# Sounding Traumatic Memory: The *Symphonia Romani – Bari Duk* and *Dui Rroma* as Memory Media of the Roma Genocide during World War II

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## Abstract

This article examines the significance of music as a medium of memory in the broader context of Romani World War II remembrance and human rights activism of the last decade. It specifically focusses on the oratorio *Symphonia Romani – Bari Duk* by Adrian Gaspar and the documentary film *Dui Rroma* by Gaspar's mother Iovanca Gaspar as memory media (Erll 2011a) of the Roma genocide during World War II. The composer based the libretto of the *Symphonia Romani* on a series of interviews conducted with the late survivor of the National Socialist genocide of Sinti and Roma, Hugo Höllenreiner, reflecting key moments of his memories of Auschwitz. In turn, the documentary *Dui Rroma* explores the relationship between the Sinto Höllenreiner and the Rom Gaspar and provides further information about Höllenreiner's life and the Nazi persecution of Sinti and Roma during World War II as well as the genesis of Gaspar's musical work until its premier in 2011. This article analyses the lyrical and musical contents of the oratorio (and the documentary as an extension of that work) with respect to their role in sounding traumatic memories. My findings are based on ethnographic fieldwork and multiple in-depth interviews with the composer and film director since 2017. I set these in dialogue with current key concepts from the field of memory studies, which consider memory as a cultural practice (Rigney 2015) that involves "movement" (Erll 2011b). Highlighting the different positionalities involved in sounding traumatic memories of Sinti and Roma to a largely non-minority audience, I emphasise the translations and transformations of memory in these processes. Central to this analysis are conceptualisations of the "witness" (Assmann 2016) and the transition from memory to postmemory (Hirsch 2012). This article argues from the standpoint of the emerging field of musical memory studies (Spinetti, Schoop, and Hofman 2021) and aims to bridge the gap between the fields of (ethno)-musicology, minority studies, and memory studies.



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## German Abstract

Traumatische Erinnerung zum Erklingen bringen:
Die *Symphonia Romani - Bari Duk* und *Dui Rroma* als Medien der Erinnerung an den Roma-Genozid während des Zweiten Weltkriegs

Dieser Artikel untersucht die Bedeutung von Musik als Medium der Erinnerung im Kontext des Menschenrechtsaktivismus der Sinti und Roma und der breiteren Erinnerungskultur an den Zweiten Weltkrieg der letzten Jahrzehnte. Im Fokus stehen das Oratorium *Symphonia Romani – Bari Duk* von Adrian Gaspar und den Dokumentarfilm *Dui Rroma* von Iovanca Gaspar als Erinnerungsmedien (Erll 2011a) an den Völkermord an den Sinti und Roma. Das Libretto der Symphonia Romani basiert auf einer Reihe von Interviews, die der Komponist mit Hugo Höllenreiner, einem Überlebenden und Zeitzeugen des nationalsozialistischen Völkermordes, geführt hat. Der Dokumentarfilm Dui Rroma wiederum beleuchtet die Beziehung zwischen dem Sinto Höllenreiner und dem Rom Gaspar und über die Entstehung des Stückes bis zu seiner Uraufführung im Jahr 2011. Dieser Artikel analysiert die lyrischen und musikalischen Mittel des Oratoriums (und des Dokumentarfilms als Erweiterung dieses Werks) und deren Rolle bei der Vermittlung traumatischer Erinnerungen. Meine Analysen beruhen auf ethnografischer Feldforschung und mehreren ausführlichen Interviews mit dem Komponisten und der Regisseurin. Der Artikel setzt meine Forschung in Beziehung zu aktuellen Schlüsselkonzepten aus dem Bereich der Gedächtnisforschung, der Erinnerung als eine kulturelle Praxis (Rigney 2015) betrachten, die Zirkulation und „Bewegung“ (Erll 2011b) voraussetzt. Indem ich die unterschiedlichen gesellschaftlichen Positionierungen hervorhebe, die mit der Vermittlung traumatischer Erinnerungen von Sinti und Roma an ein größtenteils mehrheitsgesellschaftliches Publikum verbunden sind, hebe ich die Signifikanz von Übersetzungen und Transformationen von Erinnerung in diesen Prozess hervor. Im Mittelpunkt der Analyse stehen die Neukonzeptualisierungen von „Zeug*innenschaft“ (Assmann 2016) im Kontext des gesellschaftlichen Übergangs von gelebter Erinnerung hin zu „Postmemory“ (Hirsch 2012).


## Introduction

In December 2017, I attended a film screening in one of Cologne’s smaller cinemas showcasing a selection of films on Romani culture. The documentary I found particularly intriguing was called *Dui Rroma* (“Two Roma”), directed by Iovanca Gaspar, which depicted the life of Holocaust survivor Hugo Höllenreiner and the composer Adrian Gaspar’s musical piece, *Symphonia Romani – Bari Duk* (“Great Pain”), based on Höllenreiner’s memories. The documentary included footage of the concert in Vienna on May 10, 2011, which was later broadcast on Austrian television. The narrative focused primarily on interviews with Höllenreiner conducted by Gaspar and captured in diverse locations, including the former Auschwitz death camp. During the interviews, Höllenreiner showed the young composer where he and his family were imprisoned and where some of the most horrific events took place. Footage of various historians and experts on Romani culture, giving background and context to the genocide of the Sinti and Roma during the Nazi era, accompanies the film.

After the film ended, Iovanca and Adrian Gaspar – introduced as mother and son – took to the stage. After a short exchange with the moderator, the floor was opened to questions from the audience. Afterwards I met the Gaspars in the foyer. We discussed political activism, composition, and future projects. This marked the start of my ongoing commitment to working with the Gaspars, whereby I gained a deeper appreciation of their engagement with current Romani rights campaigns, both musical and non-musical.

After the death of Hugo Höllenreiner in 2015, the documentary and the musical piece are some of the few media that tell the story of his life.[1] In this article, I examine the documentary and the musical piece as media of memory (Erll 2011a: 120–126). Specifically, I explore how these media adapt and transform Höllenreiner's memories at the onset of the "post-witness era" (Schult and Popescu 2015). I will focus on the musical and lyrical aesthetics applied to sound traumatic memories, as well as the narrative and visual devices of the documentary to tell the story of Höllenreiner's survival of Auschwitz. Considering the central role of Holocaust remembrance in current European discourses on shared values and a common identity (Assmann 2012), studying the transformation and mediation of witness memories in the current era, where only a few survivors remain, has become a crucial task towards comprehending present developments in European memory culture.

In the following pages, this article discusses how the documentary serves as a platform not only for Höllenreiner's recollections but also for Adrian Gaspar's musical composition. While the documentary's narrative extends beyond merely recounting Höllenreiner's experiences, I will show how it forges an emotional connection between his story and Gaspar's music through montage. I argue that the documentary strongly conveys that Gaspar's music functions as a faithful vessel for Höllenreiner's memory. *Dui Rroma*, therefore, not only functions as a medium of memory but also as a meta-medium for *Bari Duk*.

I position my study in between the fields of ethnomusicology and memory studies, arguing that a combination of concepts derived from memory studies with ethnomusicological methods and thinking benefits both fields while facilitating a better understanding of the possibilities and difficulties of the post-witness era memory media. While existing research exploring the cultural memory of World War II has primarily concentrated on textual, visual, and audio-visual media, it has largely overlooked music (see Nieper and Schmitz 2016). Bijsterveld and van Dijck (2009: 12) argue that remembrance is often constituted by auditory factors that are both underestimated and undertheorised. Meanwhile, musicology has seen a growing number of publications exploring memorialization processes (see for instance Baumgartner and Boczkowska 2020; Rásky and Pawlosky 2015; Wlodarski 2015). Music making is often seen not only as a means of reading history, but also as a tool for constructing historical narratives

[1] In 2005, author Anja Tuckermann published Höllenreiner's biography "*Denk nicht, wir bleiben hier!" Die Lebensgeschichte des Sinto Hugo Höllenreiner* and in 2007, Simon Ritzler made a documentary about Höllenreiner's life titled *Angelus Mortis*.

through performative experiences (Bijsterveld 2013; Bithell 2006). However, these studies rarely engage with the theoretical and/or conceptual issues raised by memory studies. This article argues from the perspective of an emerging field of musical memory studies (see Spinetti, Schoop, and Hofman 2021; Ringsmut and König 2021) that aims to bring memory studies and (ethno)musicology into dialogue. As a field of study, the significance of Holocaust remembrance in Romani culture has been largely overlooked by ethnomusicology. Notable exceptions to this are, for instance, studies by Petra Gelbart (2015), Ursula Hemetek (2000, 2006) Zuzana Jurková (2018), Siv B. Lie (2023), and Anne M. Weißbach (2015). This article ties in with these contributions and begins by conceptualising music as a medium of memory and discussing the changing role of testimony and trauma in contemporary cultures of memory. Following this, I will conduct a comprehensive study and examination of *Bari Duk* and *Dui Rroma* as conduits of memory and elucidate the way the role of the witness is transformed.[2]

## Memory Media, Trauma, and the Changing Role of the Witness

Understanding music as a medium of memory requires clarification of certain premises and concepts related to memory and how media, including film and music, are involved. Thus, before exploring the specific issue of music as a medium of traumatic memory in the post-witness era, it is important to have a basic understanding of these concepts and their traditions of thought.

Aleida Assmann (2016) offers a useful entry point into current memory studies, wherein she distinguishes three levels of memory according to their respective media, namely neural (the brain), social (communicative networks), and cultural (symbolic media). These three levels are interconnected and serve to enable analytical examination rather than forming distinct and autonomous categories. Following the foundational work of the Assmanns's since the 1980's, there has been a noticeable shift in how collective memory is understood, focusing primarily on memory as a dynamic process. This shift has led to the development of new concepts which consider the role of the multi-directional nature of memory (Rothberg 2009), prosthetic memory (Landsberg 2004) and post-memory (Hirsch 2012), and its impact on and involvement with current politics (Assmann 2016). Notably, many of these concepts formed through reflections on the remembrance of World War II and its broader societal and cultural repercussions. The commemoration of World War II and the Holocaust has played a pivotal role in shaping contemporary memory studies and our understanding of cultural memory. Astrid Erll ties these various strands together, postulating that "memory studies should develop an interest in mnemonic itineraries, follow the non-isomorphic trajectories of media, contents, and carriers, the paths, and path-dependencies, of remembering and

[2] I followed similar paths in my work as part of the DFG project Sounding Memories. Specifically, my articles on the Requiem for Auschwitz (Ringsmut and Schoop 2021) and the commemoration of the Sinti victims in Wuppertal in 2019 (Schoop, Köhn, and Ringsmut 2024) investigate related issues, albeit in different contexts.

forgetting" (2011a: 19). Based on these assumptions, it is possible to identify a shift from individual neural memory to social and cultural memory regarding the transfer of Höllenreiner's witness memory to subsequent generations through film and music. Erll's (2011b) concept of "traveling memory" or "memory in motion" can be applied to conceptualise this transition.

With the concept of "traveling memory" Erll argues that in the production of memories, people, media, memory forms and symbols, as well as different memory forms and practices, are in constant motion. Only through movement does memory come alive. She identifies five dimensions central to this process which will guide my analysis later on: 1. people as memory actors. In our case, the main actors are Hugo Höllenreiner as the witness and Adrian Gaspar as an interviewer and composer, who therefore occupy different positions in the memory process. However, the number of actors involved extends beyond these two and also includes Iovanca Gaspar and her film crew, members of the audience, memory activists, ethnomusicologists and, by extension, readers of this article; 2. Media, which are the *Symphonia* and the documentary. Other media like the libretto and score of the musical piece are also memory media which through their circulation keep the memory in movement; 3. content, by which Erll refers to shared images, ideas, and narratives about the past. Here, the specific episodes told by Höllenreiner and the contextualisations added in the documentary form the main contents; 4. practices such as concerts or film screenings that are usually embedded in larger commemorative contexts; and finally, 5. forms, i.e. condensed content, such as topoi, symbols or motifs which are particularly suitable for dissemination due to complexity reduction. Thus, memories of the Holocaust circulate in various partly condensed forms. They are spread through different techniques and with the use of various media, thereby reaching new actors of memory.

There may be a discrepancy between the emphasis on circulating and sharing memories on the one hand and our understanding of trauma and traumatic memories on the other. For instance, Cathy Caruth, who introduced the concept of trauma theory in her 1996 book *Unclaimed Experience*, argues that trauma manifests as the repetition of the traumatic event in the mind and is therefore "inextricably tied up with belatedness and incomprehensibility" (92) and therefore unspeakable. However, as Thomas Trezise states "the putative unspeakability of the Holocaust has not prevented . . . witnesses from speaking" (2013: 40–41). It is thus important to understand the relationship between traumatic and narrative memory as part of what Susan J. Brison (1999) has termed "speech acts of memory" that are crucial in the "remaking of the self":

> Trauma undoes the self by breaking the ongoing narrative, severing the connections among remembered past, lived present, and anticipated future. In telling first-person trauma narrative to a suitable listener, the survivor is, at the same time and once again, a second person, dependent on the listener in order to return to personhood. (1999: 41)

In this sense, survivor and witness testimonies of Nazi persecution such as Hugo Höllenreiner's may be viewed as speech acts of memory that serve multiple purposes. As Brison emphasised, they shape and organise the recalled events and establish greater

control over traumatic memories (ibid.: 40). Conversely, these acts of remembrance are inherently social and play an important role in our post-war memory culture. According to the historian Annette Wieviorka, the "Era of the Witness" (2006) started during the 1960s, when contemporary witnesses played a growing role in anchoring the memory of National Socialism and its victims in the collective memory and passing it on to subsequent generations (ibid.: 56–57).

There is a historical link between witnessing and religious martyrdom, evident in *mártys*, the Greek term for witness (see Agamben 2003: 23; Wieviorka 2006: 32–34; Assmann 2016: 86–87). In Abrahamic religions, the martyr bears witness to something through their suffering and death. Aleida Assmann distinguishes between the religious witness and three other forms: legal, historical, and moral. For legal and historical witnesses, their own experience and perception are essential, legitimising their role as witnesses (Assmann 2016: 85). However, these two forms of testimony differ in their social function. Court testimonies are provided impartially and under oath, resulting in a legal verdict. In contrast, historical testimony, commonly recounted by survivors and contemporary witnesses, is viewed as the primary source for reconstructive historiography, but, as Assmann (2016: 86) points out, is considered controversial (if not unreliable) in professional historiography. Enzo Traverso (2007) argues that the tension between witness accounts and historiography stems from the conceptual separation of memory and history and the distinct social roles of witnesses and historians. Witness testimonies make history singular because memory is "deeply subjective, selective, often disrespectful of chronology, indifferent to the reconstruction of the whole and to generalising rationalisations" (18).[3] In contrast, historians are tasked with "inscribing this uniqueness of lived experience in a general historical context" (ibid.).

Like Wieviorka, Traverso nevertheless argues that eyewitnesses have played an important role in the historiography of the Holocaust and its place in human history (ibid.: 16–19). This type of witness, which Assmann, drawing on Jay Winter (2007) and Avishai Margalit (2002), calls a "moral witness" (2016: 88–92), combines aspects of religious, legal, and historical witnesses. Moral witnesses "embody" the injustice that has been inflicted upon them. In contrast to historical testimonies, however, moral testimonies always take place within a public sphere and their status is, as Assmann noted, controversial in official historiography. Their purpose is, therefore, not only to report on what has happened, but to create and maintain a moral authority in the form of a community of memory (ibid.). The speech acts of memory by survivors such as Höllenreiner therefore serve a dual purpose: the remaking of the self and the creation of a community of memory.

However, as Schult and Popescu (2015) state, the "era of the witness" is coming to an end, and other forms of memory circulation are emerging that significantly change the role of the witness in the current memory culture of World War II. For example, Alison Landsberg posits that media of memory, particularly film, function as a "transferential space" (2004: 113) where individuals can create experiential connections to

[3] Unless stated otherwise all translations in this article are done by the author.

events they have not directly experienced. Landsberg coined the term "prosthetic memory" to describe a type of memory that is "portable, fluid, and nonessentialist" (ibid.: 18). Similarly, Marianne Hirsch (2012) coined the term "postmemory" to conceptualise the process by which traumatic experiences are transmitted to subsequent generations. It is a form of memory that is passed down mainly through family and cultural networks, creating a sense of connection to a past that one did not live through. According to Hirsch (2012: 18), postmemory functions as a secondary type of memory where recollections of the past are filtered through stories, photos, objects, and other cultural manifestations that confer the status of witnesses and secondary witnesses.[4]

Amy Lynn Wlodarski's *Musical Witness and Holocaust Representation* (2015) is a critical study that explores the role of music in representing (and bearing witness to) the Holocaust. The book analyses how music conveys emotions, experiences, and memories. Particularly the analysis of Steve Reich's *Different Trains* (ibid.: 126–163), which focuses on the relationship between eyewitness accounts and their musical adaptations inspired my own analysis of *Bari Duk*.

In what follows, I will offer an analysis of the musical piece, focusing on the ways in which traumatic memory is narrated, adapted, and travels. Specifically, I will explore the roles of memory actors, media, content, practices, and forms to shed light on how the witness's role has evolved and how music can serve as a medium of memory in the post-witness era. To comprehensibly represent the narrative of Hugo Höllenreiner, my analysis will follow the structure of both the musical piece and the documentary.

## Deportation – Prelude

*Dui Rroma* begins with a close-up of the score for *Bari Duk* and a shot inside a café in Vienna where the composer is sitting at a table writing. In the background, we hear the initial eerie string sounds from the *Symphonia*'s second movement. The camera then switches to a close-up of Gaspar's interview transcripts, which are in the process of becoming the libretto, with some words marked in red and arranged in a particular order. Simultaneously, we hear some of these emphasised lyrics being sung by the solo bass singer, bringing the auditive and visual spheres together. Then the composer's voiceover explains "From the beginning, it was clear to me that this work could reach certain audiences and draw attention to what has happened in the history of the Roma and Sinti." The camera then shows Höllenreiner standing in front of the wooden barracks at the former Auschwitz concentration camp, saying, "I don't really want to talk when I'm here. But I have to tell it" (00:53–01:04). The scene transitions to Höllenreiner and Gaspar alongside the train tracks, accompanied by minor chords played on the piano. The exposition concludes, and the scene then cuts to the title screen.

[4] For an analysis of music festivals as media for postmemory see for instance Schoop (2021) and Ringsmut (2021).

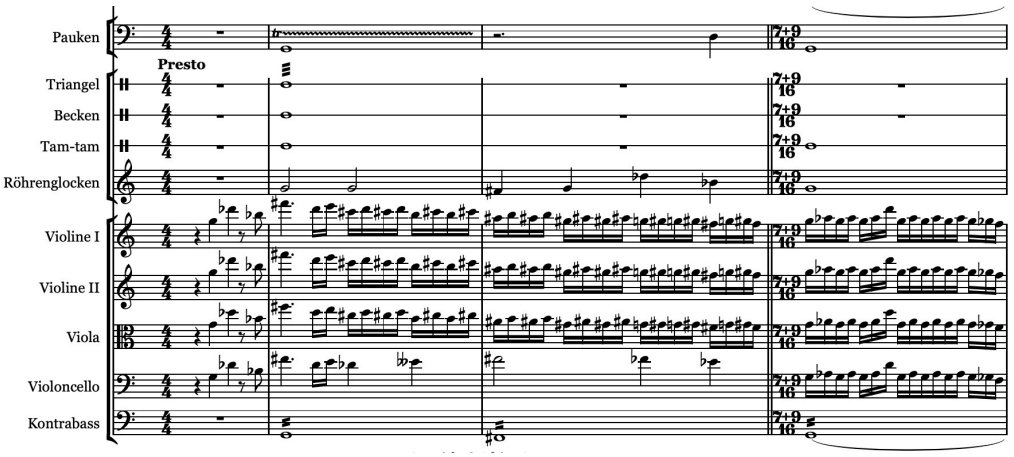


**Figure 1.** Bars 1–4 of the prelude of *Symphonia Romani – Bari Duk* (courtesy of Adrian Gaspar, all rights reserved).

The first shots after the title are scenes from the rehearsals for the *Bari Duk* concert in Vienna in 2011. The composer provides insights into his background and the inspiration behind his musical composition, which aimed to "accurately capture Höllenreiner's words" (03:25–03:40). Subsequently, a monochrome photograph shows Höllenreiner's family before the war and we learn that he was nine years old when they were deported. The documentary progresses as the setting shifts to Höllenreiner and Gaspar aboard a train. Höllenreiner recounts their transportation to Auschwitz, describing how they were treated like livestock. He recalls the overwhelming stench of human waste and the intense heat inside the wagon. During the narration, the documentary switches to Gerhard Baumgartner, a historian and specialist in the history of Nazi persecution and anti-Nazi resistance, who provides additional historical context for Höllenreiner's experiences. With this, the exposition of the documentary transitions into the next narrative episode.

Unlike the documentary, the prelude of *Bari Duk*'s first movement does not offer any narrative information through lyrics. Instead, the instrumental movement comprises the distinct musical elements that will become more prominent and developed in the subsequent movements of the piece. Therefore, the prelude serves as a non-verbal introduction to Höllenreiner's memories through musical poetics. Let us examine the musical material to identify the significant compositional traits and motifs utilised by Adrian Gaspar to produce a sounding entrance into Höllenreiner's memories.

*Bari Duk* is composed for orchestra, choir and a solo bass singer. The final section additionally incorporates components of a Jazz Combo orchestration. The 2011 concert added drums, saxophones, and acoustic bass to the orchestration. Furthermore, Adrian Gaspar personally played the piano sections in this composition. The prelude starts with a fanfare-like motif consisting of four notes. The motif exhibits chromaticism and wide intervals and reappears later in the fourth and fifth movement, albeit in modified forms. Subsequently, a sequence of alternating minor second intervals is played in chromatically descending 16th notes (see Figure 1).

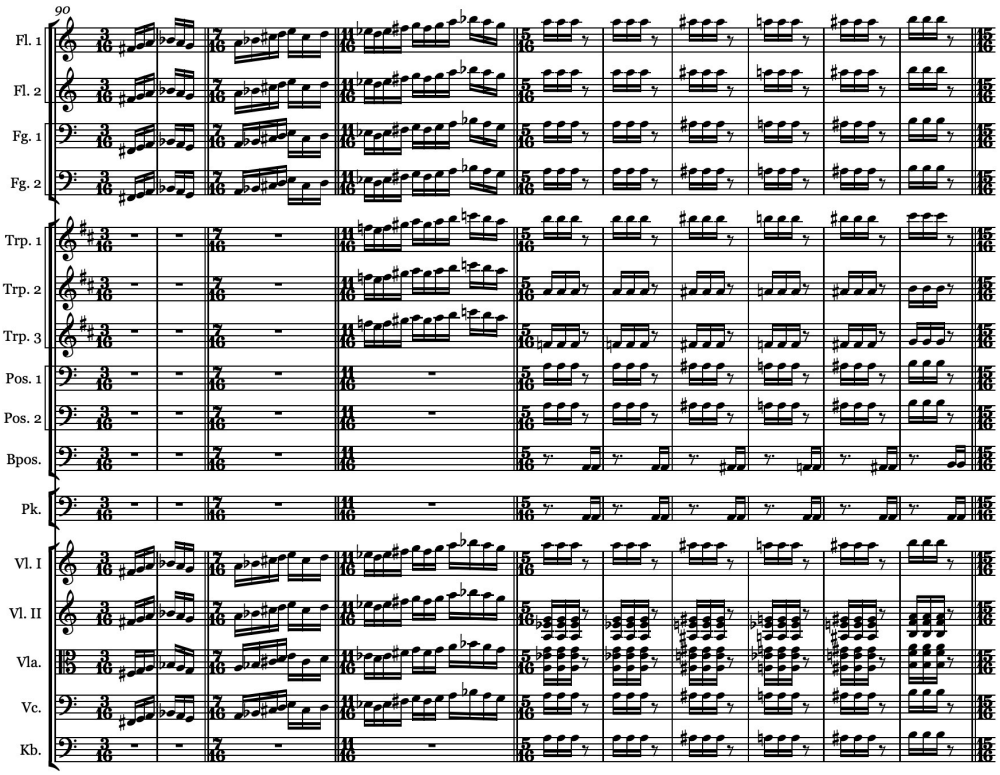


**Figure 2.** Bars 90–100 of the prelude of *Symphonia Romani – Bari Duk* (courtesy of Adrian Gaspar, all rights reserved).

The basic pulse of the prelude is notated in 4/4. The piece frequently interrupts this basic beat with odd time signatures and meters. These compositional techniques comprise the primary material of the prelude from the beginning until bar 28. From bar 28 onwards, the chromatic 16th sequences are fragmented and take on a more subdued role. Meanwhile, the violins and parts of the wind section play longer notes with less chromaticism and atonal runs, more akin to the musical style of the late Romantic period of European symphonic music. Gaspar conveyed that he was more drawn to "tonal music" than "contemporary compositions" (interview, March 29, 2018) during the composition of *Bari Duk*. Richard Strauss had been a significant influence on the composer regarding instrumentation, arrangement, and musical poetics (ibid.). This influence becomes especially evident in the section from bar 28 to bar 62, which heavily relies on tonal melody and extended chords. The prelude then reverts to the chromatic lines, which are now more prominent than in the first section. The fanfare motif from the outset makes multiple appearances in different modulations. Additionally, the 16th sequences are increasingly elaborated in varied odd-time meters and performed in near unison by the entire orchestra (see Figure 2).

Given Gaspar's preference for more "traditional harmony and melody," along with the basic 4/4 meter as reference points, the prevailing musical poetics suggest a melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic disorientation. During significant portions of the Prelude there is an absence of any tonal or rhythmic centre. It is replaced by the fast 16th note sequences and fanfare motif, conveying a musical language of unease and impending

danger. As noted by Wlodarski (2015: 7), common aesthetics for expressing traumatic memories in so-called Holocaust compositions include musical poetics that reflect the disorientation and disjunctions often present in the testimonies themselves. As Maria Cizmic argues, "aesthetic works that foreground such fragmentation and disruption can [also] engage complicated issues around suffering and historical memory and prompt audiences to experience empathy that expands their understanding of the world" (2012: 19; cited in Wlodarski 2015: 8). The build-up of tension continues throughout the last 19 bars, until after a general pause the final chord, which is harmonically ambiguous and full of tension, sounds in full orchestration. The tension remains unresolved, lingering during the brief pause between movements.

Both *Dui Rroma* and *Bari Duk* used an entrance, an arrival, to introduce the narrative of Höllenreiner's memories of Auschwitz. The documentary features footage during Gaspar's and Höllenreiner's train ride to the former death camp and its entrance area. It establishes a chronological order of events starting with the deportation of Höllenreiner's family. The musical piece instead introduces the musical material that subsequently represents Höllenreiner's memories before arriving, both figuratively and harmonically, at the main part of the composition.

## Blood Brothers – 'kana si 'men pandsch prala

Höllenreiner and Gaspar are in the former concentration camp with close ups to the train tracks, barracks, and information panels at the memorial site. Then the scene cuts again to the 2011 performance of *Bari Duk*. We hear the bass singing the lines from the second movement "'kana si 'men pandsch prala" ending with the word "Blutsbrüder." After this sequence, the documentary cuts to Höllenreiner and Gaspar sitting in two armchairs in a lobby. At this point, the documentary has caught up with and runs parallel to the narrative of the musical piece.

Höllenreiner speaks to the composer about a boy in the concentration camp who became very dear to him. He tells him that they cut their fingers and became blood brothers. He told his mother they were now five brothers. Once they were playing in front of the barracks with a ball made of clothes from a deceased person and rags. Höllenreiner threw the ball into the air and the other boy chased after it. Three shots were fired from a tower. The boy died from a shot to the stomach. Höllenreiner reminisces about their shared childhood fantasies of growing up to have families with loving spouses and children. He says that he remembers the boy's name, but that he no longer utters it.

In this and the subsequent episodes, Iovanca Gaspar employed editing techniques that switched between the setting in the lobby, where most of the following interview segments with Höllenreiner took place, the 2011 performance of *Bari Duk*, as well as scenes from the former concentration camp and short excerpts from interviews with the historian Gerhard Baumgartner and linguist Marcel Courthiade, who specialises in Romani language studies. By alternating between interviews and musical performance,

the documentary constructs a coherent narrative that seamlessly shifts between music and testimony, underscoring and illustrating the composers' desire to remain as faithful as possible to Höllenreiner's own words.

Let us now turn to the musical piece and focus on *Bari Duk*'s second movement. It is titled "'kana si 'men pandsch prala" ("now we are five brothers"), which is a direct quote from Gaspar's interview with Höllenreiner. It begins with eight bars of strings playing a very quiet extended C chord that resolves into a unison D before the first sung passage is introduced by the choir singing "29" which is answered by the bass with "Jawohl!" ("Yes!"). The following lines are sung in Romanes by the choir. The choir sings the following lines in Romanes, conveying Höllenreiner's message to his mother that they are now five brothers. The word "Blutsbrüder" ("blood brothers") appears in German and is followed by the bass singing: "Hab seinen Namen nie mehr ausgesprochen" ("Never said his name again"). The subsequent choral section begins at bar 85 after a two-bar instrumental line played by the cello and doublebass: "Ando Lageri, ando baro Lageri" ("In the camp, in the big camp"). Following this, the bass sings large portions of the lyrics, with minor interjections from the choir: "Samas awri, jek mulo. Ame' liam lesko Lumpi, kerdiam, menge Balla, tschudiam me leste i jop mande, me tschidium e Balla, jop naschas palal, o Tschawo, jop bückirelpes, aschundum trin garbena: Baff, baff, baff!" ("We were outside, there was a dead man. We took his rags, made a ball out of them, I threw it to him and he to me, I threw the ball, he ran after it, the boy, he bended down, I heard three shots: baff, baff, baff!"; translated by Adrian Gaspar). The bass sings the last two lines unaccompanied. Following a brief pause, the string and horn section play three eighth-note hits of clustered chords. The bass continues to sing while a bell rings, and the violin and double bass play a low C and a high G continuously: "Denkerau me: kate na mai khelamenge, thaisa ka awawa kate nimmer! Jop bückirelpes, le' e Balla, awela mande zu, dikhumles an, awelas rat von lesko mui, von die jakha! Vorher, men kerdiliam Blutsbrüder." ("I thought to myself: we won't play here anymore, tomorrow I won't come here again! He bends down, picks up the ball, comes to me, I looked at him, blood was coming out of his mouth, out of his eyes! We were blood brothers."; translated by Adrian Gaspar). The last words in this movement ("Vorher, men kerdiliam Blutsbrüder.") are not sung but spoken, followed by two bars of cello and doublebass playing a slow descending line ending on a low C.

The second movement is sparse in harmony and instrumentation, emphasising the sung bass lines. The focal point is on the bass singer's depiction of Hugo Höllenreiner recounting his memories. Extended unaccompanied bass segments create an intimate and direct atmosphere, implying Höllenreiner's perceived responsibility for his blood brother's death. The concluding section, comprising spoken words, indicates a deliberate attempt to convey the limitations of musical expression regarding trauma. Both the documentary and the musical composition employ techniques including moments of silence, fragmented narrative lines, and deliberate omissions to represent trauma, with a strong emphasis on Hugo's claim that he has never spoken his blood brother's name since. These devices are featured throughout the film and composition as both visible and auditory representations of trauma.

## Maimo

The episode begins with Höllenreiner speaking about a boy in his barrack called Maimo. A black and white archival picture of the inside of a barrack in Auschwitz accompanies his voiceover, after which we see him and Gaspar sitting in the foyer. Höllenreiner recalls Maimo being a handsome child who everybody knew and loved. One day when they had been lined up in five rows waiting for inspection the boy ran from his mother onto the camp road. His mother yelled after him, telling him to come back. She was unable to pursue them due to the other women holding her back. Höllenreiner recollects that the child was apprehended by three SS officers, Palitzsch, Plagge, and König, who proceeded to fatally strike the child's head against a brick wall.[5] Höllenreiner recounts the events from a child's point of view while seated in a lobby armchair. As he told how the SS officers approached, he struck the armrest with his fist, creating three loud thuds. When recounting the murder of the boy, he brought down his fist again on the armchair. As a child, Höllenreiner had been standing behind the adults and only saw in their faces and heard that something terrible had happened. The scene then transitions to the concert, where we hear the bass singer continuing the story before it switches again to Höllenreiner and Gaspar who are standing on the grounds of the former camp where the boy was murdered. Höllenreiner points to the spot and imitates the actions of the mother who tried to scrape her son's remains off the wall. He says the words from the beginning of the documentary: "When I am here, I don't really want to talk. But I have to tell it. It was just too much. Do you understand? These people did things to us" (19:30–20:00). He then falls silent, and they both stand before the barracks. The scene cuts to Marcel Courthiade, who provides background information about Robert Ritter and his assistant Eva Justin. They were part of the Racial Hygiene and Demographic Biology Research Unit of the Criminal Police in Nazi Germany (Fings and Sparing 2005: 128–151) and instrumental in the Nazi Persecution of Sinti and Roma.

At this point, the film has assembled all its necessary scenic material and combines them in a specific way that serves the mediation of Höllenreiner's memory and the validation of the documentary (and the musical piece) as "secondary witnesses" (Wlodarski 2015: 6). The utilisation of montage techniques and the juxtaposition of the interviews with musical performance serves as the primary strategy to connect particular moments and events in Höllenreiner's testimony with their musical counterparts in the composition itself. We will see that the narration of the following episodes of his memory make use of the same elements and techniques. Let us turn again to the musical piece.

The third movement, titled "Maimo," uses the same techniques as the previous movements to convey Höllenreiner's memories. Attention is again focused on the solo bass singer who narrates the Maimo episode. In contrast to the preceding movements,

[5] It needs to be stated that, while the murders of Ernst-August König have been well discussed, the described involvement of these three SS officers is not documented in historical sources. I am thankful to my peer reviewer who brought this to my attention.

the instrumentation prioritises individual wind instruments, with the choir bearing the primary responsibility for harmony. The third movement begins with a clarinet melody characterised by rhythmic variety and unexpected jumps, which develops into a small fugue before the bass enters with the first line. In choosing the clarinet and its skipping and bouncing lines to introduce the Maimo movement, Gaspar employs compositional techniques akin to a tone poem, reflecting the composer's fondness for Richard Strauss. In this context, the boy Maimo, who runs playfully from his mother, is identified with the clarinet. The choir assumes the roles of the other inmates and Maimo's mother. During the sung sections, the instrumentation underscores the narrative with a bell chime signifying the call to muster on the word "Glockenschlago," and snare drum beats representing the approaching officers. The fast chromatic 16th notes return, played on the double bass after the line "O tschawo is weg" ("the boy is gone"). As the narrative approaches the boy's demise, the bass intones the phrase "nur dumpfo schlago" ("just a thud") which is followed by a drumbeat.

In general, the composer uses musical symbols to accompany and signify key elements of the narrative provided by the bass. These symbols align with symphonic traditions, particularly late romantic tone poems, and contribute to the representation of Höllenreiner's memories. This is what Wlodarski (2015) refers to as the musical witness. For example, the documentary shows Höllenreiner demonstrating the sounds of approaching SS officers and the murder of Maimo by knocking on a sofa. These knocks are then translated directly into snare drum and kettle drum beats in the third movement, which speaks to the focus on detail of the composer to capture Höllenreiner's testimony as well as the filmmaker's intention to highlight these congruencies.

## Great Pain and Ultimate Liberation

The subsequent episodes follow the formula with minor variations. As a result, I will only provide a brief overview without going into as much detail as before. The scene at the former concentration camp where Höllenreiner showed Gaspar the location where the boy was killed, as well as the crematoriums and where they stacked the corpses, transitions once more to Courthiade. He discloses information about Josef Mengele, who conducted inhumane medical experiments on prisoners. After this, the scenes alternate between Höllenreiner's narration in the lobby and the 2011 concert. Höllenreiner describes how he and his brother were subjected to Mengele's experiments. They had heard of the notorious doctor who "turned boys into girls and girls into boys" (28:30). Höllenreiner went first and recalls lying on a bench, experiencing intense pain in his groin. His brother was subjected to the same experiment. The documentary does not specify the details of Mengele's procedures. Courthiade assumes that Mengele conducted his research by operating on their lymph nodes (32:17). Despite being the younger of the two brothers, Höllenreiner insisted on going in first. This is taken up by Gaspar at the end of this episode, where he says: "Hugo often told me that even as a child he felt responsible for his family." This feeling of responsibility also translates into

his activities as an eyewitness of the Nazi crimes and echoes Margalit's and Winter's conception of the moral witness.

The fourth movement, *Bari Duk*, functions as the musical centrepiece of the *Symphonia*. Here, the composer assembles and develops the different musical motifs and makes full use of the orchestra. In particular, the inclusion of mainly German lyrics makes the piece unique in its narrative significance. Prior to composing the work, Gaspar engaged in several interviews with Höllenreiner, during which Höllenreiner was encouraged to freely recount his personal story. The initial interview was conducted in German, which both speakers were native in. However, upon discovering that Gaspar was also a native Romanes speaker, Höllenreiner gave a second interview in Romanes. The majority of the lyrics were derived from this second interview, whereas the lyrics for the fourth movement were extracted from the first interview. I conversed with Gaspar and inquired whether the differences were due to cultural taboos about death or hospital-related issues (cf. Kozubik, van Dijk, and Filakovska Bobakova 2019). Gaspar stated that he was not previously aware of any taboos among Sinti and only became familiar with the cultural differences between Roma and Sinti afterwards. Cultural taboos, he told me, were not a contributing factor in his decision. Gaspar believed that the story relating to Mengele and the then emerging movement *Bari Duk* would be best suited as a self-contained piece that could also be performed in different contexts (Gaspar, interview, September 29, 2023). Some of the lyrics in this piece are striking in their directness and their ability to reflect a child's perspective. For instance, in bar 57, the bassist sings the line "Es kam ein Junge zu uns rüber. 'Schaut her,' er machte seinen Mantel auf, er hatte kein Geschlechtsteil mehr dran!" ("A boy came over to us. 'Look here,' he opened his coat, he did not have genitals anymore!"), which culminates in the line "Ich will kein Mädchen werden!" ("I don't want to become a girl!") during the musical climax of the composition.[6] Gaspar mentioned during the same conversation that he was aware that certain lyrics could be considered offensive by some. However, he maintained that the original words of Höllenreiner should be respected, and that there should be no artistic or compositional decisions made that would change them.

The last episode recounts the story of his family's rescue. He, his mother, and younger siblings were sent to Ravensbrück, Mauthausen, and finally Bergen-Belsen, while his father and older brother remained in Auschwitz. He explains to Gaspar that Bergen-Belsen was the harshest concentration camp and that they wouldn't survive more than two or three days without food or water. Between three and four p.m. he recalls hearing someone say "you are free." They realised they had been rescued. The documentary cuts to the 2011 concert, which depicts an extended section of the final movement. A jazz ensemble with drums, saxophones, and walking bass fuses with the orchestra, symbolising the American soldiers who liberated the concentration camp. The finale of the symphony culminates in a grand crescendo with the bass and choir exclaiming, "You are free."

[6] For historical works on the Nazi sterilisation politics see for instance Gisela Bock (2010: esp. 297–364) and Heike Krokowski (2001).

The final sequences of the documentary shift their focus to the present day. The closing moments of the concert feature Höllenreiner and Gaspar together on stage. Gaspar's voice-over says: "First and foremost, as a musician, as a composer, I want my piece to continue the story of Hugo and his message, namely that you should never give up" (39:57). Following this, the documentary shifts to Baumgartner and then to Courthiade, who highlight the threat of a recurring history and the current marginalisation and discrimination faced by Roma and Sinti communities. The final remarks are made by Höllenreiner himself as he sits in a garden with other elders and converses with Gaspar, who leans over him. We hear his voice-over:

> Of our Sinti and Roma, over 500,000 people are lost, who were brutally murdered. Of our family alone, over 100 people are lost. I am alive, but our dead cannot forgive that, cannot absolve that. And I want that something like that, which happened not only to us Sinti and Roma, but also to Jews, Poles, in all nations, should never happen again. That is what I am fighting for. (42:36)

We see him looking through a fence at the former concentration camp, then turn and walk away as the scene cuts to black. A brief written statement from Romani Rose, chair of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, emphasises the significance of Höllenreiner's example before the final credits roll.

In the following section I examine the specific strategies and methods applied by both memory media to translate and create a form of witnessing apart from the witness itself. I will show that while this form is based on Höllenreiner's experience and testimony, the documentary and the musical piece use specific techniques of legitimisation with which they compose memory for the post-witness era.

## Composing the Post-Witness

The narrative of Höllenreiner's memories of Auschwitz, as it is presented here, is fragmented and shaped by two different media. Although the analysis of the narrative forms is therefore inseparable from its specific medium, a number of general points can be made about Höllenreiner's memory narrative that apply to both media. In Höllenreiner's narrative we can clearly see the speech acts of memory that are instrumental in his own remaking of the self as well as in the formation of a wider community of memory. Through the excerpts of the interviews with Gaspar shown in the documentary, we can see the deliberate structuring of his traumatic memories into a narrative framework with multiple episodes that follow an internal logic and chronological order. Details such as names, specific locations, and directions within the former concentration camp and the clarity of his descriptions of his sensory impressions, as well as the condensation of his memories into multiple self-contained episodes, all indicate Höllenreiner's efforts to "exercise greater control over the memories themselves" (Brison 1999: 47). In both media we see memory being moulded into a specific form that is repeatable and, as Erll (2011b) points out, can circulate in wider contexts and apart from the witness itself.

At the same time, his narrative reveals this process of gaining control over the past as unfinished. In one of our conversations, Adrian Gaspar told me that he was often impressed by Höllenreiner's "coolness" when talking about Auschwitz, but that there were always certain moments in his narrative when he became very emotional (Gaspar, interview, September 29, 2023). Especially in those passages where certain things were deliberately left unsaid, such as the name of his blood brother, the "speech acts of memory" appear as an ongoing process.

The "truth mission" as a moral witness, as Assmann (2016) puts it, is perfectly captured in Höllenreiner's first and last words in the documentary. At the beginning, when he says that he does not want to say anything, but that he has to, we can recognise this statement not only as the need of a traumatised self but also as a declaration of his mission. Together with his last sentence, in which he says that he is fighting against a repetition of history, we recognise the special social significance of moral witnesses. While Assmann and Margalit emphasise the centrality of the witness itself as the site of the embodiment of injustice, this aspect of embodied witnessing inevitably fades away, and memory media such as the documentary and the symphony exemplify the transformations of moral witnessing in the post-witness era. I want to highlight some of the key elements of the musical piece that are central to this process of transformation.

Throughout the composition, except for the prelude, the focus is on Höllenreiner's narrative, delivered by the solo bass singer, who acts as a stand-in for the witness: the text is sung as a recitative with minimal melodic embellishment. Frequent spoken passages reinforce the impression that we are listening to the testimony of a witness. The chorus takes on various roles. It comments on or repeats the bass lines. At times it takes on the role of other concentration camp inmates, reinforcing the depiction of Höllenreiner's time in Auschwitz. The orchestration often has a disruptive and disorienting aesthetic, which Wlodarski (2015: 7) has identified as indicative of musical representations of trauma. Furthermore, the orchestra uses musical aesthetics that mimic the sounds in Höllenreiner's narrative, such as gunshots or the sound of army boots, which reinforces the connection between the musical piece and the testimony.

And yet, the musical piece conveys something about the testimony that is not purely textual or narrative. Sound and performance create a sensory and emotional experience that is part of the mediated testimony. The mediation of memory through music is a highly affective, embodied and experiential phenomenon through which performers and audiences forge and articulate social relations by establishing "living connections" in the form of post- and prosthetic memories (Hirsch 2012; Landsberg 2004). Ethnomusicologists such as Federico Spinetti, Monika E. Schoop, and Ana Hofman have highlighted in their work the "affective power of music to evoke intense emotional and experiential connections between the past and the present" (2021: 5). It is precisely in this aesthetic experience that the composer Gaspar sees the best way to keep memory alive:

> Personally, as someone who works in the cultural sector, I think this is the first way to reach people. Then comes education, school or the internet. Imagine you are 25 years old and maybe you have heard about Sinti and Roma during the Nazi era. You know

> about it from school or maybe even from different workshops. And I think that's quite superficial, it's very rational. When you go to a concert, whether you're a musician or not, you go with certain expectations, and then you might hear something you don't expect, and you might be shocked, you might not like it, but any reaction is good. You might find some sounds extremely ugly, but it's something that can stick and create an emotion and through that you can create and access the past. (Gaspar, interview, September 29, 2023)

The analysis of the piece echoes Wlodarksi's notion of "musical witness," which challenges the composer to balance the moral impulse of faithfully representing the memory of the Holocaust with their own artistic imperatives and genre conventions. She points out that musical witness "seeks to suffuse the surrounding text with the privilege and authority of witness and generally manifests itself in a close binding of the composer's voice with that of the witness-figure and an explicit reference to historical sources" (2015: 6). We also see this binding together of voices perfectly displayed in the documentary by Iovanca Gaspar.

*Dui Rroma* underlines the centrality of the testimony, emphasising the importance of hearing and seeing the witness in their own words. This emphasis not only conveys Höllenreiner's personal experience, but also captures the suffering, emotions, and poignant silences that define his account. At the same time, the film functions as a metamedium by showing the compositional process and the musical performance that resulted from the composer's engagement with Höllenreiner, thereby aiding the legitimisation of the musical work as a faithful representation of his memory. I will illustrate this through a closer examination of the cinematic composition of the Maimo narrative as representative of the documentary as such.

A key aspect of the documentary's visual composition is the use of long takes with minimal variation in camera angles. This stylistic choice aims to keep the focus on the witness, avoiding distractions that might break the audience's connection to the narrative. The inclusion of footage from the actual site of the camp enhances the authentication and mediated immediacy of the witness's experience, thus reinforcing the authority of his testimony. The inclusion of archival material and expert interviews serves to provide the audience with essential background information. This broader contextualisation extends the scope of the narrative beyond the individual subject and places it in the wider context of the genocide of the Sinti and Roma. Furthermore, the Maimo narrative, for example, interweaves Höllenreiner's account during the interview with the lyrics of the *Symphonia*, illustrating the complex process of translating memories into lyrics (see Figure 3). This seamless transition serves to underscore the faithfulness of the lyrics to the original testimony.

In summary, the Maimo narrative intricately combines spoken and sung words of the witness, intimate long shots, authentic locations and supplementary archival material. As such, it not only represents a medium of Höllrenreiner's memory, but also

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time Code | 15:45 | | | |
| Visual | Archival Foto | Close-Up Höllenreiner | Gaspar and Höllenreiner in the Foyer | Concert 2011 |
| Audio | Höllenreiner Foyer Interview | Höllenreiner Foyer Interview | Höllenreiner Foyer Interview | Bari Duk Basso |
| Content | “In our block there was a family with a little boy…” | “A beautiful child…” | “He broke away from the group and ran unto the camp road.” | “She wanted to run after him. Stop, the gadje will kill you.” |
| Time Code | | | | 18:02 |
| Visual | Close-Up Höllenreiner | Gaspar and Höllenreiner in the Foyer | Gaspar and Höllenreiner in the Foyer | Concert 2011 |
| Audio | Höllenreiner Foyer Interview | Höllenreiner Foyer Interview | Höllenreiner Foyer Interview | Bari Duk Basso |
| Content | “The other women stopped her… His name is burnt into my memory…” | “Three men came in… I could not see. I could only hear them…” | “The people I saw looked terrified” | “The boy was taken by his legs and smashed with his head against the wall.” |
| Time Code | | | | |
| Visual | Concert 2011 | Gaspar and Höllenreiner at Auschwitz | Gaspar and Höllenreiner at Auschwitz | Footage from the camp |
| Audio | Bari Duk Basso | Höllenreiner at Auschwitz | Höllenreiner at Auschwitz | Piano Music |
| Content | “His brain was still on the wall.” | “Here is where they smashed him against the wall…” | “I have to tell it.” | Silence |
| Time Code | 20:00 | | | |
| Visual | Interview Courthiade | Archival Photo | | |
| Audio | Interview Courthiade | Interview Courthiade | | |
| Content | Over half a million Sinti and Roma were murdered by the Nazis | Background information on Robert Ritter and Eva Justin | | |

**Figure 3.** Scene composition of the Maimo narrative in *Dui Rroma* (created by the author).

functions as a meta-medium that employs various forms of memory mediation, including historiography, oral history and music. In particular, as a meta-medium of *Bari Duk*, the documentary remediates (Erll and Rigney 2009) the musical piece in such a way that, through juxtaposition, it further authorises the musical piece as secondary witness.

## On the Portability and Circulation of Memory Media

Understanding musical testimony as "memory in motion" (Erll 2011b) necessarily means considering music in its "multiple simultaneous forms of existence" (Born 2011: 377). Musical testimony must be conceptualised beyond the score and also take into account its materiality and performativity. So far, my analysis of the musical piece has focused on its lyrical adaptation and sonic aspects. In this final section, I would like to look at the performative contexts of *Bari Duk* and its circulation and compare it to the documentary in terms of the "portability" (Landsberg 2004: 19) of memory.

To date, the complete *Symphonia* has been performed three times, with the last performance taking place in 2011. The YouTube video of the Vienna concert had been viewed approximately 3,500 times by July 2024 (see Adrian Gaspar Music 2013). It was performed a fourth time by a school orchestra, but without the third movement. Although Adrian Gaspar has been actively involved as a musician and composer in transnational commemorative events, the *Symphonia* has not yet been performed in such a context. For example, in 2019, when Gaspar performed with the Roma and Sinti Philharmonic on the Day of Remembrance for the Roma victims of the former Auschwitz concentration camp, they performed his composition "When Something Special Ends" for piano and string orchestra.

Given this limited circulation, it is unclear whether *Bari Duk* by itself will succeed in keeping the memory of Hugo Höllenreiner alive. However, the composer does not regard this as an obstacle. Rather, he sees the performances and the media representations of his work in the form of articles, websites, podcasts, etc. as opportunities to bring together different, albeit few, actors involved in different forms of cultural production and social activism (Gaspar, interview, September 29, 2023).

By comparison, the documentary *Dui Rroma* has had much wider circulation, having been screened several times in different countries and contexts such as film festivals, university lectures, workshops, memorial days and online commemorations, most recently in a webinar on "Multigenerational Legacies of Roma Auschwitz Hell and Survival" in October 2023. However, Iovanca Gaspar is very careful to protect the documentary from unauthorised circulation. Similar to the film screening described at the beginning of this article, Gaspar is often present at these events, giving either short interviews or introductions about her work and her personal involvement with the Höllenreiner family. These performative parts of the screenings also allow for the expression of social and cultural differences. For example, after the screening in Cologne in December 2019, a woman asked her about the subtitles that translated Romanes into

German. She said that she thought it was taboo to share the Romani language with non-minority members. Gaspar acknowledged this, but also told her that she did not have a problem with the translation of the language and that it was now possible to study Romanes at several universities. She then said that it might be different here than in Eastern Europe (the Gaspars emigrated from Romania to Germany and Austria), and that this might be the difference between Sinti and Roma. In her opinion, it is more important to present Romani language and culture to the general public (Iovanca Gaspar, pers. comm., September 27, 2023).

In addition to this personal commitment, Gaspar has taken other measures to safeguard Höllenreiner's memory. There is no freely available version of the documentary on the internet, and interested viewers must look out for screenings or contact the filmmaker directly for information through her website.[7] These measures to secure Gaspar's intellectual property rights considerably limit the circulation of the documentary. Nevertheless, as a travelling memory media, *Dui Rroma* is much more portable than *Bari Duk* and requires far less infrastructure and investment than an orchestral performance. However, the fixed form of the documentary is not easily adaptable to different contexts, whereas the musical piece assumes a more fluid form. In 2020, for example, Gaspar saw the (online) premiere of his chamber opera *Rromano kidipe*. The composition intertwines three biographical accounts: those of the Polish Romani poet Bronisława Wajs (known as Papusza), the Austrian Romani painter Ceija Stojka, and Hugo Höllenreiner. The chamber opera includes adaptations of the second and fourth movements of *Bari Duk* alongside a sixth previously unfinished movement. In this movement, the bass singer, representing Höllenreiner, performs the lyrics from the last part of the interview, in which he tells Gaspar that he will continue to fight against the repetition of history. This demonstrates the musical witness's ability to adapt and remain flexible. Although the *Symphonia* as such might not circulate as widely as the documentary (or other media of Höllenreiner's memory), the possibility of restructuring and reshaping the musical piece to suit different contexts constitutes one of the strengths of musical witnessing in the "post-witness era."

## Conclusion: Post-Witnessing and the Issue of Cultural Memory in Romani Studies

Höllenreiner's memories of Auschwitz, presented through film and music, are shaped by the distinct qualities of each medium. However, several general observations can be made about Höllenreiner's memory narrative that apply to both forms of media. His narrative reflects speech acts of memory, which are instrumental in his personal reconstruction of self and the formation of a broader community of memory. Through his interviews with Gaspar featured in the documentary, we can discern a deliberate structuring of his traumatic memories into a narrative framework complete with multiple

[7] https://duirroma.wordpress.com (accessed September 12, 2024).

episodes that follow a logical and chronological sequence. The meticulous attention to detail, such as specific names, locations, sensory impressions, and the condensation of memories into distinct episodes, suggest Höllenreiner's active efforts to exert greater control over his memories. In both the documentary and the symphony, we see memory taking on a specific, repeatable form, which, as Erll (2011b) notes, can circulate in broader contexts independent of the witness itself. Both media build on direct representations of the witness through text, sound, and video, whose account remains central even in the post-witness era. I have shown how the documentary specifically serves as a meta medium that in turn is instrumental in the validation of the musical witness *Bari Duk*. By considering the memory in movement, we can also acknowledge the transfer of authority from the witness itself to secondary witnesses in the form of the composer and the film maker who, returning to Assmann's conception, take on Höllenreiner's "mission of truth" and engage in creating a community of memory. Following this line of thought, this article can also be considered part of the memory media and its author and readers part of the community of memory.

Lastly, I want to take a little detour and address a general problem of cultural memory prevalent in Romani Studies. I specifically refer to the critique by political theorist Huub van Baar's of the trope of "a people without history" that characterises Romani cultures by an "art of forgetting" (2011: 271–276) found, for instance, in the works of Isabel Fonseca (1995) and Inga Clendinnen (1998). These studies, van Baar elaborates, establish the alleged lack of social memory as an intrinsic part of Romani culture. He traces variations of this trope in the anthropological studies by Michael Stewart (1997; 2004), Paloma Gay y Blasco (1999; 2001), and James Scott (2009), who suggest "that the Roma do remember, but do generally not objectify their remembrance in the form of shrines, anthems, ruins, written stories about their origins, or monuments" (see van Baar 2011: 275).This, in turn, runs the risk of essentialising and othering Romani cultures as people who are culturally prone to live in a continuous present (Stewart 1997: 246). Stewart, who himself seeks to argue against "presentist rhetoric" (2004: 561) by describing the various day-to-day interactions in which memories of the Holocaust reverberate, explains the lack of public commemoration through Romani culture-specific ways of relating to the past (ibid.: 566–568).

More recent studies on Holocaust remembrance in Romani cultures from the field of ethnomusicology highlight the significance of various forms of emerging public remembrance (e.g. Jurková 2018; Lie 2023; Ringsmut 2021). For example, in her work on Holocaust commemoration of French Manouche, Siv B. Lie concludes:

> What I can reasonably conclude is that Manouche artists are producing work that aims to participate in established frameworks of Holocaust commemoration. This represents a departure from the idea that Manouches are publicly silent about Romani genocide and that their historical models are fundamentally different from those that prevail within French society. Their works are meant to be consumed by a broad public in the service of changing dominant narratives and even policy, all while speaking to fellow Manouches and compelling reevaluations of their own relationships to history. More

> than advocating for the recognition of Romani genocide among all audiences, these artists effectively challenge essentialized notions of cultural difference between Manouches and the rest of society. Their work points to the need to consider more fully the larger processes that create and codify such difference in the first place. (Lie 2023: 388)

Although Stewart (2004: 577) acknowledges the shift in attitudes towards public commemoration, especially in Germany under the leadership of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, his understanding of Romani Holocaust remembrance remains largely culturalist. To present an alternative viewpoint, I would like to revisit the theories of Margalit, Assmann, and Brison. They all highlight the importance of a community of memory that is receptive and attentive to traumatic memories, such as those of Hugo Höllenreiner. The moral witness is a social role that only functions within a society that is willing to acknowledge their testimony. Instead of explaining the relative lack of Romani testimonies and commemoration of the Nazi genocide by turning to their alleged cultural disposition to not remember, we might engage in something that Petra Gelbart (2011) termed "Gadjology" and turn our attention to the European majority cultures and their own attitudes towards their past and their relationship with their minorities. We might consider, then, understanding the relatively long public silences of survivors and their descendants more as an expression of the majority society's attitudes towards Sinti and Roma than as an expression of their cultural disposition.

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