

Roma Agency and Ukrainian Popular Music During Russia's War in Ukraine

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Abstract

Romani activism and political participation in Ukraine grew in earnest when the country declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Western-funded Romani non-governmental organizations guided the early years of political engagement. This first generation of Romani politicians heralded from musical and artistic families, leading to a Romani activism firmly focused on cultural rights. Following Ukraine's 2014 Euromaidan and Revolution of Dignity, the Romani political narrative shifted from focusing solely on cultural rights to encompassing Romani citizenship rights. Since 2014, many Romani politicians have been elected to local governments. Their leadership has been especially evident since Russian forces invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. This article provides an overview of Romani political responses to the war and illustrates how Roma in Ukraine have mobilized against Russian aggression. Specifically, this article draws on Romani-themed popular Ukrainian-language songs performed during the war. Such performances shared widely on social media have brought Ukrainian Roma into the center of Ukraine's resistance narrative.

Ukrainian Abstract

Ромський активізм та українська популярна музика під час війни Росії проти України

Анотація

Громадсько політична активність ромів в Україні серйозно зросла після проголошення Україною незалежності від Радянського Союзу в 1991 році. Ромські неурядові організації, що фінансуються Заходом, очолили цю політичну діяльність в перші роки незалежності. Це перше покоління ромських політиків вийшло з музичних і мистецьких сімей, що призвело до ромської активності, твердо зосередженої на відстоюванні культурних прав. Після Євромайдану та Революції Гідності 2014 року ромський політичний наратив в Україні змінився від зосередження виключно на культурних правах до охоплення всіх громадянських прав ромів в Україні. З 2014 року багато ромських політиків були обрані до ор-

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ганів місцевого самоврядування. Їхнє лідерство стало особливо очевидним після повномасштабного вторгнення російських військ в Україну 24 лютого 2022 року. У цій статті подано огляд політичної реакції ромів на війну та їхньої участі в боротьбі проти російської агресії в Україні. Зокрема, мова йде про популярні україномовні пісні на ромську тематику, які виконувалися під час війни. Такі виступи широко поширюються в соціальних мережах, що ставить українських ромів в центр наративу українського опору.

Carpathian Romani Abstract

Romano aktivizm a te popularne ukrajincika gila andro vojnakero čhasos.
O rusi protiv ukrajinci.

Anotacija

Pre Ukrajina igen fejs bārila o romano aktivizm the e poličičesko situacija akor kana rozpejla pes o Sovjetsko sojuz andro 1991 berš. O romane orgaņizaciji save xudenas love le zapadne stranendar. On sas perše romane lidera maškaro gādže. Odā sas peršo poličično pokoleņije, kala manuša avle avri andalo lavutārika čalāda. Lendar pes kezdiŋda romaņi aktīvnost' maškaro gādže. Avka kezdiŋdam te vakeren pale romaņi kul'tura. Palo Jevromajdan pre Ukrajina andro 2014 berš kana sas e Revolucija Pařivakeri o romano poličičesko vakaribe čerinda pes. Kezdiŋde te vakeren the te terdon važo roma, važo romano pravos. Andro 2014 berš but romen pal savori Ukrajina kine avri sar deputaten andro peskere fovri. O roma pes igen sikade avri kana o rusi avle vojnaha pre Ukrajina andro 24 februāris 2022 berš. Andre kadā pisišāgos, andre kadi statja, o aftor probālinel te sikaven e poličično situacija the e romaņi reakcija pre vojna. Rozvakerel pes sar o roma terdile protiv o rusi. Meng andre kadi statja vakarel pes palo popularne ukrajincika gila andre save gilaven palo roma the vojna. Andro internet sas but lāčhi informacija palo roma kana kezdiŋda pes e vojna. Kaleha o roma ačhile popularne maškaro gādže. The pal kajso vakerla pes andre kadi statja.

Translation from Ukrainian to Carpathian Romani by Viktor Chovka

Amid bomb and missile assaults upon Ukrainian cities, let us not yet again forget that among the stranded families (who are increasingly living without supplies, electricity, or medical equipment) are Roma, people of African descent, stateless people, migrants, women, elderly, sick people, differently-abled human beings, children, including those in state care. Let us not forget that amongst those joining the resistance to fight for the freedom and security of Ukraine, and all its residents, are those same people. (*Romea.cz* 2022)

The opening text is from a letter signed on March 1, 2022 by more than 200 Roma organizations worldwide, condemning the Russian aggression in Ukraine that began on February 24, 2022. The letter draws attention to the plight of minority and marginalized populations, many of whom have become further marginalized during the war. Documented discrimination against minorities fleeing from the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine where fighting has been most intense point to the rhetorical complexities of citizenship and belonging, especially when documents left behind in haste cannot prove identities. The question “who is a Ukrainian citizen” amidst the mass wave of internally

displaced persons and refugees, might be more accurately reframed as “who *looks* like a Ukrainian citizen.” The question of citizenship, belonging, and Roma rights has never been more pressing than now.

This article analyzes the question of belonging from a musical perspective. Through an analysis of Romani themes in popular wartime Ukrainian-language repertoires, this study offers insights into a growing literature on Romani wartime experiences that analyzes Roma commitment to the war effort (Müller 2024). Because Roma in Ukraine are equally affected by the war as are other citizens of Ukraine, they fight alongside non-Roma volunteers and engage in cultural collaborations that were perhaps less common or, at times, seemed impossible before the war.

Drawing on methods from popular music studies that analyze musical references and contextualize lyrics while focusing on overarching themes, this article elucidates the political narrative within which Roma in Ukraine currently find themselves. Through an analysis of songs that circulate on social media, including TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and other platforms, this article questions how wartime music reshapes relationships between Roma and non-Roma. Laying the groundwork for future post-war research, this article also asks how shared cultural initiatives might influence post-war processes of Roma integration, acceptance, and equality. Roma are faced with an impossible choice – to protect the nation-state that has not supported Roma progress in employment, education, and integration. Roma and non-Roma are forced by circumstances to work together to protect the sovereignty of Ukraine.

Romani Activism in Ukraine: 1991–2018

Despite a relatively peaceful transition to independence, Ukraine, like all post-Soviet countries, went through dire years of poverty, corruption, and political instability; however, it has had a more challenging time stabilizing than other developing nations which were once part of the USSR. Since gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine has experienced two revolutions, one peaceful in 2004, known as the Orange Revolution (Wilson 2005), and one violent in 2014, called the Revolution of Dignity (Shore 2018). In 2014, Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula, and the country’s eastern borders were affected by insurgent violence (Allison 2014). Since 2014, a war has been raging in the Donbas region where separatists swearing allegiance to Russia established two break-away republics: the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic (Cavandoli 2016). Since February 24, 2022, when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, 3.7 million people in Ukraine have been internally displaced, 6.5 million are refugees, and 14.6 million are in need of humanitarian assistance (UNHCR 2024).

Among such staggering numbers, it is difficult to discern how the current crisis impacts the daily lives of minority groups, especially Roma (Benstead 2022). Roma are surviving in complex conditions, especially in the eastern and southern *oblasts* (regions) where the fighting is most intense (*ibid.*). Of significance for the broader understanding of Roma experiences, however, is the fact that Zakarpattia (Transcarpathia), Ukraine’s

westernmost oblast, home to the poorest Romani population, is the only oblast that has not sustained Russian missile attacks. Bordering Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania, Zakarpattia is currently the safest area in Ukraine. It is also the area through which most refugees leaving Ukraine have passed. Romani communities have welcomed Romani and non-Romani displaced persons and have offered warm food to those waiting for onward transport into the EU countries welcoming displaced citizens of Ukraine.¹ Many internally displaced Roma, of whom approximately 100,000 have crossed into the EU, have returned to Ukraine, citing discrimination in their host countries (Kottasová 2022). Some have stayed in Zakarpattia, joining Romani communities from which they differ culturally and linguistically.

While Zakarpattia may currently be the safest place for non-Roma escaping Russian missiles, the oblast has never been safe for Roma. On June 23, 2018, ultranationalists attacked an encampment of Romani laborers from Zakarpattia, killing one person and injuring several others. This attack was the sixth in a series of attacks on Roma that year (Mendel 2021). The suspects in the June 2018 attack on Roma were reported to have been members of a radical group called “Sober and Angry Youth.” Some members of this group had ties to the former volunteer battalion Azov, which has fought against Russian forces in eastern Ukraine since 2014 and was implicated in numerous cases of unlawful detention, torture, and other abuses. In 2018, human rights groups documented at least two dozen anti-Roma attacks, threats, or instances of intimidation by radical groups such as C14, Right Sector, Tradytsiya i Poriadok (Tradition and Order), and Karpatska Sich (Carpathian Sich), which derives its name from *sich*, the historic military center of the Zaporizhzhian Cossacks on the Dnipro River (Human Rights Watch 2018). Karpatska Sich self-styled after the nationalist militia group formed in 1938 in the short-lived Transcarpathian state of Carpatho-Ukraine.

Such ongoing acts of violence prompted some Roma to organize politically, particularly on social media. When Transcarpathia Roma, who had set up camp in the outskirts of Lviv, were attacked in 2018, Kyiv-based Romani leaders reached out to international media outlets via watchdog organizations like the European Roma Rights Center (ERRC). Since the 1990s, the ERRC has monitored and published reports on Romani living conditions, unemployment, and attitudes among non-Roma towards Roma in Ukraine (ERRC 2001, 2005, 2006). The ERRC, comprising a global network of activists and lawyers and connected with many Romani rights organizations, helped bring information about Romani realities in Ukraine to an international readership. However, before 2018, that international readership was limited in scope. The fact that the 2018 stories about anti-Romani violence in Ukraine went viral on English-language and multi-lingual social media platforms, attests to how Romani activist networks have grown in Ukraine. Social media networks that crystallized during the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, the first revolution to rely on social media networks to document Russian-

¹ In Zakarpattia, Romani settlements are on the outskirts of town. Patterns of exclusion have contributed to police harassment, unjust incarceration, and lack of access to economic advancement, education, and health care (Helbig 2023).



Figure 1. Wartime website header of the *RomaUA* news portal featuring a Ukrainian tractor pulling a Russian army tank (screenshot taken by the author on June 12, 2024, <https://romaua.org.ua>).

backed violence against citizens of Ukraine, also helped Romani activists bring to light stories once relegated to the shadows, dismissed, or not reported at all.

Romani Wartime Cyberactivism

RomaUA is a Roma-focused Ukrainian-language online information portal based in Transcarpathia.² The logo of *RomaUA* incorporates the *chakra*-inspired wagon wheel image from the Romani flag. Since March 2022, however, the once blue and green striped background that evoked the Romani flag before Russia's invasion has been replaced with the blue and yellow striped background invoking the Ukrainian flag (see Figure 1).

The change from the Romani flag to the Ukrainian flag by one of the main Romani media outlets in Ukraine indicates a shift in rhetoric that has framed Romani political activism since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. The wartime website header also features an image of a tractor pulling a tank. It refers to military successes by Ukrainian citizens in the Spring of 2022 when Ukrainian farmers used tractors to pull Russian tanks stuck or left in the mud. It is among several images that became viral internet memes, reproduced widely in a cottage industry of war souvenirs, and featured on a postage stamp issued by Ukraine's national post office. The incorporation of this iconic wartime image into a Romani media website points to how Roma, despite having been targets of ultranationalist violence prior to the war, are drawing on symbols like the

² I have worked with individuals involved in Romani media since 2004 when I first began conducting ethnographic research among Roma in Ukraine. My last visit to Ukraine was in 2019, prior to the pandemic and the current war. I have continued to collaborate with Romani colleagues whose names I omit in this article for reasons of safety, translating news articles from Ukrainian into English on the *RomaUA* website. The translations from Ukrainian to English throughout this article are my own.

Ukrainian flag to present themselves as willing actors in the fight for Ukraine’s sovereignty.

The reference to a Russian tank on the *RomaUA* website also carries a deeper meaning, particularly regarding Romani resistance. On February 27, 2022, Ukrainian news channels reported that a small group of Romani Ukrainians had allegedly seized and captured a Russian tank in the village of Lyubimovka, near Kakhovka in the Kherson region of southern Ukraine. The news of brave Roma stopping a Russian tank without weapons was re-shared on various social media platforms. Responses to the story were of disbelief and amused pride. The alleged incident is referenced in a humorous song of resistance by Jerry Heil “Геть з України, Москаль Некрасівий” (“Get Out of Ukraine, Ugly Muscovite”).

Jerry Heil’s viral Ukrainian-language hit “Геть з України, Москаль Некрасівий” (“Get Out of Ukraine, Ugly Muscovite”), uploaded to YouTube on April 10, 2022, specifically references the incident in Lyubimovka (see [Video 1: Heil feat. Serdiuchka 2022](#), the reference to Roma appears in the official video between 1:15–1:19). Drawing on the melody of a well-known Ukrainian folk song, “Ой на горі та й жінці жнуть” (“On the Mountain, the Reapers Are Reaping”), the text references Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and the leaders of the ЗСУ – Збройні Сили України (The Armed Forces of Ukraine): “В новинах нові українські герої щоранку! / Вони крадуть наші серця, Наче цигани танки!” (“New Ukrainian heroes are in the news every morning! / They steal our hearts, the way Gypsies [steal] tanks.”) Jerry Heil’s text uses a negative stereotype (stealing) in a favorable comparison. Referenced through the derogatory term *Tsyhany* (Gypsies),³ Roma are placed as parallel actors alongside the President and his Cabinet.

The song’s video borrows from a popular 1970s children’s cartoon series produced in the Ukrainian SSR about the comical exploits of a band of Cossacks. These freemen lived in the southern steppes and protected Ukrainian lands from invaders. Jerry Heil’s video splices Soviet cartoon clips from the Cossack series to highlight Cossack cunning and innovation as they defend themselves and neighboring towns and villages from attacking invaders. The cartoon video does not depict Roma. However, the lyrical reference aligns Roma with images of Cossacks who employ defensive tactics, and draws parallels between heroic Romani acts and Cossack bravery.

Jerry Heil, whose real name is Yana Oleksandrivna Shemayeva, is a young musician and YouTuber from the Kyiv region. She specializes in musical covers and her songs feature samples from other artists.⁴ The above-referenced song, which also goes by the

³ The term *Tsyhan* (*Tsyhany*, pl.), is a negative slur that has etymological connections to the German slur *Zigeuner*. While the term “Roma” is widely accepted in Romani political spheres, the term *Tsyhan* is still commonly used by non-Roma in Ukraine when referencing Roma.

⁴ Jerry Heil has been fined in the past for using samples without permission and her channel removed from YouTube. The popularity of her covers over the years, however, has led to many dropped lawsuits and her YouTube channel restored.

title “Пісня про ЗСУ” (“Song about the Armed Forces of Ukraine”), incorporates a sample by Verka Serduchka, the drag persona of Andriy Danylko, who represented Ukraine in the 2007 Eurovision Song Contest, coming second. The sampled track comes from a 2004 clip in which Verka Serduchka, dressed as a ballerina, sings the lyrics, “Геть з України, москаль некрасивий” (“Get out, get out of Ukraine, ugly Muscovite.”) Serduchka’s emphatic gesturing that accompanies the original lyrical refrain, is sampled in Heil’s video. That this sample echoes the political shifts of 2004, when Ukrainian citizens staged the Orange Revolution to protest the political corruption of pro-Russian candidates, is not lost on audiences familiar with the complex political nuances in Jerry Heil’s hit.

Music as Politics

The speed with which musicians responded creatively to the war parallels music’s central role during the 2004 Orange Revolution, the 2013 Euromaidan, and the 2014 Revolution of Dignity. In 2004, when few people in Ukraine had access to the Internet, musicians played an essential role in calming and supporting the hundreds of thousands who participated in the month-long winter protests on Kyiv’s Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square; Helbig 2006). Musicians performed from a similar stage on Kyiv’s Maidan Nezalezhnosti during the 2013 Euromaidan and the subsequent 2014 Revolution of Dignity until the pro-Russian president ordered the army to open fire on innocent civilians. In 2022, due to the scale of simultaneous Russian missile attacks across Ukraine and the attempts of the Russian army to capture Kyiv, citizens did not move towards Kyiv in communal protest. Rather, once they were in safe areas, musicians uploaded their newly composed war-themed songs to YouTube. These songs were also disseminated widely on TikTok as soundtracks to videos that depicted Ukrainian citizens resisting Russian soldiers in every way possible – by throwing a jar of pickles at a Russian drone or dancing on abandoned Russian equipment.⁵

The politicized nature of music in Ukraine as a hold-over from Soviet times (Hansen et al. 2019; Helbig 2006, 2009; Sonevtsky 2019) forces Romani activists to engage in frameworks of cultural essentialism that, on the one hand, draw attention to Romani rights rhetoric through performance, while on the other hand reinforcing deeply-rooted cultural stereotypes that continue to impede economic advancement and social change (Helbig 2023; Szeman 2018). A musical example highlighting the complex discourses within which Romani wartime experiences circulate comes from a video clip by Oleksandr Ponomariov titled “Україна Переможе” (“Ukraine Will Win”), uploaded to YouTube on April 18, 2022.

⁵ For more information on musical output during Russia’s war in Ukraine, see the list of resources compiled by music scholars at <https://www.ethnomusicology.org/page/Ukraine> (accessed September 10, 2024). See also the author’s resources for understanding Ukraine through music at <https://www.music.pitt.edu/news/adriana-helbigs-resources-understanding-ukraine-through-music> (accessed September 10, 2024).



Figure 2. Romani women from Zakarpattia, including the author’s goddaughter, are featured alongside the famous Kyiv-based Romani singer Petya Chornyi in the music video for Oleksandr Ponomariov’s wartime song “Україна Переможе” (“Ukraine Will Win”; screenshot taken by the author on April 19, 2022).

“Ukraine Will Win” is a collaboration among six musicians, including Taras Topolia, Mykhailo Khoma, Oleksandr Ponomariov, Yuriy Tkach, Yevhen Koshovyi, and the Romani musician Petya Chornyi (see [Video 2: Ponomariov et al. 2022](#), the section featuring Petya Chornyi with female Romani dancers appears at 1:22–1:25). The video features wartime footage interspersed with clips of the musicians, many wearing army gear. The verse-refrain structure allows for a catchy refrain that references the Russian warship *Moskva*, sunk by Ukrainian missiles on April 14, 2022: “Горить, палає техніка ворожа / Рідна Україна переможе! / Горить, палає і ще спалахуй, / Руській корабель, іди. . . Гей! Гей!” (“The enemy’s equipment is on fire / Native Ukraine will win! / Burn, burn and burn again / Russian warship go. . . Hey! Hey!”). The “Hey! Hey!” in the refrain serves as a substitute for the vulgar language of the initial response by Ukrainian soldiers on Snake Island responding to a Russian warship telling them to surrender. The soldiers’ Russian language response, “Русский военный корабль, иди на хуй!” (“Russian warship, go f*ck yourself!”), has spurred a series of memes, songs, and wartime souvenirs. That this phrase was edited in the song “Україна Переможе” / “Ukraine Will Win” points to a broader listening audience, including children.

The “Ukraine Will Win” video is the first time in which Roma from Zakarpattia appear in a music video alongside a Romani musician from a different region of Ukraine (see Figure 2). Thus, the video serves as a metaphor for a moment when linguistically

and culturally different Romani groups come together for a common cause. The video incorporates the image of a tractor that aligns Romani strength with that of Ukrainian farmers who pulled Russian tanks out of the mud. It also centralizes Romani women in the war effort.

The language of the video – Ukrainian – is also significant. The majority of Roma in Ukraine speak Russian and Romanes, with only a fraction of the population having spoken Ukrainian before the 2022 Russian invasion. Petya Chornyi, of Ruska Roma descent, has also predominantly performed in Russian.⁶ His Ukrainian-language verse references Romani resistance: “Ще про тракторні війська, / Маю розказати, / Бо все, що десь недобре стоїть, / Хай буде біля хати.” (“More about the tractor troops / I have to tell you / Because everything that is not good somewhere / Let it be near the house.”) The use of Ukrainian and the inclusion of minority representation in a song titled “Ukraine Will Win” points to a shift in a wartime political narrative that highlights new ideologies as regards Romani politics in Ukraine.

International Audiences

Global support for Ukraine, especially in the early months of Russia’s invasion, fostered a desire to know more about the country and its people. Western media attention to musicians in Ukraine changed the musical landscape, broadening audiences and significantly expanding the reach of Ukraine’s music industries. Ukraine’s 2004 Eurovision win by Ruslana, followed by a subsequent win in 2016 by Jamala, was replicated in 2022 by Kalush Orchestra. As political emissaries, Ukraine’s musicians took to global stages, touring extensively throughout the European Union, the U.K., and especially the United States, whose military support was most actively sought by Ukraine. Many performed with the Ukrainian flag on stage and joined the plea for funds to help the victims of war.

Central to Ukraine’s war efforts were long-standing groups with Ukrainian roots like Gogol Bordello. Gogol Bordello’s efforts are especially relevant in the context of this article because they were the driving force behind the embrace of East European punk that drew inspiration from Romani musical sources. Formed in 1999 in New York City, the band’s musical style can be defined as a fusion of punk rock, a variety of Romani musical styles and Eastern European traditional sounds, klezmer instrumental aesthetics, and Balkan rhythms. Their live performances are known for their high energy and theatricality, with lead singer Eugene Hütz often jumping off the stage into the crowd.

Gogol Bordello’s music is heavily influenced by Hütz’s roots in Ukraine and his experience of living in various countries worldwide. The band’s lyrics touch on immigration, cultural identity, and the struggle to find a sense of belonging in a rapidly changing world (Helbig 2009). Their most popular songs include “Start Wearing Purple,” “Wan-

⁶ Petya Chornyi is the son of the late Lialia Chornaya, a famous Roma singer who made her career in the USSR.

derlust King,” and “American Wedding.” Their music has been featured in several movies and TV shows, including *Everything is Illuminated* and *Gossip Girl*, and continues to be popular on U.S. college campuses. Before the war, Gogol Bordello typically performed with a Romani flag prominently displayed on stage, drawing attention to Romani rights. Since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Gogol Bordello has performed with a Ukrainian flag, contextualizing Romani sounds in a broader narrative that focuses on the Ukrainian nation-state.

Gogol Bordello’s 2022 tour featured well-known favorites as well as songs from his wartime album *Solidaritine*. The album featured many collaborators, including one with Serhiy Zhadan, a musician, poet, and Ukraine’s Nobel Prize for Literature nominee. Zhadan offered the vocals on the track “Сили Перемоги” (“Forces of Victory,” released on July 7, 2022; see [Video 3: Gogol Bordello feat. Zhadan and Kazka 2022](#)). The Ukrainian-language refrain sung by Zhadan together with Gogol Bordello points to the strength artists draw from each other: “Так прокидаються на півдороги / Сили перемоги / То прокидаються в середині / Сили перемоги” (“So they wake up halfway / Forces of victory / They wake up in the middle / Forces of victory.”) The English refrain, sung by Gogol Bordello, is a call not to give up: “I can’t go on, I will go on / I can’t go on, I will go on / I can’t go on, I will go on / I can’t go on, I will go on.” The English lyrics draw global audiences to the war effort amidst a broader repertoire of Romani-inspired musical aesthetics. This performance of Roma and non-Roma fusion serves as a template for using music to embrace and integrate all the peoples of Ukraine.

Gogol Bordello’s collaboration with electro-folk duo Kazka (Fairytale) on this track further reinforces the metaphorical mergers in Ukrainian society. In the band’s full iteration, Kazka’s use of traditional Ukrainian folk instruments, especially the *sopilka* (woodwind flute), culturally associated with the Hutsul people of the Carpathian Mountains, harnesses cultural identity narratives that drive current pre-Soviet folk music revivals. In the “Forces of Victory” video, Kazka is represented by Oleksandra Zaritska (vocals). The video compilation, featuring images of Ukrainian citizens, accompanied by a track performed by Zhadan and Eugene Hütz, serves as a collaboration of like-minded individuals from different backgrounds working towards a shared goal – a Ukraine without war.

Conclusion

Ukrainian-language songs have been a crucial way through which people have fostered hope, strength, and resistance during Russia’s war in Ukraine. As this article illustrates, music has created spaces for Roma and non-Roma cultural engagement, dialogue, and exchange. As the war rages on, Romani organizations in Ukraine and abroad continue to document the extensive physical and psychological toll experienced by Romani communities in Ukraine. Romani activists and people access social media accounts to actively share images of Roma holding the Ukrainian flag and, increasingly, wearing traditional Ukrainian embroideries. Videos of Roma listening to Ukrainian-language music

at family celebrations and singing the World War I war anthem “Ой у лузі червона калина” (“Oh the Red Viburnum in the Meadow”) as well as other patriotic songs point to the complexity of Roma wartime experiences. As this preliminary study has shown, wartime relations have fostered undeniable gains in dialogue and collaboration between Roma and non-Roma in Ukraine. The war has provided opportunities for inclusion, recognition, and acceptance. How the current dialogue between Roma and non-Roma will continue will only become evident when, as the title of the Roma and non-Roma musical collaboration states, “Ukraine Will Win.”

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