

Gypsy Spirit
Journey of the Roma

Wednesday, February 11, 8 pm, 2004
Zellerbach Hall

Featuring
The Budapest Ensemble
and the
Kálmán Balogh Gypsy Cimbalom Band with Guests

Zoltán Zsuráfszki, *artistic director and choreographer*
Kálmán Balogh, *music director, composer, and arranger*
Kálmán Magyar, *producer*
Zsuzsa Vincze, *dramaturg*
Zsuzsa Vincze, *costume designer*
Dezső Fitos and Nadia Abdulwahab, *assistant choreographers*
Gábor Valach, *dance director*
Péter Árendás, *musical consultant*
Zoltán Vincze, *lighting designer and scenery*
Dániel Vincze, *company manager*
Otto Juhász, *technical manager*
Jeff Dyksterhouse, *company manager*
Sam Quentin Ritchie II, *production manager*

Musicians

Yasko Argirov, Ferenc Balogh, Kálmán Balogh, Sándor Budai, Attila Jakab, Ferenc Kovács,
Sándor Kuti, Slavtcho Lambov, László Major, Csaba Novák, Ágnes Szalóki

Dancers

Nadia Abdulwahab, Milán Albuovics, Irén Deffend, Anna Sára Endrődi, Dezső Fitos,
Éva Gömöri, Flórián Hajdú, Ignác Kádár, Enikő Kocsis, Csaba Taba, Attila Tompa,
Gabriella Tóth, Melánia Tóth, Gábor Valach

Presented by Columbia Artists Management in association with Centrum Management
Exclusive Management by Columbia Artists Management Inc.,
Jean Jacques Cesbron, *executive vice president*

MALÉV Hungarian Airlines is the official airline for *Gypsy Spirit, Journey of the Roma*.

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Please note:

The program list offers a general guide to the performance. Each night, the specific musical selections will change as the program continues to evolve. The spontaneity of the program truly reflects that of the “Gypsy Spirit.”

The Origins

The performance will open with an old fairy-tale concerning the origins of the Romanies, told in the Romani language. Images and dance from India, where the Gypsies originated, remind us of the roots of the Romani people. The company will fill the stage with joyous activity, featuring a Gypsy dance from the Carpathians.

The Music

The Central European variations of Romani music will be featured by the musicians. Trademarks of Gypsy music include improvisation and a love of all types of musical expression—tunes and songs that always surge with high energy.

The Vocations

The Gypsies, although they lived mostly on the fringes of society, were an integral part of village life, providing necessary jobs and skills, through which they earned their living. The essential tools for their work often doubled as musical instruments during leisure time.

The Virtuosity

Gypsy musicians have always made the music of their adoptive country more exciting, and through the years became famous from their virtuosic musicianship. This quality will be featured in music from Transylvania, the Balkan countries, and Hungary.

Dance Suite from Szatmár

The large Roma population in Northern Hungary is famous for its exciting music and dance culture, which will be displayed in this selection.

*INTERMISSION***Rókatánc (“The Dance of the Fox”)**

Some of the most ancient dances the Romanies have preserved are ritualistic, reminding us of our close ties to nature and to a more archaic world, where animals and humans were dependent on each other. In this authentic dance, an old fox teaches his offspring the secrets of survival.

Roma Euro-Pub

We are treated to a unique evening of festivity in an imaginary *Roma Euro-Pub* somewhere in Europe, where the Gypsy musicians and dancers convene and enjoy themselves. Fun, humor, virtuosity, and passion are abundant and contagious.

Transylvanian Gypsy Dances

The most lyrical—and also spectacular—Gypsy dances are found in Transylvania. Our finale demonstrates some of these works and, we hope, will leave the audience wondering how some of these treasures could have remained hidden for centuries.

**Origins of the Romani People**

The Roma have been made up of many different groups of people from the very beginning, and have absorbed outsiders throughout their history. Because they arrived in Europe from the East, they were thought by the first Europeans to be from Nubia or Egypt or any number of vaguely acknowledged non-European places. They were called, among other things, Egyptians or “Gyptians,” which is where the word “Gypsy” comes from. It was not until the second half of the 18th century that scholars in Europe began to realize that the Romani language, in fact, came from India. Basic words—such as some numerals and kinship terms, as well as names for body parts, actions, and so on—were demonstrably Indian. So, they concluded, if the languages were originally Indian, its speakers very likely must be as well. Once they realized this, their next questions were obvious: if Romanies were indeed from India, when did they leave, and why? Are there still Romanies in that country?

As the ethnically and linguistically mixed occupational population from India moved further and further away from its land of origin as the result of the 11th-century spread of Islam, it began to acquire its own ethnic identity. In some instances, the mingling of small groups of Romanies with other peoples has resulted in such groups being absorbed into them and losing their Romani identity; the Jenisch are perhaps such an example. In others, it has been the outsiders who have been absorbed, and who, in the course of time, have become one with the Romani group.

In Europe, Romanies were either kept in slavery in the Balkans (in territory that is today Romania), or else were able to move on and up into the rest of the continent, reaching every northern and western country by about 1500. Over time, and as a result of having interacted with various European populations and being fragmented into widely separated groups, Romanies have emerged as a number of distinct ethnic groups within the larger whole.

Although every European country has a Romani population, those citizens usually have a much lower standard of living than the rest of the population. There are many reasons for this—their lack of a country, their distinctive language and appearance, and their conservative traditional culture being just some of them. Since the collapse of Communism in 1989 and the rise of new ethnic nationalism, their situation has grown worse and has led to substantial migrations of Central and Eastern European Romanies to the West, including the United States and Canada, to escape racial persecution.

The Romani Archives and Documentation Center

The University of Texas at Austin houses the The Romani Archives and Documentation Center (RADOc), which today is the largest resource of its kind in the world. It consists of over 25,000 books, monographs, bound articles, papers and letters, prints, transparencies, photographs, audio- and video-recorded material, framed and unframed prints and documents, as well as many other non-media items. It began to be assembled in London in 1962 and has existed as an accessible academic repository since 1976, the first year that Romani studies were taught at the University of Texas. The Center, not supported by the University itself though listed in its directory, attracts visitors from all over the world, and receives e-mail requests for information daily. As the only university-based body regularly receiving governmental and other official reports on the condition of Romanies throughout the world, it remains the leading US facility for Romani studies. While the Center attracts international scholars and students, its additional long-term purpose is to function as the main bureau connecting a network of similar centers in Europe and elsewhere, from which scholarships, once such a program is in place, will be distributed and monitored, to allow Romanies to pursue their education. It is not funded, relying entirely on donations, both from authors and publishers, and from private benefactors.

—Ian Hancock

If you would like to support RADOc, please contact The Romani Archives, Calhoun Hall 501, University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712, or at xulaj@mail.utexas.edu (www.radoc.net; www.beris.ac.uk/UHPRESS/romanipeople.html).

The Budapest Ensemble is one of the oldest, yet freshest, folk ensembles from Central Europe. It was established in 1958, and has always played an important role in the Hungarian musical and dance life. The first artistic director was the legendary István Molnár, who was the first to present authentic Hungarian folkdance on stage. As the Ensemble's artistic direction evolved, it has remained a leader in creating the newest presentations in European folkdance. Zoltán Zsuráfszki was named artistic director in 1991, and since then the Ensemble's philosophy has been to present folklore in its most authentic form possible, yet include adaptations to suit the performance requirements of the modern stage and tailor the presentations to contemporary audiences. The Budapest Ensemble has performed to great critical acclaim on every continent.

Kálmán Balogh Gypsy Cimbalom Band represents the dynamic merging of music from the old and new worlds. Although all the music is based on authentic tunes and melodies (the result of extensive research and strict musical training), it is the creation of a new and untested musical genre that takes precedence for the Band. Melodies that have been polished in European villages for centuries are reinterpreted with great respect and understanding, enabling present day music lovers to experience the emotions and beauty inherent in the music of the group's ancestors. The Band brings a contemporary and uniquely forward-looking attitude to time-honored traditions.

Zoltán Zsuráfszki (*artistic director and choreographer*) is one of Europe's most talented choreographers. His extensive field research in remote villages of the Carpathian Basin makes him unique among currently active artistic directors

of professional folk ensembles. In 1991, Zsuráfszki became the leader of The Budapest Ensemble. In his choreography, he continues to develop a clean and sharp creative style. In his folk-inspired works, he preserves the authenticity of the original folk dances.

Kálmán Balogh (*music director, composer, and arranger*) is one of the world's best known and most sought after cimbalom players. He traces his descent to a famous dynasty of Gypsy musicians. Only his understanding of, and respect for, his heritage match his virtuosity. He spent decades studying the music of the Roma in Europe and Asia, and has toured extensively with many of the best folk bands in Europe, recording dozens of albums with them as a solo artist. Balogh is also a performer of cimbalom music on the concert stage and has performed with several major orchestras throughout the world.

Sándor Budai (*violin*) was trained in classical violin from an early age and also in Gypsy-style violin playing at the famous Rajkó music school, which specialized in this technique (many of Hungary's most famous musicians are graduates of the school). Budai has toured and was the featured player with the Kálmán Balogh Gypsy Cimbalom Band for more than a decade. He is considered one of Europe's most accomplished Gypsy violinists.

Attila Jakab (*violin*) is from a musical family from Transylvania and was exposed to both Romanian and Hungarian music from childhood. He has mastered both, playing with great depth and virtuosity. Jakab is the lead violinist of the Maros Ensemble from Tîrgu Mures (Marosvásárhely) and is a musician with a rare understanding of village music.

Yasko Argirov (*clarinet*) hails from a musical family. Since the age of 10, he has provided music for countless weddings, christenings, funerals, and other events. Argirov was born and raised in the village of Brestovitz, Central Bulgaria. He is considered by many to be one of the world's most accomplished clarinetists. This is his first tour of the United States.

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