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# **Romani Music in Czech Film after 1989, Specifically Between 1993 and 2017**

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## **Abstract**

The study focuses on the detection, analysis and interpretation of the phenomenon of the use of Romani music in twenty-one or, more precisely, twenty Czech films made after 1989. Many of these films have been distributed abroad and presented at foreign film festivals. The research is grounded in a broader contextual characterisation of the emancipation of Romanness and its concrete manifestations in science and culture in the Czech Republic in the period under study.

## **Key words**

Roma, Romani music, Czech film, 1993–2017, analysis of the use of Romani music in film

## 1. Roma in the Czech Republic after 1989

Roma are one of the Czech Republic's traditional ethnic or national minorities.<sup>1</sup> Estimates of their number are always only approximate and highly variable, as official data from regular and compulsory population censuses have no validity. Roma themselves do not declare Romani nationality for many reasons.<sup>2</sup> Unofficial estimates by Romani organisations and political associations are highly unreliable and often purposely exaggerated.<sup>3</sup> At the end of October 2022, the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic published an official estimate of 250,000 Roma currently living in the country,<sup>4</sup> representing less than 2.4% of the population. However, this is a distinct group, different in many ways from the majority.<sup>5</sup>

While the political ideology of communist Czechoslovakia sought the assimilation of all national minorities,<sup>6</sup> particularly the Roma, the strategy changed after the Velvet Revolution in 1989, which led to the fall of the totalitarian socialist regime and to the democratisation of society. Following the division of former Czechoslovakia in 1992, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic became its successor states, i.e. independent subjects of international law. The situation of the Roma in the newly formed Czech Republic then slowly but significantly changed.<sup>7</sup> In the cultural sphere, one can clearly speak of

1 HANZAL, Jiří. *Cikáni na Moravě v 15. až 18. století: dějiny etnika na okraji společnosti* [Gypsies in Moravia in the 15th to 18th Centuries: The History of an Ethnic Group on the Margin of Society]. Praha: Lidové noviny, 2004.

NEČAS, Ctibor. *Historický kalendář: dějiny českých Romů v datech* [The Historical Calendar: The History of the Czech Roma in Dates]. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 1997.

NEČAS, Ctibor. *Romové v České republice včera a dnes* [Roma in the Czech Republic Yesterday and Today]. 5. dopl. vyd. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2002.

2 Since 1991, when Roma were first allowed to declare their ethnicity or nationality in the census in the Czech Republic, their seemingly marginal numbers have been steadily declining (in 1991, 32,903 declared Roma out of a population of 10,302,215; in 2021, only 21,691 Roma out of a population of 10,524,167).

3 Estimates oscillate between 140,000 and 300,000 Roma living in the Czech Republic (FÓNADOVÁ, Laura. *Nenechali se vyloučit: sociální vzestupy Romů v české společnosti: (kvalitativní studie)* [They Did Not Let Themselves Be Excluded: The Social Rises of Roma in Czech Society: (Qualitative Study)]. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2014, p. 20)

4 Romani National Minority | Government of the Czech Republic. Homepage | Government of the Czech Republic [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/rnm/mensiny/romska-narodnostni-mensi-na-16149/>.

5 Homepage | Government of the Czech Republic [online]. Copyright © Retrieved 21 March 2023 from [https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/zalezitosti-romske-komunity/dokumenty/Methodika-prosledovani-a-vyhodnocovani-naplnovani-Strategie-romske-integrace-do-roku-2020\\_1.pdf](https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/zalezitosti-romske-komunity/dokumenty/Methodika-prosledovani-a-vyhodnocovani-naplnovani-Strategie-romske-integrace-do-roku-2020_1.pdf).

6 DAVIDOVÁ, Eva. *Romano drom = Cesty Romů: 1945–1990: změny v postavení a způsobu života Romů v Čechách, na Moravě a na Slovensku* [Romano Drom = Journeys of Roma: 1945–1990: Changes in the Status and Way of Life of Roma in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia]. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 1995.

LISÁ, Helena (ed.). *Romové v České republice (1945–1998)* [Roma in the Czech Republic (1945–1998)]. Praha: Socioklub, 1999.

PAVELČÍKOVÁ, Nina. *Romové v českých zemích v letech 1945–1989* [Roma in the Czech Lands 1945–1989]. Praha: Úřad dokumentace a vyšetřování zločinů komunismu, 2004.

7 JAKOUBEK, Marek. *Romové – konec (ne)jediného mýtu: tractatus culturo(mo)logicus* [Roma – The End of (Many) a Myth: Tractatus Culturo(mo)logicus]. Praha: BMSS-Start, 2004.

“the awakening of Romani identity (in Romani, *romipen*)”. For the Romani intelligentsia and Romani artists,<sup>8</sup> this means overall emancipation and building of Romani self-confidence and pride. These efforts have long been spearheaded by the newly established Museum of Romani Culture in Brno,<sup>9</sup> Romani Studies provided as a university subject (since 1991 at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague),<sup>10</sup> the Romani studies journal *Romano džaniben* (since 1994)<sup>11</sup> and the public benefit corporation ROMEA (since 2002).<sup>12</sup> Their unifying programme is the development of Romani studies as a distinct social science discipline the subject of which is Roma from the perspective of many sciences, especially linguistics (Hübschmannová, Šebková, Žigová, Beníšek, Červenka, Bořkovicová), ethnology and ethnography (Davidová, Hübschmannová, Ort), linguistic, cultural and social anthropology (Kubaník, Viková, Hajská), history (Nečas, Pavelčíková, Daniel, Horváthová, Sadílková, Závodská, Pivoň), sociology (Jakoubek, Hirt), pedagogics (Kaleja, Šotolová, Ševčíková, Balvín), musicology (Hübschmannová, Davidová, Jurková, Stojka, Andrš), demography, political science, etc.<sup>13</sup>

In the Czechoslovak context, the music-collecting activity has a long tradition. The most intensive and long-term musicological fieldwork on the subject of gypsy (Romani) music has been carried out by Milena Hübschmannová and Eva Davidová. The former, moreover, published annotated collections (songbooks) of Romani songs, partial musical-ethnographic studies, and chapters in monographs from 1960 onwards. In professional reflection on the issue, the leading Czech authority is the ethnomusicologist Zuzana Jurková, author of thematic monographs, monographic chapters and scholarly studies, editor, university teacher and head of the Institute of Ethnomusicology at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University, focused mainly on the study of minority music, especially in Central Europe. Partial studies on Romani music are regularly published in the journal *Romano džaniben*. The Museum of Romani Culture systematically expands its collection of audio documentation.

ŘÍČAN, Pavel. *S Romy žít budeme – jde o to jak: dějiny, současná situace, kořeny problémů, naděje společné budoucnosti* [We Will Live with Roma – The Question Is How: History, the Current Situation, the Roots of the Problems, Hopes for a Common Future]. Praha: Portál, 1998.

8 BALVÍN, Jaroslav. *Romské osobnosti ve fotografii* [Romani Personalities in Photography]. Ústí nad Labem: Hnutí R, c1999.

MIKO, Václav. *Sto romských osobností* [One Hundred Romani Personalities]. České Budějovice: Nová Forma, 2009.

9 Museum of Romani Culture, Brno | Preserving Romani culture and history [online]. Copyright © 2021. Retrieved 21 March 2023 from <https://www.rommuz.cz/cs/>.

10 About the Department | Department of Central European Studies [online]. Copyright © Faculty of Arts, Charles University 2015. Retrieved 21 March 2023 from <https://kses.ff.cuni.cz/cs/katedra/o-katedre/>

11 <https://www.dzaniben.cz/publication.html?t=202202>.

12 Romea.cz – All about Roma in one place [online]. Copyright © 2003. Retrieved 21 March 2023 from <https://romea.cz/>.

13 The contribution of journalism dealing with Roma is also not insignificant (Ryvolová, Zdařilová, Wagner).

## 2. Roma and Romaniness in Czech film between 1993 and 2017

Roma and Romaniness are themes that became more prominent in Czech film after 1989, especially in short documentary television productions that focus primarily on the issues of segregation, discrimination, social inequality and pathology, as well as ethnic self-identification. In the context of film production, these are mainly films intended for cinema screening<sup>14</sup> which are secondarily broadcast on television, especially on Czech Television.<sup>15</sup> Twenty-one films intended for adult audiences (of which two are short – 4, 16) that have been made so far (after 1989, specifically between 1993 and 2017)<sup>16</sup> are complemented by two television film projects aimed at children<sup>17</sup> and two television series.<sup>18</sup> The films dealt with here were identified using a subject search for the Czech terms “Rom, cikán, cigán” (Rom, gypsy, gipsy) and derived words in the Czech-Slovak Film Database.<sup>19</sup>

These are both Czech projects (nine films in exclusive Czech production – 1, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16) and co-productions (six films were co-produced by France – 2, 3, 17, 18, 20, 21;<sup>20</sup> two films were co-produced by Slovakia – 3, 8; one by the USA – 4; and one by Romania – 8). The Czech Republic co-produced five projects (9, 13, 15, 18, 19).

14 The list of sources under study (films) contains only one item made as a television film (*Černý slzy* [Black Tears] – 5).

15 “Czech Television provides a service to the public through the production and distribution of television programmes and other multimedia content and additional services throughout the Czech Republic in order to meet the democratic, social and cultural needs of society and the need to preserve media pluralism.” It is a media outlet with nationwide coverage whose task is a public service in the field of broadcasting as stipulated by the Czech Television Act, primarily “developing the cultural identity of the population of the Czech Republic, including members of national or ethnic minorities” (extracted from the Statutes of Czech Television – All about Czech Television – Czech Television [online]. Copyright © 1996. Retrieved 3 April 2023 from <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/vse-o-ct/statut-ct/>).

16 See the list of sources under study (films). The identification items were extracted from the Czech-Slovak Film Database (ČSFD.cz) [online]. Copyright © HBO Max. Retrieved 17 April 2023 from <https://www.csfd.cz/>. Film Review (Film Review, <https://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs> [online]. Copyright © Retrieved 17 April 2023 from <https://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs>) and Film Database (Films, TV Series, Actors, Film Reviews – Film Database, FDb.cz [online]. Copyright © 2003. Retrieved 17 April 2023 from <https://www.fdb.cz/>).

17 These are the television fairy tale *Krásná čarodějka* (The Beautiful Witch), 1991, and a six-part animated series broadcast as a TV bedtime story, i.e. an evening programme for the youngest television viewers – *Mire Bala Kale Hin – Romské pohádky* (Mire Bala Kale Hin – Tales from the Endless Roads), 2001. The TV bedtime story programme has been broadcast regularly since 2 January 1965.

18 The original eight-part Czech Television comedy television series *Most! (Most!)*, 2019 (subtitled *Mají se rádi, ale ještě o tom nevědí* [They Love Each Other, But Don't Know It Yet]), which partly touches on Roma issues, was an extraordinary success not only with Czech viewers but also with reviewers, and was awarded the Czech Film and Television Academy's Czech Lion as the Best TV Series of 2019. TV Barrandov's twenty-part series *Bastardi* (Bastards), 2014, was derived from the first three films of the eponymous film series (11, 12, 14) from 2010. Like the films, it provoked extremely polarising reactions from Czech viewers and film critics. The fourth film, *Bastardi: Reparát* (The Bastards: The Resit), will be released in cinemas in 2023.

19 The Czech-Slovak Film Database (ČSFD.cz) is not only a web project – a database of films and television products, but also a social network for viewers, whose ratings and reviews are public and reflect the quality of individual items as reflected by users across sub-genres and their historical development. It is the largest platform of this type in the Czech and Slovak context (ČSFD.cz [online]. Copyright © HBO Max. Retrieved 17 April 2023 from <https://www.csfd.cz/>).

20 All seven of Petr Václav's feature films were made in Czech-French or Dutch, Italian and Slovak co-productions, which automatically ensured their foreign distribution (here 2, 17, 20, 21).

In terms of genre, dramas clearly dominate, with nineteen films in total. This genre characteristic is absent in only three projects (1, 8, 21). The psychological genre is also significantly represented (2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20, 21), four films are promoted as road movies (8, 18, 19, 21), three as comedies (8, 18, 21), and three as crime films (1, 12, 14). Only sporadically are films distributed as historical (9, 18), love story (5, 7), action (1), adventure (18), family (6), romance (7), western (18), biographical (9) and social drama (17). Only *Cinka Panna* (Cinka Panna) from 2008 (9) is presented as a musical project with the distribution slogan in Romani “Kady čhajori hin le Devlestar”, i.e. “The girl with a gift from God”. The context makes it clear that the gift of music is meant. Cinka Panna is a historically documented legendary gypsy first violinist from Gemer (called “Gypsy Sappho”).<sup>21</sup>

In most of the films analysed, Roma and Romaniness are central themes (most prominently 2, 8, 9, 13, 21), or they are discussed in the context of broader social relations and interactions (especially 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 20). Only one film does not explicitly thematise Romaniness (19). The films focus mainly on the issue of multicultural confrontation and collision with the majority, on the manifestations of Romani social pathology, on the specifics of the Romani value system and on the unique features of the Romani mentality. The films usually work with a combination of several of these interconnecting themes, topics and motifs. Only rarely does one come across an authorial effort to reinforce or create myths associated with Romani culture (3, 8, 9). The film *Aferim!* (18), which is a naturalistic probe into the dehumanisation and suffering of the ancestors of today’s Vlax Roma<sup>22</sup> in the Principality of Wallachia (Țara Românească, Цѣра РѠМѠНѢСКЪ in Romanian Cyrillic, or Valahia in today’s Romania) in the mid-1930s, takes a completely different path.<sup>23</sup>

Only one film, *Cigán* (Gypsy) (13), is in Romani;<sup>24</sup> the others are in Czech, Slovak or Romanian. The occurrence of one of the many Romani dialects is limited to the social context of the situation (argument, quarrel, confession). The desire for authenticity is positively reflected in the filmmakers’ efforts to make films in authentic settings, especially in Roma settlements (3, 13) and urban Roma ghettos (vividly 5, 11, 12, 14, 17, 21).

21 DRENKO, Jozef. Panna Cinková (1711–1772) a ľudová hudba v Gemerí [Cinka Panna (1711–1772) and Folk Music in Gemer]. In *Vlastivedné štúdie Gemera 4*. BOLFÍK, Július (ed.). Rimavská Sobota: Osveta, 1986, pp. 174–210.

DRENKO, Jozef. Rómska primáška Panna Cinková [The Roma First Violinist Cinka Panna]. In *Neznámi Rómovia. Zo života a kultúry Cigánov-Rómov na Slovensku*. MANN, Arne B. (ed.). Bratislava: Ister Sciece Press, 1992, pp. 117–126.

22 Vlax Roma (“Vlašika Rom, Vlachike Roma, vlašinci, olaši”) now represent approximately 10% of the Romani population in the Czech Republic, where they were forcibly settled by a ban on nomadism in 1959. Even today, this sub-ethnic group shows significant specificities and differences of a social and cultural nature not only in relation to the majority, but also to other Roma groups – tribes. Traditionally, Vlax Roma have not been professionally involved in music.

23 Historically, this stage has been mapped, for example, by the Romani linguist, scholar and political advocate Ian Hancock (HANCOCK, Ian. *Země utrpení: dějiny otroctví a pronásledování Romů* [originally published as *The Pariah Syndrome: An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution*]. Praha: Signeta, 2001).

24 Slovak appears only in situations where Roma communicate with members of the majority.

Most of the projects under study did not go beyond the narrow Czech context. In the global Internet Movie Database,<sup>25</sup> the films are rated by only tens (3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 21) or low hundreds (1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20) of users. The exceptions are *Náraz* (Trainwreck) (4), which has no raters, and *Aferim!* (Aferim!) (18), with 7,500 raters and an above-average rating of 7.6 out of 10. According to the Czech-Slovak Film Database, Czech and Slovak film users have rated the films as average and below average, with two exceptions: the US-made short film *Náraz* (Trainwreck) (4) – 76% positive rating, but from only 22 reviewers, and the co-production *Aferim!* (Aferim!) (18) – 75% positive rating from 861 reviewers. *Nahota na prodej* (Nudity for Sale) (1) even ranked 930th in the “1,000 worst films”, while *Cinka Panna* (Cinka Panna) (9) ranked 370th and *Bastardi 3* (The Bastards 3) (14) ranked 270th in the same user poll.

On the other hand, most of these films have been nominated for various types of awards in sub-categories at regional and international film shows and festivals (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20). Some of them have also won relatively prestigious festival awards (2, 13, 15, 19).<sup>26</sup> The success of *Aferim!* (Aferim!) (18) at the 65th Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale, Berlin 2015, Silver Bear for Best Director) was quite unique, but the film was presented as “Romanian”. The Czech co-production was limited to financing the film and supporting its production in technical professions.

Only two Czech directors – Petr Václav (2, 17, 20, 21) and Zdeněk Tyc (6, 10) – have repeatedly returned to the theme of Romaniness in their projects. Petr Václav works on his own projects. He is not only the director and scriptwriter of all four of these films, but also occasionally a producer (2) and cinematographer (21). In three cases (17, 20, 21), he also selected the music used in the film from a music bank.

Roma are involved in the films exclusively as composers, music consultants, executive musicians and as non-actors (in the lead roles in films 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 17, 19, 20, 21).<sup>27</sup> In one case, cooperation was established with Romathan,<sup>28</sup> a professional Roma theatre from Košice (9).

The synergistic relationship between film and music has been strengthened in the Czech market since the 1990s, but only some of the films analysed have been accompanied by a film soundtrack (1, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18). Trailer or teaser type products have been created for most of the films made after 2000 (6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21). These are still available on YouTube.

25 Hereinafter referred to as IMDb. It is an online database of information about films, TV shows, actors, actresses, directors and everything else related to filmmaking (IMDb: Ratings, Reviews, and Where to Watch the Best Movies & TV Shows [online]. Copyright © 1990. Retrieved 17 April 2023 from <https://www.imdb.com/>).

26 Detailed information can be found for each film in the online Film Review, section “Awards” (Database – Film Review, <https://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs> [online]. Copyright © Retrieved 17 April 2023 from <https://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs/database>).

27 The status of “actress/actor” is attributed to only two Romani personalities, Klaudia Dudová (17, 20, 21) and Zdeněk Godla (17, 20, 21). The roles of Romani women and Romani men are played by non-Roma in only two films (8 – starring Bolek Polívka and Marián Labuda as Stano Zaječí and Roman Daniel, 12 – with Andrej Hryc in a supporting role as Horváth).

28 Romathan Theatre Košice | World-Famous Roma Theatre [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.romathan.sk>.



### 3. Romani music in Czech film between 1993 and 2017

From the point of view of musicology, the semantic definition of the term “Romani music” or “gypsy music” (Zigeunermusik, musica gitana, musique tzigane, etc.) is problematic. Rather than a musicological or ethnomusicological definition, made on the basis of defining a universally valid typification of clearly defined and uniquely significant formal, content and expressive musical specifics, it is a social definition. Such music is then generally understood as music performed by Roma or by professional, semi-professional and amateur musicians who identify and present themselves as ethnic Roma. All of the analysed films approach it in this way.

Twenty films out of the twenty-one projects were subjected to a detailed analysis of their musical component.<sup>29</sup> From the detailed recording protocols of the films’ soundtracks tied to specific contextual, situational and relational links, findings related to the seven phenomena discussed below were subsequently extracted and interpreted:

- a. the relationship of Roma to music and to individual musical activities; music and its position in the Romani community and its hierarchy;
- b. music and its connection to Romaniness;
- c. Romani music and the majority;
- d. authorship of film music;
- e. changing forms and trends of film music in relation to Romani musical inspirations;
- f. the use of Romani music in the context of its typology;
- g. the most interesting film project in terms of the use of Romani music.

Regarding (a): The relationship of Roma to music is always presented as universally warm. Roma love music, they spontaneously engage in vocal, instrumental and musical-movement activities, which they combine vividly in their intensely experienced everyday reality. They are proud of their musical expressions. In the stereotypically portrayed context of Roma life pragmatism, the filmmakers always present music as a traditional, widespread and dignified way of livelihood. Musicians are respected by the community, they participate in every shared event (celebration, christening, wedding, funeral), and they occupy a prominent place in its caste hierarchy. The majority accepts Romani musicians as initiators of entertainment.

Regarding (b): Filmmakers conceive music as the most significant element of Roma identification with Romaniness, as the most significant cultural climax, the most typical and universally respected and valued focal point of this entire cultural area, and a universal integrative element. Music stereotypically represents the only absolutely universal element of self-identification with Romaniness, and therefore the dominant cultural configuration in the full sense of the word. Music as a cultural aspect is at the core of Romaniness and integrates it. It bridges discord, strengthens relationships and multiplies the

<sup>29</sup> The short student drama *Náraz* (Trainwreck) (4) has long been unavailable to viewers.



polarising experience shared together. It is both a catalyst for personal confessions, in which it replaces words, and a demonstration of powerful intimate emotions. The films do not attempt to develop the situational realisation of making music together, generally depicting only the actual act of music.

Regarding (c): In the films under study, the majority respects Romani music as a distinct cultural phenomenon. Acceptance of the specifics of Romani music and its manifestations in changing situations is portrayed by filmmakers as a traditional positive cultural stereotype. Romani music also symbolises personal freedom, is applied in situations of finding the ethnic space of self-determination and in building the characters' self-confidence. It routinely points to a belief in one's own uniqueness and inimitability. It is a dramatically effective mirror of the inner worlds of both heroes and anti-heroes, while also serving as a natural, mutually acceptable means of understanding, closeness and tolerance.

Regarding (d): The music composers in the films analysed are predominantly members of the majority, but this does not mean that Romani musicians and Romani music are not functionally present in the films. The most frequent use is of Romani traditional music (*romane gila*), and less frequently of contemporary forms of Romani music (especially Romani pop – rompop). In diegetic use, the camera usually focuses on the live musicians as a whole. Non-diegetic music is always specified in the credits. Renowned Czech and Slovak Romani musicians Vojta Lavička, Ida Kellarová, Patrik Rytmus Vrbovský, Árpád Kákonyi and Ján Berki Mrenica Jr. are credited as composers or co-composers of the music in five films (3, 8, 9, 10, 11). It is typical for them to build not on direct quotations of Romani songs, but on stylisations of Romani musical archetypes (especially rhythmic, tectonic, agogic and instrumental). Only in two cases (6, 19) is there no reference to the Romani musical context. In five projects, the composer of the music is not specified in any way; the film credits say “music used” or that “music was used from a music bank” (2, 15, 17, 20, 21). This is then declared in detail, including the copyright holder.

Regarding (e): In the period under study, the films analysed clearly show a gradual shift from mainstream cinema production to festival use. With a few exceptions (1, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14), the films target a specific, “demanding” audience and film experts. A characteristic feature of this shift is that these films abandon original composed film music. In an attempt to effectively build the credibility of the setting, situations, characters and their interactions, and to move the viewer towards an effective final catharsis, most of the analysed products work with music very sparingly. It is limited to its diegetic use in dramatically significant situations (2, 3, 7, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21). Music is not meant to replace narrative cues, to weaken the refined stylisation of the authenticity of the isolated social periphery, or to close unresolved situations and relationships between characters. Everything that is below the surface is symbolised by “silence”, i.e. the absence of music soundtrack. This concept reinforces the deliberate anti-dramatic nature of the message in the film's long passages, giving way to a pointlessness that is always accompanied by the “silence” in the credits at the end of the film. In contrast to this trend are films in which music plays a traditional accompanying and, for the audience, background role,

dynamising the film action (1), and films in which the music soundtrack creates a continuous composed stream based on a more or less artful jigsaw of characteristic musical motifs (8, 9).

Regarding (f): Musical expressions of Roma traditionally vary significantly from region to region, family to family, musician to musician. Nevertheless, in the European context, the four most prominent general groups of musical expressions are traditionally monitored, tied to geographical subdivisions. The musical expressions of Czech and Slovak Roma belong to the Central European region.<sup>30</sup> The projects under study therefore exclusively feature Romani music related to this area. Occasionally, a Romani scat with body rhythmisation appears as part of the living musical reality of a street or settlement (9, 13, 18). In terms of form, Roma songs (*romane gila*), i.e. the most typical and only significant Roma musical form, are worked with. In the films, they are presented as the most distinctive Romani means of self-expression, most often for intimate painful confession, emotional catharsis, love confession and harsh criticism. In the spirit of tradition, they also mirror intimate personal pleas. Stereotypically, then, they tend to be synonymous with a demonstration of proud affiliation with Romaniness. These practices are typical of the diegetic use of Romani songs in films, where the music illustrates an informal social situation in which the Romani participants “can be expected” to listen to the background music, typically in informal conversations in homes, during routine daily activities, in chance encounters in the settlement, on the streets of the ghetto, and, secondly, when it is necessary to functionally reinforce the stereotypical idea that the Romani wellbeing of life experienced at celebrations, when sitting down to eat and drink or when relaxing, is realised to the accompaniment of Romani music. This is how film situations are commonly modelled (2, 3, 5, 7, 13). The same element is also used as an identifier of Romaniness in staged performances by Romani musicians who play for the amusement and money of non-Roma. Iconic songs from the *phurikane gila* layer usually appear here<sup>31</sup> (e.g. 1 – *Imar Avel, E kapura, Andro verdan*; 1, 8, 17 – *Čhajori romaňi*; 5 – *Devla, devla, Soven, čhave, soven*; 8 – *Le more e brača*; 14 – *Ej, Romele*; 17 – *Amen Roma sam, Me rovav pale daj, Žandara len*). Or new songs (*neve gila*),<sup>32</sup> which are carried in the spirit of *phurikane gila* standards and whose authorship is stated as “unknown”. Typologically, however, more interesting are the original songs by local musical formations (e.g. 13 – the ensembles Bartošovci, Gypsy Štancel; 17 – the bands Khalo raj, Orlová and Gipsy

30 DAVIDOVÁ, Eva, JURKOVÁ, Zuzana. Hudba a písňový folklór Romů [Music and Song Folklore of Roma]. In *Romové – O Roma. Tradice a současnost. Angodez the akának*. Group of authors of the Museum of Romani Culture. Brno: SVAN a Moravské zemské muzeum, 1999, pp. 59–63.

31 *Phurikane gila* (*mulatouša dila* among Vlach Roma), or ancient songs, represent the traditional Romani repertoire of epic ballads, social, lyrical or love songs, and lyrical-epic family songs that are generally familiar to all generations of the Romani diaspora, to the Roma of neighbouring regions, but also to non-Roma. Their active repertoire ambitus is not very large among today's Czech Roma, only a few dozen songs that are played at a relatively high level of interpretation by virtually all the leading Czech Roma bands.

32 The term new/modern songs (*neve/moderna gila*) is used for songs written in the last 40 years or so. They are usually inspired by the themes and melodies of contemporary popular music. They are either traditional melodies with new lyrics, reflecting changed living conditions and contemporary life in general (a parallel combination of traditional and new repertoire) or traditional lyrics using new melodies, growing out of the current tradition of contemporary popular music, especially dance styles and pop music.

Mischel; 21 – Gipsy bejla Chomutov, etc.). A separate category is formed by the original works by Romani music professionals and Romani musicians engaged by them for the project (3 – Ida Kellarová; 8, 10 – Vojta Lavička). New Romani production is also represented in the films by rompop,<sup>33</sup> which is characteristically used as diegetic background in homes or a platform for social pub entertainment. In terms of the composer's style, the songs by the Brno funk band Gulo čar and the Slovak rapper Rytmus have a special place in the films under study. The former were engaged as actors and musicians in the film *El Paso* (*El Paso*) (10). Patrik "Rytmus" Vrbovský created for the film *Bastardi* (*The Bastards*) (11) a personal musical song testimony in Czech with "Romanisms" harshly declaring the life attitude of outcasts and rebels living on the fringe of society, which effectively and authentically opens, dynamises and closes the film. It underlines the rawness and brutality of the film, thematising the elements of nihilism and destruction. The songs in all the other films are always built on Roma lyrics and performed by Roma musicians, without exception.

Regarding (g): In terms of the use of Romani music in the films under study, the most interesting by far is the co-produced drama film *Cigán* (*Gypsy*) (13). The timeless Hamletian theme is set in the authentic environment of Slovak Roma settlements near the villages of Richnava, Levočské lúky and Krompachy. Its basic ideological and systemic starting point is contrast and the resulting series of disturbing questions. This ideological platform is accepted, strengthened and developed by the composer of the music, Vladimír Godár.<sup>34</sup> The contemporary rustic and dynamic form of music of Roma settlements, which is described in the credits as "folk", is presented by the three musical ensembles appearing in the film, namely Bartošovci (Čierny Balog) – "compositions" *Džava mange, džava, Kana tuke dajko*, Gypsy Štancel (Stráne pod Tatrami) – *Pal o foros me phirav, Te me mamó adarik džav* and Kesaj čhave (Kežmarok, Poprad) – *O Romale romanca, o gadžele gadženca*, and three field recordings made in the Roma settlements of Bystrany, Čemerné and Markušovce – Jareček, from the album *Phurikane gila* released in 2002 (Občianske združenie Žudro) – *Hoj na nej na nona, Av ke mande čhaje, K'oda k'odaj pre'blačkica?*, and finally two other arrangements of the traditional songs *Nasvalo somas* and *Aven peske duša napredžala*. An interesting feature is the Bach-Gounod *Ave Maria* arranged by Ivan Akimov, which is performed by Kesaj čhave in diegetic use during the church service. Godár's original music is then quite a contrast to all these vitalising musical moments. The serene, formally concise and minimalistically recurring main theme, evoking the natural cycle, the inevitability of fate and narrative predestination, is built on neo-baroque principles (recorded in the studio by Solamente naturali<sup>35</sup> – violin, vio-

33 Rompop (also spelt rom pop or rom-pop) is an uninspiring genre for the demanding listener, a genre that is neither surprising in content nor in form, and unexciting. It is based on conventionalised elementary musical morphology. Every community has its own changing musical formation, made up mainly of young musicians.

34 Vladimír Godár (born 1956 in Bratislava) is a non-Romani Slovak composer, musicologist and university teacher, composer of chamber, film and orchestral music.

35 Founded in 1995, the professional non-Romani ensemble Solamente naturali specialises in the authentic interpretation of classical music of the 17th and 18th centuries.

la, cello, harp, guitar, harpsichord). It opens and closes the film, reinforcing its cyclical framework. It is consistently and systematically used to link the film's images and to calm the escalating plot situations and interactions between characters. It can also be latently perceived in the space of silence. It is then fully developed only in the climactic title passage, namely the gradual jazz improvisation of the saxophone performed by Radovan Tariška.<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusion

Films dealing with Romani issues represent a partial but interesting segment of Czech film production after 1989. Music is an integral part of these films, carrying its own significance and reflecting its current forms through amateur, semi-professional and professional production. Through the continuous fixation in film, a distinctive repertoire archive is created, serving as an authentic testimony to the approaches and attitudes of non-Romani filmmakers towards this phenomenon in the evolving Czech context.<sup>37</sup>

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- Zpráva o putování studentů Petra a Jakuba* (The Pilgrimage of Students Peter and Jacob) [film]. Directed by Drahomíra VIHANOVÁ, Czech Republic/Slovakia/France: Bontonfilm, 2000. Runtime 95 min. Music by Emil VIKLICKÝ, Ida KELAROVÁ.
- Náraz* (Trainwreck) [student film]. Directed by Michal SEDLÁČEK, Czech Republic/USA: Bontonfilm, 2001. Runtime 17 min. Music by Béla BARTÓK.
- Černý slzy* (Black Tears) [TV film]. Directed by Milan CIESLAR, Czech Republic, 2002. Runtime 90 min. Music by Jan ČERNÝ.
- Smradi* (The Brats) [film]. Directed by Zdeněk TYC, Czech Republic: Artcam, 2002. Runtime 93 min. Music by JABLKOŇ.
- Indián a sestřička – O indianos the e pheñori* (The Indian and the Nurse) [film]. Directed by Dan WŁODARCZYK, Czech Republic: Bontonfilm, 2006. Runtime 91 min. Music by Dušan NEUWERTH, Jiří HRADIL.
- Romíng* (ROMíng) [film]. Directed by Jiří VEJDĚLEK, Czech Republic/Romania/Slovakia: FALCON a. s., 2007. Runtime 105, alternatively 109 min. Music by Vojtěch LAVIČKA.

<sup>36</sup> Radovan Tariška (born 1979 in Tlmače) is a non-Romani Slovak jazz saxophonist and bandleader.

<sup>37</sup> All quotations in Romani were taken verbatim from the cited source documents and have not undergone Romani language correction.

- Cínka Panna* (Cínka Panna) [film]. Directed by Dušan RAPOŠ, Slovakia/Hungary/Czech Republic: Bontonfilm, 2008. Runtime 122 min. Music by Arpád KÁKONYI, Ján BERKY MRENICA Jr.
- El Paso* (El Paso) [film]. Directed by Zdeněk TYC, Czech Republic: Bontonfilm, 2008. Runtime 107 min. Music by Vojtěch LAVIČKA.
- Bastardi* (The Bastards) [film]. Directed by Petr ŠÍCHA, Czech Republic: Pegasfilm s. r. o., 2010. Runtime 107 min. Music by Tomáš HAJÍČEK, using songs by RYTMUS and others, Ondřej KONVIČKA.
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- Můj pes Killer* (My Dog Killer) [film]. Directed by Mira FORNAY, Slovakia/Czech Republic: CinemaArt, 2013. Runtime 90, alternatively 87 min. Music used from a music bank.
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- Cesta ven* (The Way Out – festival title) [film]. Directed by Petr VÁCLAV, Czech Republic/France: Aerofilms, 2014. Runtime 103 min. Music used from a music bank.
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- Koza* (Goat) [film]. Directed by Ivan OSTROCHOVSKÝ, Slovakia/Czech Republic: Artcam, 2015. Runtime 75, alternatively 72 min. Music dramaturgy by Miroslav TÓTH.
- Nikdy nejsme sami* (We Are Never Alone) [film]. Directed by Petr VÁCLAV, Czech Republic/France: Falcon, 2016. Runtime 105 min. Music used from a music bank.
- Skokan* (The Jumper – festival title) [film]. Directed by Petr VÁCLAV, Czech Republic/France: Pilot Film, 2017. Runtime 94, alternatively 90 min. Music used from a music bank.

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38 The music is specified for each piece individually.

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