



FRANK HÖRVATH - BASE VIOL.

9.—RECENT VISITS TO HUNGARIAN GYPSIES IN CHICAGO, U.S.A.

Some years ago when a Hungarian Gypsy friend of mine named Frank Horvath moved to Chicago, I promised him that I would look him up if I ever visited that city. So last January, in 1962, when I made the first of a series of business trips to Chicago, I tried to locate Frank, but, being a stranger to the city, did not know where to start looking, and consequently failed in my purpose. Several weeks later I again visited Chicago. This time I was fortunate in being accompanied by a native Chicagoan who knew the city well and offered to conduct me to the Hungarian section, where I hoped to find Frank. We took a taxi to the 1600 Block on North Avenue, and eventually stopped in front of a small café called the 'Hungarian Village'.

Upon entering, I observed an attractive, dark-haired woman tending the bar. She was conversing with other young girls. As I listened, I caught fragments of her conversation and was delighted to note that she was using the Hungarian Gypsy language. When she approached us I commented on this, and she readily explained that she was a Hungarian Tsigan and therefore was speaking in that dialect to the others. She introduced herself as Vilma Duna, a name which struck me as being somehow familiar, and when I further learned that she was a former native of Cleveland, my old home town, I soon found out that I had known her, years ago, when, while she was still a little girl, I had attended the funeral of her younger sister. When she learned this she was overcome with joy, and welcomed me with open arms. We talked about the old days back in the Hungarian Gypsy district in Cleveland, which I used to visit often to make sketches of the Tsigans. Then, I told her that we would like to hear some Gypsy music, and she immediately telephoned for a Gypsy band.

Meanwhile, I asked her if, perchance, she could tell me of the whereabouts of a certain Frank Horvath. To my great surprise and delight, she informed me that Frank lived just across the street from the Village! In less than fifteen minutes Frank entered the café, threw his arms around me and kissed me in welcome. We had found each other at last! Soon, the Gypsy musicians arrived, one by one, until there were eight players.

14
+

With them came a Romani *cai*, the most attractive looking girl I had ever seen. Her name was Kathi, and her dark eyes and dark hair were as Gypsy-like as anything could ever be. Kathi was to sing for us. For several enchanted hours the Gypsy band played while Kathi sang Gypsy songs. Her voice was deep and full of feeling, and as she sang her dark eyes flashed like gleaming coals. We were spellbound by her and even the musicians also seemed to be bewitched by her. The remainder of the evening was all too short for I had to catch a train back to Akron. But I promised that I would soon return. Vilma followed me out into the street and, putting her arms around me, promised that when I returned she would cook my favourite dish, chicken paprikash with dumplings. She urged me to return soon, and I declared that I would.

A few weeks later I was in Chicago again and visited the Village, this time with several friends who were also interested in Gypsies. True to her promise, Vilma had a huge kettle of paprikash cooking on the stove. It bubbled with savoury red paprika imported from Hungary. Nearby were several large bowls of dumplings, and alongside them trays of delicious Hungarian pastries. A long table was set for us and at it sat eighteen Gypsies, including Frank and his wife. Kathi was there too, with her mother, also a singer. Together with the food, imported Hungarian wines were served. A band of Gypsy musicians, led by Kal Bandy, a locally famous *primás*, played for us; quite recently, Bandy had been rewarded for his artistry by the Governor of Illinois.

After the meal, Kathi sang for us, followed by her mother. Her mother sang sad, plaintive songs in Hungarian Romani. Whenever she used a Gypsy phrase she would turn and translate it to me in English. She not only sang to us, but seemed to direct her songs toward the musicians, and soon they, too, joined in.

Hers were not just ordinary songs; I was told that she had a gift for improvising, as the musicians had in their playing. Most of the songs were almost dirges. They were about the deaths of loved ones, the separation of friends, and broken love affairs. As she sang, tears filled her eyes, and her voice often faltered. So intense was her emotion that even the musicians had tears in their eyes. But there were also gay tunes, lively and full of excitement, growing faster and faster in speed, until the poor musicians waved their hands at her, with fingers limp, as a sign to her that they could no longer keep up with her pace. At last the instruments were put down, and we all sat down for our meal. During this interval one of the smallest Gypsy youngsters picked up a violin and played for us, amidst the loud applause and cheers of his delighted parents and relatives.

After everyone had finished eating, the tables were moved aside to clear a large floor area, and the remainder of the evening was spent in dancing. Since the majority of the dances were *Csárdas*, fast and tiring, we contented ourselves by just sitting and watching the others. Frank took this opportunity to invite me to the

christening of his first grandchild, which was to take place several weeks later. Since I was not sure that I could attend, he made me promise that I would at least visit his home the next day to see his grandchild, before I left for Akron.

It was nearly three o'clock in the morning before the party ended and a taxi was called to take us to our hotel. By that time we were weary but none the less pleased by our night's experience amongst the Hungarian Gypsies. The next evening I spent a few hours before train time visiting Frank at his home. After a good hot supper we sat and discussed the Gypsy situation in that area. I was informed that within the immediate vicinity of the Hungarian Village, there were over two thousand resident Gypsies. These were mostly Hungarian Tsigans, for the Coppersmith Gypsies lived in another section of the city, near Halsted and Maxwell Streets. Many of the Gypsies were musicians, but only a few earned a living as such. Most of them worked at some other trade, many of them being engaged in manual labour. The chief reason for this fact is that since the recent infiltration into the neighbourhood of so many other mixed nationalities, such as Cubans, Filipinos, Mexicans and, above all, Negroes, the original Hungarian families are rapidly moving out of the area to other quarters of the city. The few who remained were either too old, or the young people were too 'Americanized', to care about the Old Country customs. They preferred American music and dances to those from Hungary. Also, music in the home is no longer a luxury; there are many gramophones, radios, and television sets which supply this need. Even in cafés, the ever-present 'Juke-Box' has replaced the old Gypsy band. And so, in most of the Gypsy homes the violins and cymbaloms remain in closets harbouring dust, and are used only for personal amusement, or for an occasional event of significance to the older folks. Frank, an excellent violin bass player, admits that he seldom played his instrument any more. His son-in-law, a young Gypsy from Braddock, Pennsylvania,¹ is an excellent musician but cannot depend on this for a living. They worked hard as labourers, longing for the 'good old days' when their skill and artistry were in demand. Only on rare occasions, such as at a wedding or christening, are they called upon to perform, and only a few 'name-bands' can hold their own against the trend towards more modern music and dances.

Slowly but surely the old-time Gypsy band must give way to the 'canned' versions of so-called 'Gypsy' music. Soon the Gypsy band will become a rarity, and a great many of us will be the poorer as a result; and soon too, even the Gypsies themselves may become a novelty in the neighbourhood. In past generations the Hungarian Gypsies have lived in such close harmony with the Hungarian people that they cannot long endure being separated from them.

January 3, 1963.

J. D. JESENSKY.

¹ See *JGLS*. (3) xxxviii. 85-94, xxxix. 64-72.



VILMA DUNA



VILMA
&
EDDY
DUNA.

CHICAGO
HUNGARIAN
GYPSIES



Vilma-Duna

J.D.J. 1965
Joe Jesensky

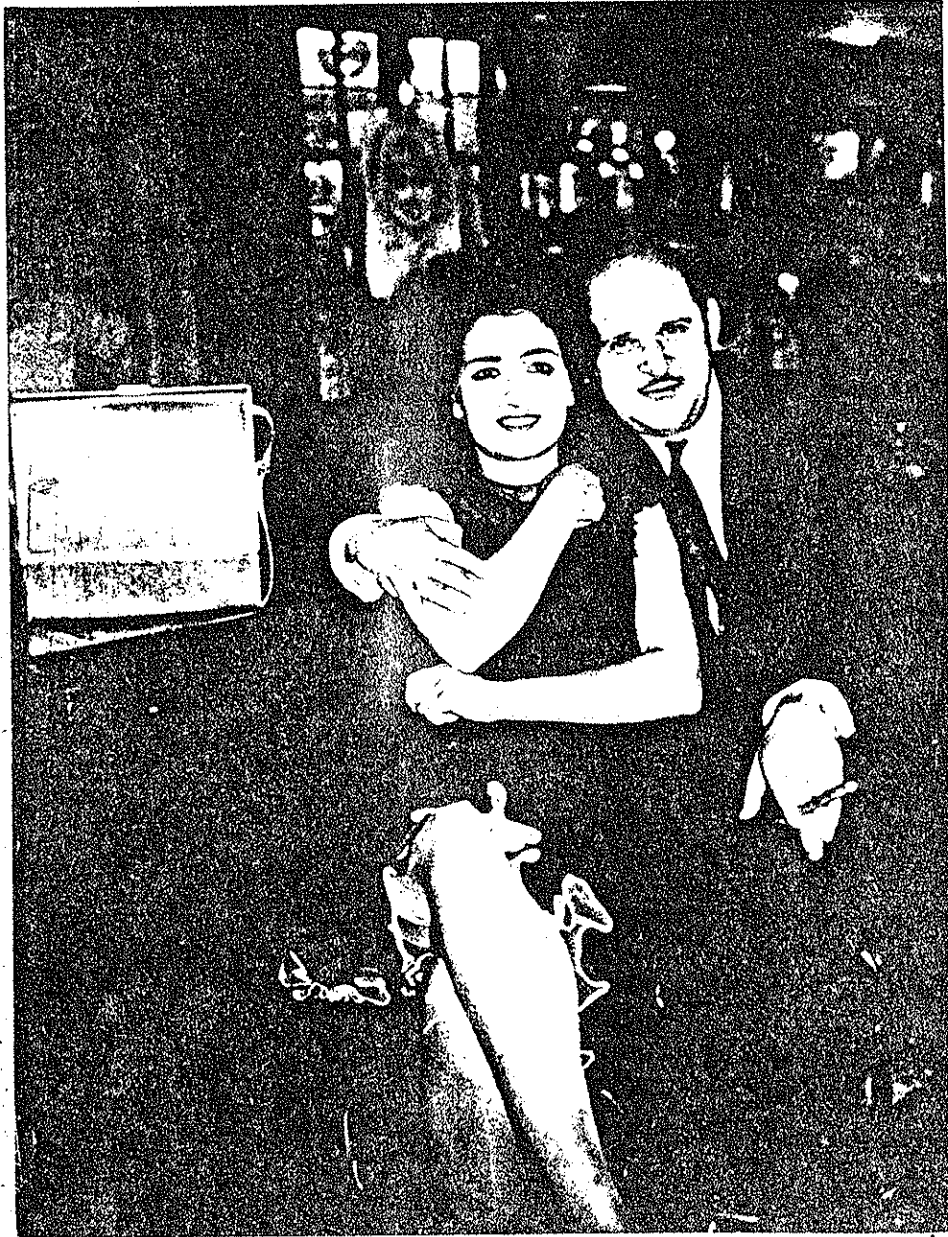


J.D.J.
Joe
Jesensky

VILMA

EDDIE

CHICAGO HUNGARIAN GYPSIES



Joe Lesensky

KATHI - THE GYPSY SINGER

France sends Gypsies back to Romania

USA TODAY
8-20-2010

The Associated Press

PARIS — France expelled nearly 100 Romanians back to their native country Thursday in an effort by President Nicolas Sarkozy to dismantle Gypsy camps and sweep them out of the country.

A flight to Bucharest left from the city of Lyon with 79 Gypsies, as the Roma people are known here, on board, the Immigration Ministry said. More flights were scheduled for later this month and September.

Interior Minister Brice Hortefeux insisted France is being careful "not to stigmatize any community" but said the government can't just let people occupy land illegally.

"Simply, everyone understands we are enforcing simple rules: One cannot just illegally occupy land without authorization," Hortefeux told journalists during a visit Thursday to the town of Crécy-la-Chapelle, east of Paris.

The Gypsies left on a voluntary basis and were given \$386 for each adult and \$100

per child, a standard French practice.

Adrian Paraiapan, 37, who was aboard the Lyon flight along with his wife and three children, said he planned to return to France.

"In two weeks, I will leave again," he said, adding that his family was unable to make a living in Romania.

France is allowed to repatriate Gypsies from Romania — who as citizens of a European Union member state are allowed to circulate freely within the 27-member bloc —

provided they are unable to prove they can support themselves while in France, said Alexandre Le Clève, a spokesman for Rom Europe.

Foreign-born Gypsies are often seen begging on the streets of France's cities, often with small children or puppies, and many French people consider them a nuisance, or worse. Sarkozy has linked Roma to crime, calling the camps sources of trafficking, exploitation of children and prostitution. On July 28, he pledged that illegal Gypsy

camps would be "systematically evacuated."

The government is facing criticism from French-born Gypsies, known here as "traveling folk," who've lived in France for centuries and do not want to be confused with Eastern European Gypsies.

Romanian President Traian Basescu said, "We understand the problems created by the Roma camps outside the French cities" but insisted on the "right of every European citizen to move freely in the EU."

PARIS *Plain Dealer*
9-5-2010
**Gypsy crackdown
draws protests**

A whistle-blowing, drum-beating crowd of thousands demonstrated in Paris on Saturday against expulsions of Gypsies as well as other new security measures adopted by President Nicolas Sarkozy's government. Human-rights and anti-racism groups, labor unions and leftist political parties were taking part. Organizers said demonstrations were taking place in 135 cities and towns across France. They accuse Sarkozy of stigmatizing minorities and seeking political gain with the security crackdown. Sarkozy said Gypsy camps would be "systematically evacuated" — and his interior minister and other officials said last week that about 1,000 Roma have been given small stipends and flown home since then.



2 | France
Roma 9-2010
Deportations
Earn Rebuke

The European Union criticized France's recent deportation of more than 1,200 Roma Gypsies and warned that it might take legal action if France is found to have broken international law by targeting a specific ethnic group for expulsion. While France claims it is simply removing those who are in the country illegally, a leaked internal government memo identified the removal of Roma camps as a priority. E.U. Justice Minister Viviane Reding likened the situation to what happened under the Nazis during WW II.

Time Mag.