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Contents

Producing and Consuming "Folklore"
A Study of the Origins and Usage of Folklore as a Field of Media Culture in Post-communist Romania[*]

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CORINA IOSIF

O<small>NE OF</small> the important areas of media practices in contemporary Romania is what might in one way or another be defined as "folklore". After 1989 this entertainment genre (which presupposes artistic performance, at the centre of which are music, dance and certain visual compositions), a genre recognised as such by a public moulded in advance and ready to consume it, has been capitalised upon by radio and television productions in equal measure, as well as in stage performances. For methodological reasons, in the pages that follow I have focused my attention on aspects linked to the fields of music and dance as they are elaborated in the folklore segment of the media, leaving the question of visual imagery for a future discussion.

Any attempt to understand the way in which these media practices have taken shape in contemporary Romania must first look at the way in which folklore as a field of mass culture[1] was linked, during the communist regime, to the Party's cultural programme, on the one hand, and to the development of the mass media, above all in connection with this programme, on the other hand.[2] Besides the subjects of this process, "the masses," via their representatives, defined as "popular artists," there are three categories of "actor" that vied with each other in the creation of the administrative and normative framework of the media domain that we today generically name, as I said, folklore: 1) the cultural political activists who made sure that the project was permanently linked to the Party's ideological and cultural regime; 2) the producers of performances, be they professionals half-way between performers and political authority, be they associated with media institutions (radio

and television) or the institutions of performance in general; and, not least, 3) the folklorists, who lent academic legitimacy to the project of folklore as a domain of the national culture.

In the following, I shall refer briefly to each of these categories and to: 1) the way in which the ideological programme of mass culture integrated the project of recourse to "traditions"[3] in order to establish a national culture; 2) the role of folklore studies as a discipline in this project, and 3) the configuration of the media field within the process of Romania's modernisation and the origins of the current media practices generically defined as "folklore".[4]

The folklorists

Before 1989, ethnological theory and practice were strongly influenced by the search for what was termed the national specific. This phenomenon reached its culminating point in the final period of the communist regime (Verdery 1990, Mesnil, Popova 1997, Karnoouh 2007). In successive periods since the formation of the modern Romanian state, ethnology, like historiography, has been required to supply evidence of the existence of an ethnic-national culture and its specifics.[5] The finality of folklore studies as a discipline intersected with the need of the communist state to legitimise its demand for a cultural specific to facilitate the construction of "national communism."[6] The national character and nationalist ideology that marked folklore studies in Romania have their origins in a previous historical period, however, dating from the late nineteenth century and the formation of the modern Romanian state. A part of the inter-war intellectuals who are today part of the history of folklore studies as a discipline, as well as a part of those who made their debut in the domain after the Second World War, in the period when communist power was established in Romania, were members of the bourgeois intellectual class. Their interest in peasant culture, already expressed through "folklore," had been shaped not only in the family, but also in the social circles of university life or bourgeois high-society life in general.[7] Another part came from the rural milieu.

Of these folklorists, I would like to look briefly at those entered the research field mainly via the world of performance and work specifically connected to the performances of "folkloric ensembles". These were in particular choreographers, later termed, in connection with theoretical work, ethno-choreologists. In at least one branch of folklore studies, choreographic folklore, which was permanently (i.e. even before 1948, but even more so thereafter) capitalised on the stage and by show business, the folklorists who made up the generation contemporaneous with the beginnings of the "mass artistic movement" were of heterogeneous social origin. This generation had a highly diverse professional and, in general, intellectual background, and here I refer to its "elite corps" in particular, concentrated especially

within the Institutes of Ethnology and Folklore and in the Centres for Guidance of Folk Creation. Of this generation of folklore researchers, some of whom had a background in classical dance, some of whom had developed an interest in peasant dance as members of "student ensembles," and some of whom had direct experience of peasant dance from the rural milieu,[8] were often recruited as supervisors and evaluators of folklore performances. What is more important to point out is that they were thus also critical witnesses of the process of professionalising "folklore" practitioners (dancers, musicians, singers), a process which gained greater momentum as the media developed in Romania. The fact that some of them had a background in classical dance, as well as the experience of others as rural dancers, was able to meet the exigencies of the political programme, which stipulated the involvement of "professionals" (i.e. persons with formal experience in the discipline, gained through specialised education) in the process of configuring and validating stage equivalents of peasant culture. Thus, it might be said that what Donna Buchanan called the "western model" of stage performance was present alongside the experience of rural peasant dance in the configuration of "folklore" as a stage genre, at least in the background experience of the evaluators.[9] In any case, the (politically programmed) phenomenon of academic supervision of stage performances that gradually constructed the genre of folklore as a domain of media culture was typical to an equal extent of neighbouring countries that (broadly) shared the same political and socio-historical situation as Romania. Moreover, it should be said that the shift from the functional (the rural community) towards the aesthetic (the stage) could easily be made within the wider and complex social movement generated by the political-cultural programme of constructing "the new man."

Mass culture, cultural activists and "specialists"

THE DEFINITION of mass culture as an ideological programme of the Communist Party finds its analogue in the definition of mass culture as a specific social phenomenon, characterised above all by the association between the political programme and the development of the media practices that developed in Romania in parallel.[10] These media practices, whether related to the performing arts or not, but always consumerist, found a privileged domain in the various incarnations of the folklore show. However, I do not intend to look at the definition of the construction of mass culture as an action of communist policy here, but rather at the way in which the individuals who were the subjects of this political action integrated and then reproduced their content. Of particular interest is the way in which cultural actions and phenomena classed as "folklore" in the public discourse during the communist period were assimilated and reproduced by the subjects of these actions: I refer to the way in which systems of representations defined as "folklore" (Buchanan 1995, 2002) and recorded as such in the social memory were reproduced, giving

rise to media practices and consumerist behaviours and thereby contributing to the configuration of the media field and the public taste in Romania after the regime change. The actors who brought about the conversion of fragments of peasant culture into products of the entertainment industry were chiefly the cultural instructors. These instructors were selected by Party activists according to a number of criteria of relatively equal importance. First of all, they had to be "professionals". This meant that besides having a good knowledge of local traditions, they had to be have completed courses of specialist study (musical studies for those who were to deal with instrumental and dance ensembles, but also high-school level courses in choreography, particularly for those chosen to deal with dance groups, and studies in theatre or philology for those chosen to organise amateur theatre of any type). Then, they had to meet the demands of the political programme of mass culture promptly: they had to be capable of mobilising people, training and managing the "folkloric" groups, be they dancers, musicians, singers, folk actors, or folk craftsmen.

The instructors had to be capable of supplying, at the request of the higher political authorities, individuals and groups to be trained to take part in demonstrations organised as part of the programme for mass culture. Not least, the instructors had to be natives of the region in which the activity was to take place. Thus, at least those whose area of activity was "folklore" not only had a knowledge of the traditional local culture, but also originated from within that culture. Consequently, their involvement in the political programme lent them additional legitimacy in the effect they had upon the significations of traditional culture. Recruitment of the instructors involved careful selection and above all else (even social origin) had in view the quality of the candidate's "professionalization".

There were a number of reasons for the imperative that the instructor should be originally from the region where he or she was to operate, to which I shall refer below. What should first of all be remembered is that from the viewpoint of the content of the performances the instructor's contribution seems to have been easily accepted and integrated by the stage performers. As far as supervision on the part of the representative of political power is concerned, this seems to have been more interested in the statistics of mass participation in cultural programmes than in the content of the stage repertoires, which was left entirely up to the instructors.

The interventions of the instructors in the countryside ("fieldwork") often took the appearance of a "resuscitation" of community practices, a programmatic action in direct ideological connection with the construction of an ideal and unchanging symbolic ruralism. At the same time, however, the political action, whose direct agents were for the most part the same instructors, all of them originally from the area where they were operating, and the "popular artists" constructed a type of community practice whose categories, such as the "artistic ensemble," the "popular soloist" and the "popular craftsman," came to replace or complete the pre-existing community traditional institutions.

This process in fact presupposed the shaping of behaviours proper to the stage show genre, introducing new categories into the community social practice, such as "the instructor," "the ensemble," "the soloist," "the rehearsal," "touring," "the festival," "the show," "the competition," "the jury," "the prize". The new vocabulary, whose presence was gradually legitimised and generalised in the rural economy after the 1950s, was proof of the configuration of a new domain in the local cultures, a domain that ensured the entry of media practices into the logic of community life. From this point of view, the legitimising role of the instructor was defining. To this can also be added the guarantee of financing for the show (travel expenses, costumes, non-interruption of wages during absence from the workplace), once again fostering and generalising in rural areas the emergence of the two major social categories of the show genre: producers and consumers. Once integrated and reproduced, these new practices ensured the systematic shaping of an audience for folklore.[11]

The landmark event for the encounter between "folklore" as a political construct and "folklore" as a media object was the Ceausescu-era "*Song of Romania*" festival, a series of public events intended to celebrate the cultural values of Romanian national communism. These spectaculars, which took off in the 1980s, were forms expressing the peasant cultures that had become the "national folklore" (Giurchescu 1987), and which were thereby absorbed into media practices and continued to exist and to diversify even after the fall of the communist regime. The political-cultural project that bore the generic name "Hymn to Romania" (Cîntarea României) was one of the most important objectives of the programme of the Romanian Communist Party in regard to the construction of a national mass culture. Within the framework of this project, the models for major show forms were elaborated and likewise different types of audience – media consumers – were moulded. From the point of view of the local actors involved in this phenomenon, however, the political and ideological project of "Hymn to Romania" seems to have chiefly brought significant financial support, rather than structural modifications, to a cultural movement that had already been initiated.

The process of heightened professionalization that characterised the progressive development, hand in hand with the media, of the performance genre known as "folklore" in Romania implicitly presupposed the creation of distinct professional niches, primarily that of the "performer" (singers, instrumentalists and dancers, as well as comedians and artisans), the manager, the instructor, and, not least, the media specialist. Merely to illustrate the pace at which this process of professionalization was achieved, it is worth mentioning that the work of the cultural instructors, which ensured, from the artistic and organisational point of view, the participation of as large a number as possible of people at the events that were part of the mass movement's programme, was permanently intensive (a single instructor might simultaneously deal with more than ten "ensembles") and had two main characteristics that interest us here.

The first characteristic was that this work produced, between political orders and social practice, the model framework for managerial-type professional training, which among other things presupposed, the same as in any field of entertainment, availability for the most flexible of working hours and the capacity to know, supervise and mobilise a significant number of participants in show events. Not least, it presupposed extensive knowledge of the cultural content of the show and its cultural sources. The second characteristic is that of having elaborated a series of standards of professional excellence in the field of artistic management in the media segment of folklore. These standards encompassed not only the quality of the instructor's professional training (the instructor had to know the repertoire of his or her region and to have skills acquired by training in the area of the high arts), but also interpersonal social skills.

However thoroughgoing and tested the professional instruction might have been, however, the *sine qua non* condition for recruitment of a cultural instructor was to have roots in the region where he or she operated. As we have already said, the legitimacy of the instructor's presence in the rural milieu was in fact the path to legitimise the political programme of which he or she was the messenger and agent: the construction of a national and mass culture.

At the same time, however, within the same programme there was also a process that legitimised the construction of a show genre whose source was rural, traditional cultures. The criteria according to which the mechanisms whereby this genre was constructed were entirely in the hands of the instructors the political powers entrusted with this project, however. The instructors elaborated their own cultural strategies from within the system and ultimately "produced" their own show genre. It is no wonder that the folklore show and later folklore in the media were easily integrated into the local cultures, which thereby gave proof of the fact that they reproduce the new domain of social life: the folklore spectacular.

These professional niches (in both the media domain and that of cultural management), albeit more so in the 1960s, were often filled by the same individuals, who could hold, simultaneously or successively, positions in each of the professions. This mobility was connected not only to the logic of their professional evolution (for example, from dancer to instructor, or from instructor to professional training in the field of research), but also horizontally to the involvement of those who were part of the newly moulded show genre as well as in the process of creating the shows themselves, as instructors, and the production of the corresponding media object. Thus, in the majority of cases, entry into the domain of media-produced folklore was preceded by individual training in the musical field (generally degree-level musical studies at a conservatoire), and the development of the media field of folklore in Romania (radio, then radio and television) provided the privileged framework for the process of professionalising the folkloric show.

The model of professionalization also integrated recourse to an "originality" constructed not only on the basis of primary reference to the rural origin of the

"performer," but also his or her capacity to reproduce on his or her own account the labour of the folklorist, that of discovering and recognising (prior knowledge being taken for granted), collecting (and therefore preserving) reproducing for the stage (therefore integrating within a new cultural configuration, that of the national culture in its public stage expression) cultural objects that were thereby constructed as "treasures" (Iosif 2011). Consequently, as interest in the world of the show, in the privileged category of mediatised performers, was already formed and capitalised upon in the local cultures, particularly after the 1980s, the recruitment of new generations of "folk performers" gradually became a profitable activity in which not only media professionals were involved, but also, to an equal extent, a part of the "performers". Thus, the mediatisation through "promotion" of local cultures, a task originally specific to the work of the instructor, was integrated and at the same time replicated by performers already integrated into the media industry.[12]

Additional legitimacy was lent to these behaviours, integrated with the process of professionalization, by their correlation with the founding period of Romanian folklore studies, embodied in the persons of Constantin Brăiloiu, above all, and Dimitrie Gusti. Thus, as a process of consolidating the authenticity whose proof was the roots of the performer in the cultural area represented by the "repertoire" he/she mastered, by his/her capacity to prove that he/she had by taught by his/her parents, the fact that the performer had a connection with the beginnings of folklore studies granted the status of "cultural reference point," of repository of cultural information from an older generation, and thereby characterised by additional authenticity (and I refer here above all to the practice of establishing a stage repertoire by means of access to the folklore archives).

Within this process, which is in essence one of constructing a cultural heritage, two phenomena are worthy of note: the first relates to the presence of the temporal, chronological dimension in defining the cultural object classed as folklore, in the context in which traditions, as a domain of the national culture, are constructed as "ancestral" and therefore atemporal. The second phenomenon is that of integrating the image of academic culture, represented by the legitimising image of the folklore archive in this process. This phenomenon has repercussions on media mechanisms through the increase of the media (and, implicitly, market) value of the "heritage" thereby constructed.

The stylistic norms and criteria for putting together a folklore show, as well as the criteria for the structure of the various types of folklore broadcasts, began to take shape between 1965 and 1970. Norms such as "variety," "rarity," "originality," and "specificity" acquired shape and at the same time significance in terms of the show. The show (or broadcast) is primarily constructed according to a chronological space specific to the type of event or a pre-established (radio or television) broadcast space. Cultural intelligibility as a dimension of the production of meaning within a certain cultural system (one that is communal or regional in nature) gives way to aesthetic intelligibility constructed at the intersection between the logic of the po-

litical programme and the exigencies of media production. The normative system that regulates this media production is based, as I said, on criteria including "rarity," "originality" and "variety," each being intrinsic to a consumerist logic, in which the abundance (of media products) is the *sine qua non* condition for the proliferation of media consumerism.

At the same time, the media language proper to folklore broadcasts takes shape above all via individual professional practice and the informal transmission of specific experience from one generation to another. The shaping of the folklore audience becomes a particularly important objective, which regulates the configuration of professional practices and, above all, the establishment of the language specific to folklore broadcasts.

Within a logic in which the stage version of the media product coexists with its cultural source, as two distinct categories of the same (rural) cultural system, the process of professionalising folk artists (of whatever type they might be) is perceived as legitimate, and professionalization itself as inevitable. Furthermore, folklore as a variety of show, which comes to represent the symbolic construct of the specificity of the national character, is generalised as a domain of mass culture, with all the professional fields that this generates. In the case of musical folklore, the exigency of the variety of stage (media) production, as well as the exigency of the undiscovered, causes areas such as instrumentation, harmonic constructs as accompaniment solutions, and the question of the relationship between the solo and the group performance or the number of (vocal or instrumental) performers taking part in an event to become increasingly separated from the model of the cultural source to which the stage performance relates. Such licence, which was never due to ignorance on the part of either performers or organisers, was accepted as an exigency of the show genre. Solutions for instrumentation in the case of folklore shows will be increasingly bound to the exigencies of the spectacular, relegating "specificity" to a secondary position.

In addition, we should also take into account the fact that the more the "folkloric" was reproduced as a show genre, the more the new generations of practitioners, in particular the instrumentalists, benefited from systematic specialist courses of study. For example, stage training for the "folkloric" musical text, which always fell to the responsibility of the conductor, was up until the 1970s part of the conductor's professional training,[13] but thereafter it involved professionals who, although they had a thorough knowledge of folk music, had also finished intermediate or higher courses in formal musical education.

To the requirements of the orchestra (and instrumentation), of "adaptation," inherent to the preparation of a peasant musical repertoire for the stage, was also added the existence of a performance model, mentioned by all those who were kind enough to discuss the subject with me: this was the model of the "large ensembles" (Buchanan 1995), the supersized folkloric ensembles (copied, according to my interlocutors, from the Soviet Union), which were perceived by professionals as an excess compared with performance in the original rural milieu. This variety of media show, which persists, either as a self-contained genre or as part of a spectacular (the

finale of a show, for example), remains one of the examples of the way in which the exigencies of the ideological programme of mass culture and its nationalist dimension contributed to the structural configuration of the folklore spectacular as a media genre. This type of performance construct restored an image of political action that recouped and reused the theme of traditions as a dimension of the national, bringing about an (ideological) annulment of the regional to this end.

In their turn, the professionalised singers and solo instrumentalists underwent a dual process that can be described as follows: first of all, it was a process of standardisation (one of "attuning" to a series of norms that depended on the conditions of the show, such as those connected to the almost systematic presence of instrumental accompaniment in the form of the "folk music orchestra" and of orchestral arrangements as a generalised process; the presence of the conductor; technical means, such as the microphone, with which the soloist was in direct and constant relation during the performance; and, not least, the situation of the recording and temporal preservation of the spectacular with a view to its media dissemination). In the second place, against this background of standardisation, there was also a shift towards individualisation, in connection with the stylistic exigencies of the show genre, in particular the exigencies of the "undiscovered" and variety (i.e. abundance) of media production.

At the same time, the meaning of these two processes is professionalization. As Gruia Stoia has justly noted, the "soloist" himself consciously transforms the meaning of his performance from a sequence of traditional culture, whose cultural dominant is community identity, into an "artistic moment," constructed in relation to other "artistic moments" and meeting aesthetic criteria exterior to the cultural source that precedes them: traditional peasant cultures.

The conscious character of this process is what justifies the systematic integration and reproduction of licences from rural, regional types of song or dance; reproduction produces imitations, giving rise to "styles" external to local or regional styles, and media-influenced repertoires begin to represent singers and solo instrumentalists of every kind rather than representing ethnographic regions. The kinds of licence I am talking about (whether they be solutions for musical discourse or instrumentation, or whether they represent alterations to the texts of the songs) acquire the value of a structural characteristic of a stage style and thereby become legitimate. At the same time as the development of the genre of the "folklore" show as a media domain, what takes place within it is the individualisation of a number of sub-genres generated both by the type of show (radio or televised), the type of broadcast to which it is allocated (two examples are the short radio broadcasts entitled "Folkloric Stopover"[14] (*Popas folcloric*) and the longer, interactive broadcasts generically known as "musical requests") or by its function (such as the competition, the entertainment variety show, or the patriotic performances honouring the political leadership. To these can be added a type of media product that is a broadcast focussing primarily on two concepts: memory and authenticity.[15] The object of this type of broadcast, which combines the function of the documentary with that of the entertainment

broadcast, was to give media coverage to the recordings of the older generation, coverage which at the same time built up the historical perspective of the media domain of the folkloric and the legitimising image of the origins of folklore studies as a discipline. The result was the construction of a historical memory (Halbwachs 1968, Nora 1989) of traditions as a domain of the national culture.

In the domain of television, the reference media product, which, however, completely abandoned the documentary function in order to concentrate exclusively on entertainment and which capitalised on both the idea of authenticity, this time simultaneously with the idea of specificity, and the idea of the undiscovered, has remained to the present day the broadcast "*Folkloric Treasury*". What was remarkable in the conception of this broadcast was not only the producer's concern with the artistic language (and musical language in particular) that ought to convey to the audience the concept of the broadcast: the elaboration of a media version of the folklore studies approach that abandons the documentary character of the latter in favour of entertainment. The particularity of the broadcast was also that via its construction it was situated, at the time of its initiation, at the opposite pole to the supersized folklore spectacular. Not least, the broadcast, together with the production strategies that supported it, was important from the point of view of establishing and subsequently reproducing media practices that consolidated the process of professionalising folklore performers and the media domain corresponding to them. I refer here above all to the criteria for recruiting performers, to the strategy for establishing repertoires (with recourse to archive recordings, a strategy that also played the role of legitimising new generations of performers), to the logic of training and then reproducing new, successive generations of folklore performers, in connection with the older stratum of archived memory, but trained, partly or wholly, inside media structures.

The circle thus closes. Not only did traditional peasant music and dance come to have a media equivalent, but also the process of constructing a media domain of the folkloric produced, in accordance with the dynamic of the rural cultures to which they referred, their own professionals, folklore performers.

After the fall of communism, these forms and genres of its mass culture were decoupled from the ideology of the one-party state and, thanks to the popularity they had gained, they became available for recycling under the new market conditions. Certain types of public performance, initially conceived of as "socialist," capitalisations of "folklore" and "national traditions," have changed their function: after 1990, they became exclusively vehicles for the entertainment media. Their structure combines pre-existing models of folklore entertainment with the formats of media products. Thus, their popularity with audiences (and, in fact, certain segments of society) has not only been reinvigorated, but also it has increased thanks to the reproduction of a certain category of already moulded audience among new generations of viewers. The diversity of the media products that integrate elements of

folklore today points to the multitude of functions and significations that this media segment acquired in the period of its emergence.

Separated from political command (but not from its significations), folklore entertainment today plays an important role both in the configuration of the media in Romania in general – in the symbols and significations with which they operate and in the kind of knowledge they produce – and in social practices of every kind. Furthermore, analysis of these phenomena is central to an understanding of the dynamic of what began as a political programme of mass culture in Romania (and the national culture it supported) before evolving towards the current social practices and phenomena, which are those of a post-national media culture.

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Notes

1. The term mass culture is used here in the over-determined sense given to it by communist ideology, namely, in the jargon of the regime, "the basic modality in raising the level of *civilisation* and *consciousness* of an entire nation." Mass culture, in this sense, is the result of programmatic political-cultural action on the scale of society as a whole and is complementary to specialised culture. Consequently, it is viewed as the principal tool of the cultural revolution (Cheţan, Sommer 1978).

2. The first national radio company in Romania (*Societatea de Difuziune Radiotelefonică din România*) was founded in 1927, and in 1936 it became *Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune*. I wish to mention here only that in 1948, the year when it was nationalised, the Company already had twenty years of experience. In 1956, when the *Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune* became Radioteleviziunea Română, a large part of the radio employees migrated to television, and their professional experience was to be based on this prior type of training.

3. . . . as a "symbolic fund on which the most contemporary events are nurtured," Jean-Francois Gossiaux, *Le sens et le verbe Sur deux modes opposés d'instrumentalisation politique du folklore*, *L'Homme*, 35ᵉ Année, No. 135, La formule canonique des mythes (Jul.–Sep., 1995), p. 127-134, p. 127

4. This text is based on a number of interviews that I conducted with ethnological researchers, political activists from the communist period, and media professionals, representative figures in the field, who were active in the period in question, as well as after the change of political regime. I would especially like to thank, in chronological order of the interviews, Mrs Anca Giurchescu, professor and researcher of ethno-choreology, and Mrs Marioara Murărescu, a central figure in the production of media folklore on Romanian Television; Mr Gruia Stoia, editor of radio broacasts, and ethno-choreologist Zamfir Dejeu, researcher at the Folklore Archive Institute in Cluj, who also had extensive experience as a folklore instructor. I would also like to thank Professor Eugen Alexiu, former director of the Centre for Guidance of Folk Creation (*Centrul de îndrumare a creaţiei populare*) in Cluj and a political activist who was involved for many years in the mass culture political project during the communist regime.

5. În the language of the discipline current before 1989, ethnologists/ethnographers were sooner referred to as researchers into material culture, and folklorists as researchers into "spiritual" culture (customs, beliefs, music, dance, etc.).

6. I here refer to the period after Soviet troops left Romanian soil (1964), when the political-ideological project of the Romanian Communist Party began to diverge from the Soviet model in favour of major cultural references and values from the country's modern "national" past, produced by "bourgeois" nationalist historiography and folklore studies. The enduring and favourite themes of this rehabilitation were "national unity" and "uninterrupted continuity," and this change in political-ideological programme found its most elaborate form in the so-called "July Theses" of 1971 and then in the programme adopted by the Romanian Communist Party in 1974.

7. In the inter-war period and up to 1948 the bourgeoisie had, for example, youth dance associations. (Interview with researcher Anca Giurchescu)

8. C.f. Interview with researcher Anca Giurchescu

9. Buchanan, Donna, Autumn 1995, "Metaphors of Power, Metaphors of Truth: The Politics of Music Professionalism in Bulgaria Folk Orchestras," *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 39, No. 3, p. 381-416.

10. I make use here of the way in which Claude Karnoouh has defined mass culture, as an "ensemble of scriptural, musical, vestimentary, and today also audio-visual products intended to be consumed (respectively sold/bought) by the wider public, even if this consumption is limited to payment of a token price to see, hear or read." (Karnoouh, 2011, p. 61)

11. In any case, of the groups, at least in the Transylvania, which particularly drew my attention, a part has remained active to this day, those that created for themselves a professional niche in the regional culture of entertainers in a society in which traditional regional dances continue to be performed on a large scale.

12. Cf. interview with Gruia Stoia

13. They might have training in folk music, but also sometimes a rigorous education in the field of classical music.

14. From the category of short radio broadcasts (I refer here to the period from the 1970s onwards) special mention should be given to "Folkloric hearth" ("Vatra folclorică"), a broadcast that combined documentation of media folklore with entertainment. "The character of an area was presented succinctly, or there were monographs on folkloric species – the *doina*, the lyric song – or a kind of profile of a folk artist." (Interview with Prof. Gruia Stoia, folklore editor and producer of radio folklore broadcasts.)

15. The producers of these broadcasts were leading figures from the field of ethnological research "who conceived popularising programmes, but also made use of the archive materials from the Folklore Institute or materials collected during fieldwork. Recording commissions were also organised, folklore commissions for different regions, where authentic peasants, rhapsodes, folk musicians were recorded." (Interview with Prof. Gruia Stoia, folklore editor and producer of radio folklore broadcasts.)

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Abstract

Producing and Consuming "Folklore": A Study of the Origins and Usage of Folklore as a Field of Media Culture in Post-communist Romania

After the fall of communism, the forms and genres of its mass culture were decoupled from the ideology of the one-party state and, thanks to the popularity they had gained, they became available for recycling under the new market conditions. Certain types of public performance, initially conceived of as "socialist," and which drew upon "folklore" and "national traditions," changed

their function: after 1990, they became vehicles of media entertainment. Their structure combines the *pre-existing models* of folklore entertainment with the *new formats* of media products. Their popularity with audiences and, in fact, certain segments of society, has not only been reinvigorated, but has also increased thanks to the reproduction of a certain category of audience. The usages of these new entertainment forms can be understood only by setting out from an analysis of their origins, of the mechanisms and processes which, in Romania, characterised the simultaneous development of the political programme of mass culture as well as the field of media culture.