

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF NICE FRACILE TO THE STUDY OF THE MUSICAL FOLKLORE OF VOJVODINA

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**SUMMARY.** The immediate motive to produce this study is the marking of significant anniversaries in the field of ethnomusicology, both in the personal life of famous ethnomusicologist Nice Fracile and in the activities of the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad. By reviewing the moments from the life and professional experience of this ethnomusicologist, an insight and a guide is offered into the possibilities of creativity and advancement of an individual, who has made a significant scientific contribution to local, regional and world ethnomusicology by studying the musical tradition of his community, and later the wider area as well.<sup>2</sup>

**Keywords:** Ethnomusicology, musical folklore, Nice Fracile, Vojvodina.

### Introduction

The motive to produce this study is the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of the famous ethnomusicologist of Romanian origin from the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Republic of Serbia, Nice Fracile 45 years of his activity in the field of scientific research, presenting the results of scientific research and 100 written and published scientific references.<sup>3</sup> No less significant anniversary

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<sup>2</sup> This paper is the result of the author's work within the project of the Scientific Research Organisation of the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad, carried out during 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Pointing out and reviewing significant contributions in the work of an individual in the field of ethnomusicology and marking important anniversaries in Serbia and abroad, examples: Čović, Borivoj (Ed.). *Zbornik radova u čast akademika Cvjetka Rihtmana (Proceedings in honour of member of Academy Cvjetko Rihtman)*. Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, Odjeljenje društvenih nauka (Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Department of Social Sciences), 1986.



is 30 years of ethnomusicology studies at the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad. It is within this higher education institution that Nice Fracile, PhD, had spent the majority of his years of active engagement and had been appointed to all teaching positions. In addition to teaching, this professor was the head of the Ethnomusicology study programme, he was the long-term head of the Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology of the Academy of Arts, and he has also acted as a member of expert bodies within the faculty and University of Novi Sad and liaison officer for Serbia at the International Council for Traditional Music. The aim of this study is to offer an insight of the significance of Nice Fracile's activities in the field of studying musical folklore in Vojvodina. For the purposes of creating this work, the author conducted a pre-structured interview with interviewee Nice Fracile, the author has continuously followed Fracile's scientific work for more than two decades and provides an analytical overview of it. In the following presentation, a review will be given of the biographical data, research experiences and the methodological procedures used in his work, as well as thematic frameworks and important publications of Nice Fracile related to the area of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

## Biography

Ethnomusicologist Nice (Jon) Fracile, PhD, was born on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1952, into a family of artisans and farmers, in the village of Kuštilj, belonging to the Municipality of Vršac, in the northern Serbian Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

Nice Fracile's love for traditional music originated in his family, in his early childhood: "I grew up in a family where everyone had an affinity for traditional music. My father and grandfather used to sing in a choir, played in a brass band, which the locals call 'fanfare'. My mother also sang in the choir and was an outstanding dancer, while my sister, two years my senior, sang in the Cultural and Artistic Society 'Mihaj Eminescu' from Kuštilj, as a vocal soloist. I was lucky to live in a village with an extremely rich cultural and

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Ceribašić, Naila & Grozdana Marošević (Eds.). *Glazba, folklor i kultura, Svečani zbornik za Jerka Bezića (Music, folklore and culture, Essays in honour of Jerko Bezić)*. Zagreb: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku – Hrvatsko muzikološko društvo (Institute for Ethnology and Folklore – Croatian Musicological Society), 1999.

Golemović, Dimitrije (Ed.). *Man and Music. International Symposium Belgrade, June 20–23 2001, to professor Dr. Dragoslav Dević 75 years of life and 50 years of professional activities*. Beograd: Vedes, 2003.

Talam, Jasmina. "A Short Story about a Great Man: Contribution by Svanibor Pettan to the Development of Ethnomusicology in Bosnia and Herzegovina." In *Musicological Annual*, 55, 2, 2019, pp. 29-34.

musical tradition, where the oldest choir of local Romanians was founded in 1869 and the oldest brass band in 1910; moreover, the village has had a very active drama section club... I remember often going to work on the fields with my father and mother. We had a farm wagon and a beautiful white horse... Father sang beautiful songs along the way, mostly 'dojna' ('doina'), which I still have fond memories of." In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the accordion was the most popular musical instrument in Serbia, so the interest in playing the accordion did not escape young Nice Fracile. However, the constant struggle for livelihood while raising children, dissuaded the parents from the idea of buying this expensive instrument for the boy.<sup>4</sup>

After completing his primary education in Kuštilj, Nice Fracile continued his education at the Teachers' School "Živa Jovanović" in Vršac, and that is when his father bought him a violin, because learning the violin at school was mandatory for all pupils. After a year, he joined the People's Orchestra "Petru Albu" in Vršac, and he occasionally played in the folk music orchestra from Kuštilj as well as at events and wedding ceremonies in the places in the vicinity of Vršac.<sup>5</sup>

After ending secondary school in Serbia, Nice Fracile finished Music Conservatory "Ciprian Porumbescu" in Bucharest (1976).<sup>6</sup> During his studies, he developed a love for ethnomusicology through collaboration with Ghizela Sulițeanu, a scientific advisor at the Institute for Folklore Research in Bucharest at that time. During the first two years of his studies at this conservatory, Fracile took the Ethnomusicology course, and in the third year, within the Folklore course, he learned the ethnomusicology "craft" from Ghizela Sulițeanu, which included the methodology of scientific work, the application of different methods in research, familiarisation with the scientific achievements of Béla Bartók and Constantin Brăiloiu, and the application of

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<sup>4</sup> Reminiscing about his love for the accordion, Fracile remarks: "I remember that as a child I pleaded with my parents, often in tears, to buy me an accordion. Finally, my father went to Timisoara to sell a fur coat and buy me an accordion. Unfortunately, that didn't happen, because he didn't get enough money, so instead of an accordion – to my great grief and even greater disappointment, he bought about 30 kg of sausages." How highly regarded quality accordions were is confirmed by the account of famous Vojvodina accordionist Srba Ivkov, who shared the fact that his family borrowed a larger portion of the money to purchase the instrument, worth 5 cadastral acres of the most fertile arable land. Ivkov, Vesna. *Harmonika – život moj. 45 godina umetničkog rada Srboslava Srbe Ivkova (The Accordion – My Life. 45 Years of Artistic Engagement of Srboslav Srba Ivkov)*. Beogradska knjiga, Beograd (Belgrade Book, Belgrade), 2008., p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> The information was obtained in an interview of the author of this paper with Nice Fracile in Novi Sad, on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Rakočević, Selena. 2014. „Fracile, Nice, J.“. In *Grove Music Online*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.2270793> (accessed on 01.03.2023)

acquired knowledge in the domain of meticulous melopoetic analysis for the purposes of producing his graduation paper and later doctoral dissertation.<sup>7</sup> Nice Fracile worked for RTV Novi Sad as an associate/editor of music programmes, in the period from 1976 to 1996.<sup>8</sup> He went on to work for Radio Novi Sad in 1986, where he was the editor of the folk music programme in five languages (Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian). He has also edited the series “The players and the traditional musical instruments of Yugoslavia” (during 1990) for the Serbian programme of Radio Novi Sad, as well as several folk music programmes in the Romanian language.<sup>9</sup> In 1996, Nice Fracile was employed at the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad, where he first received the title of Assistant Professor. From 2001, he was employed as an Associate Professor, and in 2006, he received the title of Full Professor, teaching Ethnomusicology and Ethnomusicology Practicum and Metrorhythmic Features of Traditional Music, both in undergraduate, and post-graduate studies (master’s and doctoral). After his retirement in 2022, Nice Fracile has been engaged part-time at the Academy of Arts as a Full Professor in retirement, teaching at the master and doctoral levels within the Study Programme of Ethnomusicology. He is a member of the Performing Arts and Music Department of Matica srpska, a member of the Association of Composers of Vojvodina, the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology, and the International Council for Traditional Music.<sup>10</sup>

### Field research

Carrying out the first field research in 1970 and 1971, Nice Fracile recorded songs and instrumental melodies directly during the interpretation of the performers, because at that time he had no possibility to use a sound recording and reproducing device. After 1972, when his uncle, who was working in Germany, bought him a “Philips” tape recorder, he first used the

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Nice Fracile, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Ivkov, Vesna. *Studije etnomuzikologije na Akademiji umetnosti Univerziteta u Novom Sadu (Studies of Ethnomusicology at the Academy of Arts)*. Univerzitet u Novom Sadu, Akademija umetnosti, Novi Sad (University in Novi Sad, Academy of Arts, Novi Sad), 2020., p. 44. <https://kulturoloski-identiteti.uns.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/vesna-ivkov-e-knjiga30.3.2020..pdf> (accessed on 15.02.2023)

<sup>9</sup> Rakočević, Selena. 2014. „Fracile, Nice, J.“. In *Grove Music Online*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.2270793> (accessed on 01.03.2023)

<sup>10</sup> Ivkov, Vesna. *Studije etnomuzikologije na Akademiji umetnosti Univerziteta u Novom Sadu (Studies of Ethnomusicology at the Academy of Arts)*. Univerzitet u Novom Sadu, Akademija umetnosti, Novi Sad (University in Novi Sad, Academy of Arts, Novi Sad), 2020., p. 45. <https://kulturoloski-identiteti.uns.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/vesna-ivkov-e-knjiga30.3.2020..pdf> (accessed on 15.02.2023)

tape recorder to record music and folklore, and then transcribed the recording from this device. Since he was unable to buy cassettes for the needs of each field trip, Fracile deleted the recorded content from the cassette after transcribing the melodies, so that the already used cassette would be ready for subsequent field research. Once he started working for Radio-Television Novi Sad in 1976, he used the tape recorder of Radio Novi Sad ("Uher", Report 4200 Stereo), recording music and folklore material on old, already used tapes.<sup>11</sup> In 2000, he replaced the tape recorder with a minidisc ("Sony", Portable Minidisc Recorder CE MZ R 900), and since 2011, he has been recording music and folklore material using a voice recorder (Olympus, Digital Voice Recorder WS 750M and Tascam, Zoom stereo, Handy Recorder H4n).<sup>12</sup>

He carried out his first field research for the needs of his graduation paper entitled *Muzički folklor Kuštilja i okoline (Musical Folklore from Kuštilj and Its Vicinity)*. He started ethnomusicological research within his family, recording traditional songs performed by his grandfather, father, and mother, and then by other notable singers and musicians from Kuštilj. By the end of 1975 and beginning of 1976, he continued his field research in neighbouring places: Vojvodinci, Mesić, and Markovac, accompanied by his uncle, Ionel Cârjan, a farmer from Kuštilj.<sup>13</sup> Since there were no buses or other means of transportation to those places at that time, he went with his uncle on foot, often in bad weather conditions, in rain and snow.

In the later period, before going on field research, Nice Fracile first read the relevant literature related to the topic he intended to research, then he contacted the presidents of the Cultural Centres or Cultural and Artistic Societies, often the priest from a given place as well, to obtain information about singers and how to get in touch with them. The experience of being a jury member of some music festivals and competitions throughout Vojvodina helped him to establish contacts with the festival organisers and participants,

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<sup>11</sup> The "Uher" reel-to-reel tape recorder had four speeds, allowing for a longer recording time when using options with fewer revolutions.

<sup>12</sup> According to Nice Fracile the advantage of recording melodies in the field lies in the opportunity to reproduce the recording on the spot, and if necessary, repeat the recording. Taking notes while recording is valuable for clarifying the poetic component, if the singer has poor diction and the sung text is difficult to understand, or the singer uses words unknown to the researcher, for example, archaisms or localisms. On the other hand, during field recordings, the conditions are not always favourable, unlike the conditions during studio recording, and this is the only thing that can be considered a drawback.

<sup>13</sup> His uncle loved folk music, especially romances, he was sociable and knew people from the villages where the research was carried out: "He was always in a very good mood, he liked to joke, and to share a drink with the interviewees, so he would create, before the actual recording, a very pleasant mood, which certainly had a positive effect on the performance and repertoire of songs."

i.e., with vocal and instrumental soloists and groups of singers, with whom he would arrange a research visit, and who became important interviewees for his collection of musical folklore materials.

In the period from 1976 to 1984, Fracile made field research trips changing three and sometimes four bus lines on his way there as well as back. Due to business and family obligations, research was carried out periodically, but all day long. Fracile points out that it was not easy to carry the tape recorder and tapes when he had to change multiple buses, not even when travelling to faraway destinations within one place, when going from one interviewee's place to another. But he did not find this hard when the interviewees were genuine connoisseurs of musical tradition and excellent interpreters, thanks to whom valuable and high-quality musical material was recorded. In such cases, one interviewee was visited several times, because of their extensive and varied musical material. Among such interviewees are, for example, self-taught violinist Rajko Miljanski from Sivac, Petru Avramescu Velimir, an accordionist from Alibunar, or Petru Cârșovan, a Serbian flute (pipe) player from Sočica.

Nice Fracile has vivid memories of the field research in Grebenac: "It was on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1983. On that occasion I was lucky enough to come across some great interviewees, so I recorded very interesting lyric and koledari (Serbian carolling) songs, especially ballads, which were unknown to me before. Among the interviewees, there was a choir and brass band conductor, Ilia Păuncu-Ciupera, who was 53 years old at the time. He sang me several Romanian songs, among them the extraordinary ballad '*Zagrljena stabla*' (*'Embraced Trees*'). I was captivated by the beauty of the text, the melody, the voice, and interpretation. After recording this ballad, I thanked him wholeheartedly and said that it was the most beautiful ballad I had ever heard, and I asked him to sing me another ballad. With tears in his eyes, he said that he would do it when I come to Grebenac again to work with the choir and brass band at least a little, as a trained music expert. Although I planned to go to Grebenac again, in the meantime I heard that the interviewee had passed away. This ballad, together with six other Romanian ballads, I reconstructed and recorded with two vocal soloists and a narrator for the needs of Radio Novi Sad and later Television Novi Sad. The promotion of these ballads took place in Studio 'M' of Radio Novi Sad in 1991, and a year later in the capital of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca. The ballad '*Zagrljena stabla*' (*'Embraced Trees*') was later taken over by some prominent Romanian singers from Vojvodina and performed a capella at festivals in Banat and Romania. This is how this ballad, after the death of interviewee Ilia, continued its life in the community."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Nice Fracile, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Not all experiences during field research were equally nice: “However, there were also unpleasant situations, for example in Kovilj, when the locals recommended to me ‘Katica the Singer’, a Roma woman from this place, as a gifted singer. After she sang a few well-known urban traditional music songs that were outside the focus of my research, I asked her to sing me a wedding song, a ballad, or a Lazarus song (Serbian traditional ritual songs associated with spring and the celebration of Lazarus’ Saturday). Since she knew no such songs, she demanded that I immediately pay her 2,000 dinars at that time! To avoid an unpleasant situation, because some other Roma people came and insisted to sing and play for me, and I didn’t want that, I paid ‘Katica the Singer’ the requested sum of money and took the first bus to Novi Sad.”<sup>15</sup>

During field research in Vojvodina, in addition to Romanians and Serbs, N. Fracile had the opportunity to talk with interviewees of different nationalities: Hungarians, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, and Roma (in Serbian), while with interviewees in Romania, when collecting German musical – folklore materials, he communicated in the Romanian language. The problem arose when the vocal traditional melodies were needed to be transcribed. Then he was assisted by his colleagues from Radio Novi Sad, and later by ethnomusicology students of the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad, who were members of the aforementioned national communities.

The dynamics of the field research, during the past four decades, has depended primarily on the family and business obligations of Nice Fracile and has not been always the same. Sometimes he would engage in field research only a few times a year, sometimes more often, several times a month, two days in a row, or at weekends. He has conducted field research when there was enough free time, independently or with the team of Radio-television Novi Sad, and lately with ethnomusicology students of the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad.<sup>16</sup> During the first two decades,

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Nice Fracile, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Nice Fracile cherishes fond memories of field research carried out with ethnomusicology students in the areas of Vojvodina (Bačka, Srem and Banat). He points out that during the field trips and work, the students were in a good mood, energetic and full of enthusiasm, but also very responsible when assigning work tasks: one student, for example, was in charge of photography, the other, to the extent possible, recorded the text on a laptop, while Fracile recorded the music-folklore material on a minidisc. Due to their university obligations, as a general rule, students did not participate in the archiving of the collected music-folklore material. In addition to the fact that the students’ assistance helps the professor to focus on the interview, the students have the opportunity to learn about conducting field research, observing their mentor as a model. The musical material collected during field research was used for archival material in Matica srpska, for the purposes of teaching, the production of scientific studies, and partly also for the needs of the production of students’ master’s theses.

the field research was carried out at his personal expense, and later it was mostly financed within the projects of Matica srpska or the Provincial Secretariat for Culture.

**Picture 1**



**Nice Fracile, Field research, Kula 3<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

### **Scientific production**

Nice Fracile transcribed the musical-folklore material he collected during field research in the period from the 1970s to the 1990s by hand. For the purposes of presenting scientific papers at symposia in Yugoslavia and abroad, his wife Mirela copied musical notations from his manuscripts, according to certain templates, modelled on the work of Romanian notographers. In order to prepare the sheet music material for the printing of Fracile's first book, *Vokalni muzički folklor Srba i Rumuna u Vojvodini – komparativna proučavanja* (*Vocal Musical Folklore of the Serbs and Romanians in Vojvodina – Comparative Studies*), a notographer from Bucharest was engaged, but due to the workload, because of the detailed transcriptions, the existence of numerous examples of melodies that are not based on the distributive rhythmic system, two more notographers had to be engaged. Following the technical achievements that improve activities in the field of ethnomusicology, since 1998, Nice Fracile has occasionally used the note writing software Finale 37, but realising over time that that the software does not meet all his personal needs, he opted for the Sibelius 7.5, which he still uses today.



If we are to single out some significant ethnomusicological figures who served as role models for Nice Fracile, it is unavoidable to mention Ghizela Sulișteanu, a prestigious Romanian and European researcher of traditional music. It was her, as his ethnomusicological teacher and mentor, to whom Fracile dedicated the book called *Tragom antičkih metričkih stopa – komparativna etnomuzikološka proučavanja* (2014) (*In the Wake of Classical-Antiquity Metric Feet – A Comparative Ethnomusicological Study* 2014), as an acknowledgement of gratitude for her wholehearted help with suggestions and advice in ethnomusicological activities. Another, yet no less important role model for Nice Fracile was Jerko Bezić, who was also one of the reviewers of Fracile's first monograph entitled *Vokalni muzički folklor Srba i Rumuna u Vojvodini – komparativna proučavanja* (*Vocal Musical Folklore of Serbs and Romanians in Vojvodina – Comparative Studies*). Fracile and Bezić often attended the congresses of the Union of Folklorists' Associations of Yugoslavia, as well as international symposia in Zagreb, Čakovec, Schladming, Vienna, Ljubljana and other places. As a role model, Dragoslav Dević must be mentioned, on whose initiative the Subgroup for Ethnomusicology at the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad was founded in 1993. According to Fracile, he 'has had the privilege and pleasure' of taking part together with Dević in several scientific conferences in the country and abroad, as well as in many festivals and musical events in Serbia and Italy. Among ethnomusicological influences we must mention Anthony Seeger, Bruno Nettl, and Timothy Rice, who, during an interview he gave to Fracile in Berlin in 1990, said that ethnomusicologists from Yugoslavia were "extremely good".<sup>17</sup>

In the period from 1977 to 2022, Nice Fracile produced a total of 100 titles of scientific papers that were published and accepted for publication.

Looking at shortlisted works, based on the criterion of representativeness, the thematic framework of Nice Fracile's scientific works cover a wide range. It is notable that the focus of his research is consistent with the basic didactic principles: from the known to the unknown, from the simpler to the more complex. Phenomenologically, the elements of the musical tradition of Romanians from his birthplace and the vicinity are first considered: koledari (carols),<sup>18</sup> laments, wedding ceremonies. Later scientific works are based on a comparative approach, about folklore phenomena both in the Romanian and Serbian

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Nice Fracile, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Fracile, Nice. "Koleda kod Rumuna iz okoline Vršca" ("Carols among the Romanians from the Vicinity of Vršac)." In C. Rihtman (Ed.), *Zbornik radova 27. kongresa Saveza udruženja folklorista Jugoslavije Banja Vrućica – Teslić, 1980.* (*Proceedings of the 27<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Association of Folklorists of Yugoslavia, Banja Vrućica – Teslić, 1980.*), Sarajevo: Udruženje folklorista BiH (Association of Folklorists of B&H). 1982, pp. 179-187.

traditions, based on Vojvodina multiculturalism<sup>19</sup> or, more broadly, on a wider folklore area, as the case is with the study of aksak rhythm.<sup>20</sup> Nice Fracile's scientific attention is also drawn to the topics from the domain of organology (bagpipes, cymbals, taragot,<sup>21</sup> saxophone, violin,<sup>22</sup> accordion, etc.). This ethnomusicologist dedicated a lot of his scientific works to the research of Béla Bartók.<sup>23</sup> Fracile was engaged both in the study of Bartók's phonographic recordings, as well as in the study of phonographic recordings made by other researchers of musical folklore.<sup>24</sup> Having been engaged for decades in parallel activities as an ethnomusicologist, researcher and an employee working in the music production of Radio-television Novi Sad (today Radio-television Vojvodina) inspired Nice Fracile to consider the connections between folk

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<sup>19</sup> Fracile, Nice. "Folklore Pearls that Erase Boundaries – A Multi-traditional Tunes and its European Itinerary." In M. Keveždi, B. Mickov & A. Bosnić Đurić (Eds.), *Amateurism – Youth – Interculturalism*, Novi Sad: Cultural Centre of Vojvodina "Miloš Crnjanski", 2019, pp. 135-154.

<sup>20</sup> Fracile, Nice. "Forms of Aksak Rhythm as a Connecting Thread in the Traditional Music of the Balkan Peoples – Part I." In *Зборник Матице српске за сценске уметности и музике (Journal for Performing Arts and Music of Matica srpska)*, 64, 2021, pp. 111-132.

<sup>21</sup> Fracile, Nice. "The Taragot as Part of the Romanian Folklore Heritage." In F. Hadžić (Ed.), *The collection of papers, the 9th International Symposium Music in society 2014*, Sarajevo: Musicological Society of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Academy of Music, University of Sarajevo, 2016, pp. 429-440.

<sup>22</sup> Fracile, Nice. "The violin comes to life in me and I in it." In D. Golemović (Ed.), *Man and Music. International Symposium Belgrade, June 20-23 2001, to professor Dr. Dragoslav Dević 75 years of life and 50 years of professional activities*, Belgrade: Vedes. 2003, pp. 169-176.

<sup>23</sup> Fracile, Nice. "Die Phonographaufnahmen Béla Bartóks und die Banater Volksmusik" ("The Recordings of Béla Bartók in the Light of the Musical Folklore of Banat"). In F. Metz (Ed.), *Musik als interkultureller Dialog (Music as an Intercultural Dialogue). Das Banat als euroregionaler Klangraum (Banat as a Euroregional Sound Space)*. München: Edition Musik Südost (The South-East Music Book Collection). 2005, pp. 35-40.

<sup>24</sup> In case of old recordings of vocal performances of traditional melodies, such as phonographic ones, such recordings might be damaged in some places due to the fact that they are old, and this makes it much more difficult to transcribe the melody, as well as to record the poetic component. In such situations, Nice Fracile, believes that accompanying field documentation for the songs or instrumental melodies can be very useful, because the accompanying documentation often includes the text of individual songs, explains certain archaisms, or contains a drawing or photo of musical instruments. Also, if there are interviewee records (so called cards) containing answers of singers or musicians to the researcher's questions, it can certainly be of great use, such as the example of the records of Serbian prisoners in Germany, in the Königsbrück camp, from whom Georg Schünemann recorded very valuable musical and folklore material. And last, but not the least, according to Nice Fracile, old recordings are so important that they can be used for comparative research into the existence of continuity and/or discontinuity of individual songs and instrumental melodies, but also into the influence of one culture on another, and even the permeation of traditional melodies with the cultures of other peoples. Fracile, Nice. "The Phonographic Recordings of Traditional Music Performed by Serbian Prisoners of War (1915-1918)." In *New Sound, Journal of Music*, 51-1/2018, 2018, pp. 17-42.

and artistic music, i.e., to research concert music, as well as certain aspects of the programming concept of the media institution Radio-television Vojvodina.<sup>25</sup>

In the period from 1980 to 2022, Nice Fracile took an active part in of 68 scientific conferences, congresses and symposiums in Serbia, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, North Macedonia, Greece, Israel, Spain, Hungary, Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, France, the Netherlands and the United States of America, which also testifies to how wide his scientific results have been disseminated.

This 45-year-long scientific production can be divided into three periods. In the first period (from 1977 to 1992), in addition to representative scientific works printed in anthologies and scientific journals, a monographic publication called *Vokalni muzički folklor Srba i Rumuna u Vojvodini – komparativna proučavanja* (1987) (*Vocal Musical Folklore of Serbs and Romanians in Vojvodina – Comparative Studies* 1987) is most noteworthy. This publication is Nice Fracile's doctoral dissertation, in which the categories of Serbian and Romanian vocal musical folklore are considered separately, and then the relations between Serbian and Romanian folklore, as well as their mutual influences, are considered. One of the indicative problems that Nice Fracile encountered during the melopoetic analysis of Serbian and Romanian songs in Vojvodina is the transposition of melodies to finalis g1, according to the system of the folk song analysis method, i.e., based on the work of the team of Finnish ethnomusicologists Krohn and Väisänen (Ilmari Krohn and Armas Otto Väisänen). Starting from the achievements and results of the Romanian ethnomusicological school headed by Constantin Brăiloiu and bearing in mind the structure of recorded Serbian and Romanian chants, often with a final cadence on the second degree, he tried to find a unique classification system. With the aim of bringing the variants closer together and demarcating melodic types in the classification, the recorded melodies were included in the pentatonic sequence d-e-g-a-h, with the pyknon g-a-h. In this way, the melodies with a major third in the final cadence are recorded on the final tone, the tone finalis g1, and those with the cadence in the scope of a minor third, on e1. Thanks to such classification, Nice Fracile, noticed identical melopoetic parameters in the Serbian and Romanian songs recorded by him: primarily the tonal sequence, and thus the ambitus of the melodies. Furthermore, among the common basic morphological elements of Serbian and Romanian songs are the symmetrical octosyllabic verse, the form, and

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<sup>25</sup> Fracile, Nice. "Traditional Minority Music in the Programs of RTV Vojvodina, Republic of Serbia." In Z. Jurkova & L. Bidgood (Eds.), *Voices of the Weak. Music and Minorities*, Praha: Published by NGO21 in cooperation with the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University. 2009, pp. 185-192.

by no means least important, metre, i.e., measure. In addition to the aforementioned features, the book *Vokalni muzički folklor Srba i Rumuna u Vojvodini – komparativna proučavanja (Vocal Musical Folklore of Serbs and Romanians in Vojvodina – Comparative Studies)* also points out particularities referring to Serbian and Romanian songs respectively. Following the example of the Croatian ethnomusicologist Jerko Bezić, Nice Fracile also advocates the position that the tonal relationships of melodies, supporting tones, i.e., the knowledge of the central and final tone, and the formation of the cadence, are one of the basic features of a certain musical tradition, which can serve as a criterion for determining performance styles within a certain musical culture. He believes that it is natural for differences to arise within the melopoetic analysis of traditional music, i.e., traditional songs, because the characteristics of a musical tradition are nation-, region- and culture-specific, but in his opinion, it is not natural to neglect the melopoetic analysis, while placing ethnomusicological emphasis primarily or exclusively on semantics, anthropology, philosophy, sociology, and other disciplines.<sup>26</sup>

Besides the references in the category of scientific articles printed in scientific journals and proceedings from national and international scientific conferences, the second period of Nice Fracile's work (from 1993 to 2007) is associated with the publication entitled *Tradicionalna muzika Srba u Vojvodini, Antologija CD 1 (2006) (Traditional Music of the Serbs in Vojvodina, Anthology CD 1, 2006)*. Printed bilingually, this monograph contains 40 sound examples from the musical tradition of Serbs in Vojvodina, recorded during field research conducted in the period from 1979 to 2005. In an effort to present the most important features of the musical tradition of the Serbian people, not only the native Serbs but also the Serbs who immigrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia and who live in Vojvodina, the musical examples are classified according to the calendar and life cycle of customs and the music that accompanies them. A fundamental feature of the scientific approach of Nice Fracile, not only related to this publication, is the consistency in citing data with an attached sound or musical example. Namely, when a sound example is given, it is accompanied with the information about the title of the melody, special name (genre), duration of the example, first and last name of the singer, their age, way of performing (instrument or singing style), place of performing/recording and the date. Among other things, the commentary of each auditory example contains relevant data on the origin, if possible, how spread the melody is, a review of its morphological characteristics, and a description of the occasions in which the melody is performed with an indication of the performing style.

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Nice Fracile, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

In addition to numerous scientific papers that have been presented at domestic and foreign symposia, the publication most significant for the third period, from 2008 onwards, is the monograph entitled *Tragom antičkih metričkih stopa – komparativna etnomuzikološka proučavanja (In the Wake of Classical-Antiquity Metric Feet – A Comparative Ethnomusicological Study)*, which is used as a textbook in ethnomusicology studies. This publication is based on the study of 33,421 melodies from the area of South-eastern Europe, with the purpose of understanding and defining ancient metric beats, that is, their typology, frequency, characteristics and common morphological elements of the construction of traditional melodies in several (musical) cultures in South-eastern Europe.

### **Conclusion**

The ethnomusicological activity of Nice Fracile, PhD, is an example of an extremely significant contribution to the study of the musical tradition of the northern Serbian Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, regarding the research into certain categories of musical folklore of Romanians, Hungarian Serbs, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Ukrainians and Roma who live in that area. The studies of certain elements of musical folklore by this ethnomusicologist were not limited only to the administrative area of Vojvodina, but were extended over time to the folklore area of Serbia and beyond. For his contribution to musical culture, Nice Fracile has been awarded several times and is the recipient of the “Golden Badge” of the Cultural and Educational Community of Serbia (1990), the Award of Radio Novi Sad for the best musical achievement (1991), “Spark of culture” award of the Institute of Culture of Vojvodina (2004), the Certificate of Merit and Contribution to the Faculty of Music in Belgrade (2014) and the “Vuk’s Award” of the Cultural and Educational Community of Serbia (2014). For the area of Vojvodina specifically, the epithet of extremely significant contribution is justified by the interweaving of Nice Fracile’s activities and experiences in the field of collecting musical material, its archiving and dissemination. Through his work in the sphere of media institutions, Fracile has tried to transfer the melodies collected during his field research into the performance of numerous radio and television music performers. In the sphere of pedagogical work, students can learn from the researcher how to conduct field research, directly gain knowledge about musical-folklore topics, and with the instruction of the teaching staff, they often bring Fracile’s transcriptions of traditional melodies to life sonically in a vocal, instrumental, and vocal-instrumental interpretation. Nice Fracile’s participation in the work of scientific conferences, congresses and symposia at all national and international levels contributes to the dissemination of knowledge about

the musical tradition of Vojvodina, and thus to the mapping of musical-folkloric phenomena in the domain of world ethnomusicology. The listed uses of acquired knowledge about musical folklore, based on the example of Nice Fracile's activities, testify to a desirable example of applied ethnomusicology,<sup>27</sup> which becomes a model for the next generations of ethnomusicologists.

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<sup>27</sup> The point of applied ethnomusicology is that it uses ethnomusicological knowledge and understanding of music and musicianship, in order to improve musical practices and relationships between people. Pettan, Svanibor. "Uloga znanstvenika u stvaranju pretpostavki za suživot: Ususret primijenjenoj etnomuzikologiji" ("The Role of Scientists in Creating an Assumptions for Coexistence: Towards an applied Ethnomusicology"). In *Narodna umjetnost: hrvatski časopis za etnologiju i folkloristiku (Folk Art: Croatian Journal of Ethnology and Folklore Research)*, 32, 2, 1995, pp. 217-233.

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