' [in World Music] is once again an example of the bourgeois culture's need to find and define an 'Other', in many ways ideologically not far from the folklorists' search for a 'true soul' in folk music during the 19th century.

In the case of Westerners' perception of the Guca trumpet festival, this is indisputably true. Indeed, Western journalists usually portray the festival as something of unique, exotic, and authentic value which has been lost in the Western commercialized music world and experience. In Cartwright's (2009) words, 'Guca offers a real sense of collective celebration and reminds you that music was once something tribal, wild, unshackled by industry'.

I would like to argue, however, that a significant portion of the Serbian middle class approaches the festival in exactly the same manner. The following statement made by the well-known Serbian journalist Tirnanic (2000 in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, p. 177): 'Guca used to be a safe return to the ancient primitivism', may just serve as a good case in point. Such an assumption seems to be well justified, considering that a majority of Serbian trumpet players is of Romani origin, and acknowledging that Roma, in general, represents the Other in Serbian society.

## Conclusion

The case of the Guca trumpet festival confirms well a general rule by which 'the production of both heritage and revivalist events [...] very quickly establishes a partnership with the commercial culture [and tourism] industry, and thereby "transforms the revival into a popular culture phenomenon"' (Livingston 1999, p. 80, cited in Kirkegaard 2001, p. 65). Great potential in the growth of the festival as a tourist attraction has been recognized from its very foundation in 1961 (see Djukic 1961 in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, p. 146). However, as the previous analysis shows, the ever-increasing commercialization, tourist promotion, and professionalization of the festival has been discursively framed by the two opposing interpretative models. At one extreme, there is the narrative of loss, nostalgia, and concern for the authentic Serbian (musical) tradition which became 'corrupt' by the commercial culture and tourism industry, by the globalization processes, and by the specific trajectory of Serbian society's development over time. At the other extreme, the Guca trumpet festival is celebrated for having created a channel for the revival, preservation, recreation, and popularization of Serbian traditional practices, and, in consequence, for their integration into the global music and tourism market. By problematizing the concepts of tradition, authenticity, globalization, and representation in this paper, I have sought to illustrate the extent to which these two interpretative models intersect when applied to the case of the Guca trumpet festival, and that only through their combination a more fruitful conclusion on the festival's various meanings can be made.

Despite the fact that the concept of tradition as something old and petrified has long been contested in ethnomusicology, anthropology, and cultural studies, its presence is still very alive in the discussions arising from the 'tradition/modernity'

dichotomy. This binary opposition has been further reinforced in the discourses of globalization. In the case of the Guca trumpet festival, the dynamic between what Kirkegaard (2001, p. 66) calls 'a root-based ideology' and 'the modernization of culture' has been well manifested in the Serbian trumpet music which the festival promotes.

In terms of Serbian tradition preservation, the effects of globalization on the Guca trumpet festival are complex and contradictory. On the one hand, it has been noted that the festival's brass orchestra repertoires have become standardized and less oriented toward Serbian folk tunes. On the other hand, it is equally valid to claim that the festival has simultaneously opened up space for the production of new, hybrid musical forms which have been well encouraged and facilitated by both local and global music industries.

Whether the festival has stimulated a further development of trumpet music practice in Serbia has also generated contradictory statements. Some view this practice as a sort of anachronism (see Golemovic 1996, p. 68, Bojovic 2009) while others maintain that it has become rejuvenated by a great number of young trumpet players (see Ockoljic in Milovanovic and Babic 2003, p. 194; Kaplarevic 2007 in Tadic *et al.* 2010, p. 357). Likewise, several trumpet schools have recently been opened across Serbia; but in one of them, there have been no interested candidates (see Trtovic and Nedeljkovic 2007, *Vesti online* 26 June 2010). Judging by a growing popularity of the Guca trumpet festival and its evermore fierce trumpet competition, I would generally regard it as a positive development for the Serbian brass orchestra tradition because it gives Serbian trumpet players an opportunity to improve their skills, to make a living out of their musicianship, to become globally visible, and to cooperate with international artists.

The issues of globalization are also deeply ingrained into the discourses on the relationship between cultural tourism and festivals. From that perspective, cultural tourism has surely helped the Guca trumpet festival turn into a great success by putting it on the global map alongside other famous World Music festivals. Like in any other events, there is, of course, a threat of homogenization in case if the festival becomes too repetitive as a result of the increasing market pressures and the ongoing processes of detachment from its local roots. The festival program's focus on brass orchestra music may also be understood as a double-edged sword since it can either provide the festival's survival on the global market due to its distinctiveness, or simply saturate it with too much trumpet sound.

In addition, closely linked to the topic of the festival's standardization are the issues of representation in the cultural tourism and World Music practices. As shown in the previous analysis, the reports on the Guca trumpet festival have fostered a positive although stereotyped image of Serbia and Serbs as a 'crazy' Other, together with the image of the festival as a cheap, tolerant, and friendly place with 'no curfew, few rules and a real sense of bacchanalia' (Cartwright 2009). What is, however, interesting in this particular representation of Serbianness is that the Western idea of authenticity and search for primitivism is not a construct exclusively created to meet the Western tourists' cultural needs; it performs a similar function for a largely middle-class portion of the Serbian society as well. Likewise, the severely criticized exploitative nature of World Music industry practices also takes on a specific form in the case of Serbian brass orchestra music considering that those who are making use of Serbian trumpet players are by and large Serbian artists with the power positions within the global entertainment industry.



As a final point, the issues of representation that form a significant part of the academic discourses on heritage and cultural tourism are of great relevance for the Guca festival case study given that the festival figures as a vital source of national identification for many locals. The fact that there are a great deal of disputes among Serbs about the interpretation and representation of the national past and heritage associated with the festival clearly exemplifies that heritage 'is a dynamic process of creation in which a multiplicity of pasts jostle for the present purpose of being sanctified as heritage' (Jacobs 1996, p. 35, cited in Smith 2009, p. 88). The conflicting public responses to the values that the Guca trumpet festival promotes (through, say, the glorification of the Serbian folk tradition, national past, Orthodox religion, Chetnik iconography, and so on) point out the unbalanced self-positioning of Serbian society between so-called Western civilization and Balkan barbarism (or, to put it differently, between democratic cosmopolitanism and populist ethnocentrism), in which the vision of the national rather than civil state prevails.

The Serbian Government's efforts to make Serbia an appealing holiday destination are noticeable in the substantial funds secured for this economy sector (B92 30 August 2006), as well as in its strategy to use local cultural events as 'a hook to attract tourists' (Vukovic cited in Andric 2011). These efforts have clearly paid off in the case of the Guca trumpet festival which has become the World Capital of Trumpet from 2010 due to the well-orchestrated work between the local municipality of Lucani (to which Guca belongs), the Tourist Organization of Serbia (TOS), and the government itself, but also due to a number of external circumstances ranging from the processes of Serbia's political democratization through to the global craze for World Music.

According to Ljiljana Cerovic (interview, 5 August 2011), TOS's PR representative, the festival has contributed to the development of tourism in the region with the offer which combines elements of its rural, eco-, and cultural forms. However, she stresses that these forms of tourism are not popular with tourists during the festival but throughout the year. In general, the TOS's statistics on the number of domestic and foreign tourists done on the basis of their arrivals and overnight stays in Serbia from 1989 to 2010 indicate a steady growth of foreign tourists from the 1990s until 2007 when their number has been more or less the same since. As far as domestic tourists are concerned, their number was fluctuating around the same figure from the 1990s to 2003 when it has begun to slightly decrease since. This can be explained by the improving political and socioeconomic conditions that have allowed Serbs to finally venture abroad.

Although the TOS's statistics on accommodation capacities in Serbia from 1989 to 2000 show a slight improvement in that respect until the present day, this development has been considered in public debate as being insufficient. As Sasa Djogovic of the Institute for Market Research comments, 'With poor traffic infrastructure and accommodation, there is not much to promote [in Serbia]' (cited in Andric 2011). Much of these structural pitfalls have already been overcome in the case of the Guca trumpet festival, mainly thanks to the government subsidies (see B92 8 August 2007, Tadic *et al.* 2010). Still, I feel that the festival would improve more significantly should it throw itself on the market and rely exclusively on its own commercial sources. This would not only put an end to (or at least reduce) the festival's further political manipulations, but it would also open up space for its professionalization. In that respect, I also believe that a possible cooperation between the Guca festival organizers and those of similar World Music events elsewhere might



yield some fruitful exchange of ideas for the future development of the Guca trumpet festival, both in terms of its program and organization.

Clearly, much more needs to be done to advance Serbian tourism; however, the global success of the Guca trumpet festival demonstrates not only that cultural tourism might be just the right formula for future tourism development in Serbia, but also that cultural tourism has displayed a great capacity to turn this once-scorned location into an attractive one.

## Notes

1. From 2010, an international brass orchestra competition has been included into the festival's official program as well.
2. In the centuries before such a switch to Central European music styles, the development of Serbian instrumental practice was shaped under the Ottoman oriental influence and put in the service of various Ottoman panjandrams living in Serbian towns. The first orchestra hired at the Prince Milos's court featured as well the similar types of oriental instruments and repertoires.
3. Which were themselves heavily influenced by the Central European tonal music system between the two World Wars.
4. From its military usage in numerous war conflicts with Ottomans, Austro-Hungarians and neighboring nations through to its integration into everyday social and musical practices.
5. See the well-documented chronicle of the Guca trumpet festival's development in Timotijević 2005.
6. The origins of this song are still being debated among the Serbian public. However, it has been widely accepted that *From Ovčar and Kablar* was created during the World War I as a shepherd song by Momir Pantelić, a literate man and talented singer from the Dragacevo village Ducalovici. See <http://www.riznicasrpska.net/muzika/index.php?topic=987.0> [Accessed 2 September 2012].
7. The Exit festival is a pro-Western popular music oriented event founded in Novi Sad, the second largest city located in the northern Serbia, in 2000. It has meanwhile developed into the greatest international four-day musical spectacle in southeastern Europe, taking place every summer, in the first half of July, within the astonishing Petrovaradin fortress' walls.
8. Regarding, for instance, the unsolved conflicts between the two ideologically opposed Serbian armies during World War II, or the recent war criminal past.
9. Unsurprisingly, such a debate encompasses many issues currently discussed in cultural tourism studies.
10. A public concern with the World Music theory and practice, especially within the national context, has come to gain substantial institutional support in the course of the 2000s. World Music Association of Serbia, Serbian World Music magazine *Etnoumlje* (*Ethnomind*), Belgrade World Music Center, several World Music radio shows, the releases of the CD series *Serbia Sounds Global* by the B92 music label, and so on, are all some of the examples of World Music institutionalization in Serbia.
11. Even though Golemović does not specify the meaning of the term 'subculture' in this paper, I presume from the context of his argumentation that the term is being used colloquially as a synonym for various urban social groups whose lifestyle and cultural activities are associated with different (both mainstream and alternative) popular music genres at work in Serbia.
12. This is the practice which can be traced back to the 1960s when the influence of mass media came to play a prominent role in the Serbian cultural life.
13. To name a few: the national cuisine, national costumes (including *opanak*, a traditional footwear), the Serbian flag, traditional handmade textile products, etc.
14. The Guca festival host in 2004 was Dragan Kojadinović, a Serbian minister of culture; in 2005, 2006, and 2007 – Velimir Ilić, a Serbian minister of capital investments; in 2006 – Dr. Vojislav Kostunica, a Serbian PM; in 2007 – Milorad Dodik, a Serb Republic PM; in 2008, 2009, and 2010 – Milutin Mrkonjić, a Serbian minister of

- infrastructure, together with Slobodan Jolovic, the festival organizer and president of the Municipality of Lucani (in 2009); and in 2011 – Milenko Kostic, a local entrepreneur, together with the Russian Ambassador Aleksandar Konuzin.
15. Namely, Ratko Mladic, Radovan Karadzic, Slobodan Milosevic, and Vojislav Seselj.
16. See, for instance, the former Serbian Prime Minister Kostunica's statement in *B92* 3 September 2006.

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