



# Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora (American Musicspheres)

By Carol Silverman



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Now that the political and economic plight of European Roma and the popularity of their music are objects of international attention, *Romani Routes* provides a timely and insightful view into Romani communities both in their home countries and in the diaspora. Over the past two decades, a steady stream of recordings, videos, feature films, festivals, and concerts has presented the music of Balkan Gypsies, or Roma, to Western audiences, who have greeted them with exceptional enthusiasm. Yet, as author Carol Silverman notes, Roma are revered as musicians and reviled as people.

In this book, Silverman introduces readers to the people and cultures who produce this music, offering a sensitive and incisive analysis of how Romani musicians address the challenges of discrimination. Focusing on southeastern Europe then moving to the diaspora, her book examines the music within Romani communities, the lives and careers of outstanding musicians, and the marketing of music in the electronic media and "world music" concert circuit. Silverman touches on the way that the Roma exemplify many qualities--adaptability, cultural hybridity, transnationalism--that are taken to characterize late modern experience. And rather than just celebrating these qualities, she presents the musicians as complicated, pragmatic individuals who work creatively within the many constraints that inform their lives.



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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"A masterpiece! Silverman's work is of tremendous importance for anyone interested in the Romani people, the Balkans, and also anthropology, ethnology, gender, music, performance, creativity, diasporas, and the nature of life as it is lived." -- Victor A. Friedman, Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities, University of Chicago

"Carol Silverman's book addresses the central question of how a group can be reviled and its music adored. This theoretically masterful, ethnographically rich account of Romani music offers new insights into the culture of a diasporic, marginalized group through a compelling account of the challenges musicians face to change and sustain traditions in multiple contexts including socialist and post-socialist state politics. It is crucial reading for anyone interested in human rights and cultural identity."-- Amy Shuman, Professor of Folklore, The Ohio State University

"Silverman's book features a superb companion web page with photographs and video clips that illustrate many of her points...Highly recommended." --*Choice*

"Carol Silverman does not disappoint with this long-awaited volume, a synthesis of a lifetime of research. *Romani Routes* is a recommended read for students interested in Romani music and a welcome complement to ethnomusicological literature on the Balkans." --*Ethnomusicology*

"Impressive in its scope, depth, and the sheer duration of Silverman's research, *Romani Routes* is an important work that will undoubtedly prove indispensable to scholars exploring issues of Romani rights, music, culture, and identity, as well as those interested in the cultural politics of postsocialist Eastern Europe and issues of hybridity, transnationalism, globalization, and commodification. With its accessible, narrative-driven style, this book will be a valuable resource for musicians and listeners of Romani music alike. Its supplementary website includes hundreds of additional texts, photographs, and audio-visual examples that help to visually and sonically locate the narratives. *Romani Routes* is a monumental piece of scholarship that represents a significant and timely contribution to the disciplines of folklore and ethnomusicology."--*Journal of Folklore Research*

### About the Author

**Carol Silverman**, Professor of Anthropology and Folklore at the University of Oregon, has been involved

with Romani culture for over 25 years as a researcher, teacher, activist, and performer. Her numerous articles have appeared in anthropology, folklore, ethnomusicology, and cultural studies publications.

## **Users Review**

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