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# Sounding Diversities. Towards an Open Online Archive of Migrants' Musical Lives

## Zvenenje raznolikosti. K odprtemu spletnemu arhivu glasbenega življenja migrantov

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### IZVLEČEK

Od leta 2014 naprej na območju med Lombardijo in Emilijo - Romanjo poteka participativna akcijska raziskava o glasbi in migracijah. Glasba je pomemben medij ne le za oblikovanje novega razumevanja transnacionalne kulturne identitete, temveč tudi za ustvarjalne posege v oblikovanje javnega mnenja o kulturni, etnični in verski raznolikosti v sodobni Italiji. Poleg zbiranja podatkov o glasbenih praksah in kulturnih izmenjavah prirejamo tudi dogodke za razširjanje informacij in nameravamo ustvariti spletno podatkovno bazo.

### ABSTRACT

Since 2014, in an area between Lombardy and Emilia Romagna, participatory action research about music and migration is being conducted. Music is a significant medium not only for shaping a new understanding of a transnational cultural identity, but also for intervening creatively to shape public opinion about cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity in contemporary Italy. Collecting data on musical practices and cultural exchanges, we are also organizing occasions of dissemination and intend to realize a database online.

## 1. Fieldwork

In 2009, shortly after my arrival in Cremona as Lecturer in Ethnomusicology, I was involved in preparing the nomination of traditional violin craftsmanship in Cremona for the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Representative list. This allowed me to gain a deep knowledge of the situation that existed in the town, which has more than 140 luthier shops. I was enthusiastic about the fact that this craftsmanship has a simultaneously traditional and transnational character: at least half of the violinmakers are foreigners<sup>1</sup> who have come to Cremona to learn how to make the *perfect* violin. But during this process of apprenticeship, they also go through a process of acculturation<sup>2</sup> and embrace Italian culture as a whole, with few exceptions. Despite the high percentage of foreign residents<sup>3</sup> – around 12% of the population<sup>4</sup> – it is rare to meet a foreigner in Cremona who is not somehow involved with the making of bowed instruments.

Yet, the more I familiarised myself with the city, the more I realised that there were a lot of resident foreigners, including economic migrants, outside the world of violinmakers. The main issue was and still is that they were and still are mostly invisible in the city. None of them were working in shops or bars or restaurants. The image of Cremona was all inscribed in the local traditions of food, classical music and art, and foreign residents were not part of the official narrative about the city and its province. Things have changed slightly in these last years, but we are still far from a really pluralistic city, especially as far as music is concerned.

That's why, since 2014, I have committed myself, along with my students and former students, to conducting action research<sup>5</sup> about music and migration in an area between Lombardy and Emilia Romagna, in the centre of the Padana plain. At the basis of the project is the conviction that music is a significant medium not only for shaping a new understanding of a transnational cultural identity,<sup>6</sup> but also for intervening creatively to shape public opinion about cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in contemporary

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- 1 65 percent of the graduates of the International School of Violin Making are foreigners and come from over 50 countries on all continents.
  - 2 The term indicates a cultural modification of an individual, group or people when they adapt to or borrow traits from another culture. See A. Merriam, "The use of music in the study of a problem of acculturation," *American Anthropologist* 57 (1955): 28–34.
  - 3 I use this definition instead of "migrant" to underline the difference between people in movement and people who resettle permanently in a foreign country. It comprises people who have resided in Cremona for 30 years and people that came in the last few years. What they have in common is that they chose Cremona as their place of residence. This definition seems to me more neutral than definitions like economic or forced migrant, regular or irregular migrant, which strongly label people and refer to specific common places and easy simplifications. It is a condition completely different from that of the asylum seeker, that is, a person who lives in a limbo waiting for acceptance or refusal from the nation of arrival, and who when in Italy normally intends to move elsewhere. This is the only differentiation I will make in the article.
  - 4 In 2018, they count 11.5 % of the population: 41,248 people. Of these, 27.9 % are from Romania (including Roma), India 15.6 % (mostly people from Punjab, of Sikh faith), 10.2 % from Morocco, 8 % from Albania, 5.6 % from Egypt, 3.4 % from the People's Republic of China and 2.6 % from Nigeria, while 26.7 % are identified by the National Population Register Offices as "others", which means Africans (mostly Ivorians and Ghanaians), Europeans (Ukrainians) and South Americans.
  - 5 Angela Impey, "Culture, Conservation and Community Reconstruction: Explorations in Advocacy Ethnomusicology and Participatory Action Research in Northern Kwazulu Natal," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 34 (2002): 9–24; Michael Frishkopf, "Popular Music as Public Health Technology: Music for Global Human Development and "Giving Voice to Health" in Liberia," *Journal of Folklore Research* 54, no. 1-2, (2017): 41–86.
  - 6 Glick Schiller, Nina and Garbi Schmidt, "Envisioning Place: Urban Socialities Within Time, Space and Multiscalar Power," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 23, no. 1 (2016): 1–16.

Italy. In the words of Dillane and Langlois, “At the heart of our discussion are the citizens themselves, not as undifferentiated and disciplined civic body, but as being made up of diverse peoples with different individual and collective lived experiences.”<sup>7</sup> I was interested in working with all interested foreign residents in the area of the fieldwork, regardless of age, provenience and gender, to avoid any kind of essentialism and to let other diversities emerge. The concept of diversity calls for an openness towards a great variety of possible forms of differentiation and belonging, including age, generation, class, workplace, religion, language, migration history, length of residence and the ways they may be brought into play in social life.<sup>8</sup> “We must look at processes of social interaction and not assume the existence of stable, unchanging local communities.”<sup>9</sup>

In constructing our approach, we were inspired by the community-based setting of the Limerick soundscape project Aileen Dillane and Tony Langlois started in 2013. But solutions like the Limerick or the Rostock projects or Ruth Finnegan’s ethnography of Milton Keynes would probably not have worked in my case, which had come into being to give voice to the invisible. In fact, in Cremona we have 30 choirs, numerous orchestras, lots of street musicians, festivals of violinmakers and Monteverdi organised by the Museum of Violins and the Ponchielli Theatre and many other musical initiatives. The official musical narrative of the city of Cremona is that of Monteverdi, Ponchielli and all the music (mostly classical Western) made with strings, due to the strong cultural investment in violinmaking. Can you believe that 1,000 violin and cello players gathered for the 2019 ESTA<sup>10</sup> annual meeting in Cremona? A documentation of all these kinds of music or the participation of the entire citizenry would have again silenced the *other kinds of music* I wanted to let emerge.

That is why in our research we addressed mostly the foreign residents (not involved in violinmaking) and asylum seekers, with three projects: transcultural musical workshops in schools; musical workshops in reception centres; the creation of an audio-visual archive of public events involving music linked to the expression of cultural diversity.

The transcultural music workshops involved several schools interested in the project (from elementary to high school) and addressed all the students (not only second-generation migrants). They were aimed at improving inclusive and respectful citizenship in the younger generation through music and, at the same time, investigating the relation migrants and their descendants have with the musics of their places of origin.<sup>11</sup>

Workshops in reception centres addressed asylum seekers and intended to help them manage the awful limbo they are forced to live in for years and at the same time

7 Aileen Dillane, Tony Langlois, Martin J. Power and Orhlaith Ní Bhriain, “Urban soundscapes and critical citizenship: Explorations in activating a ‘sonic turn’ in urban cultural studies,” *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies* 2, no. 1 & 2 (2015): 91.

8 See Mette Louise Berg and Nando Sigona, eds., “Ethnography, diversity and urban space,” special issue, *Identities. Global Studies in Culture and Power* 20, no. 4 (2013), doi:10.1080/1070289X.2013.822382.

9 Olwig Karen Fog, “Notions and practices of difference: an epilogue on the ethnography of diversity,” In “Ethnography, diversity and urban space,” eds. Mette Louise Berg and Nando Sigona, special issue, *Identities. Global Studies in Culture and Power* 20, no. 4 (2013): 473, doi:10.1080/1070289X.2013.822382.

10 The 47<sup>th</sup> edition of the European String Teachers Association International Congress was held in Cremona for the second time from 26 April-1 May 2019 (the first was in 2007). ESTA Italia is located in Cremona, and the Italian meeting has been held in Cremona for many years. (<https://www.estaitalia.org/>, accessed April 30, 2019).

11 See Fulvia Caruso, “Music and migration. Una ricerca/azione nel centro della pianura Padana,” in *Scuola, migrazioni e pluralismo religioso*, eds. Fulvia Caruso and Vinicio Ongini (Todi: Tau, 2017).

to collect information about their musical skills and listening and the role music could have in their lives today.<sup>12</sup>

As regards the audio-visual archive of the musical expressions of the cultural diversity of foreign residents, I was interested in understanding if and how people who may have lived in Cremona for decades still engage in a relationship with their heritage and if and how their (cultural) associations play a role in this. That is why, in 2014, together with my students, I started to document any kind of public event organised by the associations or by the various communities of foreign residents. In organising this, I drew inspiration from the *Le Patrimoine Musical des Nanterriens* project (PNM) carried out in Nanterre by Nicolas Prévôt<sup>13</sup> and his students, even if I did not want to concentrate my attention either solely on professional or semi-professional musicians or on oral traditions. I also drew much information from the project of documenting the Christian foreigners' churches in Rome that Serena Facci<sup>14</sup> has been realizing since 2014, but I didn't want to document only religious expressions. The idea was to give visibility to the realities outside the nation-based Italian narration by creating an accessible archive in the Musicology and Cultural Heritage Department and by organising public events and an open access website.

The audio-visual documentation we<sup>15</sup> have produced comprises events (religious rites, performances, concerts, presentations...), rehearsals and semi-structured interviews about what is being documented, in order to gain the profoundest understanding of the various events. We pay particular attention to the role of music in the event; which language or languages are used; the presence of musical instruments; the distribution of musical roles according to gender, age and social role; the presence of dance; which technologies are involved (writing, tablets, cell phones...) during the performance and in the transmission processes; the audience the event addresses (internal, external or mixed) and audience participation. The musical analysis seeks to understand the continuity and transformation of music, the roles and strategies of musical memory and self-representation in music. Every event was to be recorded with an audio recorder and two cameras. Sometimes, if events overlapped, we were able to use only one camera

12 See Fulvia Caruso, "Sperimentare e superare i confini attraverso la musica," in *Disegnare, attraversare, cancellare i confini. Una prospettiva interdisciplinare*, ed. Anna Rita Calabrò (Torino: Giappichelli, 2018); Fulvia Caruso, "Faire de la musique ensemble: un programme de recherche action avec des migrants à Crémone (Italie)," in "Musiques de migrants", eds., Denis Laborde and Luc Charles-Dominique, special issue, *Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie* 32 (2019): 161-178; Fulvia Caruso, "How do we go about singing a new song about migration?" in *Travelling Musics/Musicians/Musicologists*, selected essays from the XXXIIth ESEM, eds. Giovanni Giurati, Marco Lutz, Ignazio Macchiarella, Udine: Nota, (forthcoming); Fulvia Caruso, "The Chorale Saint Michel Archanges in Cremona (Lombardy, Italy) between locality and translocality," *Philomusica on line* (forthcoming).

13 Nicolas Prévôt, "Ethnomusicologie et recherche-action: le patrimoine musical des Nanterriens," *Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie* 29 (2016): 137-156.

14 Serena Facci, "Liturgie musicali nelle comunità migranti nelle chiese di Roma," in *Scuola, migrazioni e pluralismo religioso*, eds. Fulvia Caruso and Vinicio Ongini (Todi: Tau, 2017).

15 Schools: Maurizio Corda, Daniela Conzadori, Beatrice Di Mario, Andrea Fugatti, Daniela Gozzi, Teresa Polizzotto, Monica Serafini, Francesca Vergani, Rouben Vitali, Andrea Rampin; public events: Giovanni Benetti, Sara Bernardis, Clarissa Biscardi, Edoardo Boschetti, Eleonora Carrucciu, Monica Colella, Federica Colucci, Francesco Dalla Libera, Giacomo Firpo, Clara Foglia, Gaiané Kevorkian, Gabriele Lazzarini, Giuseppe Lerario, Roberta Licitra, Alessandra Paciotti, Davide Pancetti, David Perez, Margherita Tealdi, Angela Tancredi, Thea Tiramani, Carla Turlà; reception centres: Elisa Tartaglia, Rossella Calvia, Clara Fanelli, Mattia Signaroldi, Francesco Brianzi (Piacenza); Gaiané Kevorkian, Massimiliano Caruso, Alba Cacchiani, Martina Drigo, Federica La Rocca, Simone Rude and Patrizia Vaccari (Cremona).

per event. I decided to use semi-professional cameras, which were small enough to not impact too much on the events.<sup>16</sup>

We have documented fifteen religious realities<sup>17</sup> and several events organised by cultural associations.<sup>18</sup> Most of the documentation is about religious rites, because music has only a small role in the events organised by the cultural associations. As far as the religious communities are concerned, we try to document the whole year so as to have complete documentation. In some cases this is not possible, but we document at least the crucial events of the year (such as Easter for the Orthodox community, or the *Sikhs* celebrating *Vaisaki* through a *Nagar Kirtan*).

We still do not have a complete frame for all the different cases and I cannot go into detail about all the documentation, but I can say that what all these musical events (religious or not) normally have in common is primarily the need foreign residents have to re-inhabit their own culture. Indeed, the roles and strategies of musical memory and self-representation in music are similar in intent, yet different in their results, because of the power imbalance that exists between locals and foreigners and also between communities of foreigners. As Orthodox Rumanians and Ukrainians stressed in our dialogues and as shown by comparing the various situations, foreign residents have few spaces at their disposal, and, for several reasons (denomination, size of the community, occupation...), not all the foreign residents are able to live their cultures in the same manner. In some cases, they are able to celebrate every week, but more often only once a month; in some cases they have their own place of worship, in others this is lacking. An example illustrative for all: no mosque is allowed in Cremona province; except one, all the Islamic cultural centres are situated outside the city of Cremona.

Except for those annual events held outside the churches and temples, like the *Nagar Kirtan* celebrated by the Sikh, the Orthodox Easter celebrated by the Romanians or the rare events organised by the associations, foreign residents are invisible and silent.

The elder generations in particular prefer not to be the centre of attention and this sometimes produces conflicts with younger generations who are proud of their diversity and intend to share it with Italians. As an example, the young Sikhs who have joined the Siki sewa society and organized Gatka events outside the temples and outside religious events were ostracized in the temple of Pessina Cremonese.

After five years being in touch with these occurrences and their documentation, it is now time to work on dissemination and restitution.

16 I decided to buy two Canon Legria HF G40s and a Zoom H6 with all the interchangeable microphone capsules.

17 In the Province of Cremona alone: Africa: Islamic Community (in Ponteviso, mostly from Morocco, but also from Senegal and Ghana. Apart from special events, specifically for the Sufi brotherhoods, the Saturday prayers are recited all together); Catholic Nigerian Community (Rivarolo Mantovano - CR); Catholic Ivorian Community (Cremona); Catholic Ghanaian Community (Casalmaggiore - CR); Our Lady of Nazareth Nuns from Togo (Cremona); Evangelical Pentecostal Church, Ghanaian Community (Rivarolo Mantovano - CR); Charismatic African Bethel Church (Cremona); Evangelical, Methodist and Waldensian Church (from different Sub-Saharan areas, in Cremona and various villages or in Brescia). Europe: Orthodox Catholic Community of Romania (Cremona); Catholic Community of Romania (Cremona); Byzantine Catholic Community of Ukraine (Cremona); Orthodox Catholic Community of Russia (Cremona); Reformed Philadelphia Church of Romania (Cremona). India: we have a Hindu Temple in Castelverde, 3 Sikh Gurdwārā (Pessina Cremonese, Martignana Po, Casalmaggiore) and a Ravidasi Temple in Cappella de' Picenardi. All these realities, and more, can be found in the neighbourhoods of the province of Cremona, both in Lombardy (Brescia, Bergamo, Mantua) and in Emilia Romagna (Piacenza, Parma, Modena, Reggio Emilia).

18 ASACP-Associazione Senegalesi Cremona e Provincia, Orizzonti Latini, ACAPN-Associazione Cittadini Africa il Popolo Nero, Associazione Latinoamericana di Cremona.

## 2. Towards an open access online archive

Collecting data through musical practice, workshops, interviews and human exchanges is only one part of our action research. We have also organized occasions to disseminate and share the varieties of music we encounter with Italians and with the other communities of foreigners. Part of this process is the publication of an online database that makes the reality of economic migrants visible.

This is not the place to renew discussion of the usefulness of ethnomusicological archives. A rich literature already exists on this, certainly a source of inspiration for me, but it mainly concerns the life of archives built in the past, about repatriations or dissemination processes that have today become precious for the various communities for recovering spaces of creativity, belonging and pride.<sup>19</sup> Today, however, when we are going to build an archive from scratch,<sup>20</sup> it is impossible to do so without involving the living people who are being documented. As Seeger<sup>21</sup> well demonstrated, a project of creating an archive has a different dynamic when it responds to a community. Only if the people documented are involved in the process of creating the archive will they also be its first users and benefit from its creation. My intention is that the dissemination address not only Italians, but also the holders of the documented knowledge.

Creating a standard scholarly archive online<sup>22</sup> can give a more official taste to the project that may help the process of legitimisation and empowerment of the communities. But creating an archive that intends to involve the heritage communities<sup>23</sup> is a different task. What makes a community archive different from a standard archive “is the accessibility of the archive to the community and the creation of that archive for the community. Of course community is not fixed and we should avoid at all costs the

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- 19 The most inspiring articles were those of Anthony Seeger. See Anthony Seeger, “The Role of Sound Archives in Ethnomusicology Today,” *Ethnomusicology* 30 (1986): 261–276; Anthony Seeger, “Creating and Confronting Cultures: Issues of Editing and Selection in Records and Videotapes of Musical Performances,” in *Music in the Dialogue of Cultures: Traditional Music and Cultural Policy*, ed. Max Peter Baumann (Wilhelmshaven: Lorian Noetzel Verlag, 1991); Anthony Seeger, “Ethnomusicologists, Archives, Professional Organizations, and the Shifting Ethics of Intellectual Property,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 28 (1996): 87–105; Anthony Seeger and Shubha Chaudhuri, eds., *Archives for the Future: Global Perspectives on Audiovisual Archives in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Calcutta: Seagull Press, 2004, <http://www.seagullindia.com/archive/download.html>; Anthony Seeger and Shuba Chaudhuri, “The contributions of Reconfigured Audiovisual Archives to Sustaining Traditions,” *The world of music* 4, no. 1 (2015): 21–34; Carolyn Landau, “Disseminating Music amongst Moroccans in Britain: Exploring the Value of Archival Sound Recordings for a Cultural Heritage Community in the Diaspora,” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 21, no. 2 (2012): 259–277; Carolyn Landau and Janet Top Fargion, “We are all Archivists Now. Towards a more Equitable Ethnomusicology,” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 21, no. 2 (2012): 125–140; Monika Stern, “Les cheminements de l’ethnomusicologie. D’une ethnomusicologie de sauvegarde à une ethnomusicologie du contemporain,” *Cahiers d’ethnomusicologie* 29 (2016): 55–72, <http://journals.openedition.org/ethnomusicologie/2586>.
- 20 Note that Italian national or regional audio-visual archives do not comprise intangible cultural heritages of foreign residents (except for the communities who came from Greece and Albania centuries ago and resettled in the South).
- 21 Seeger and Chaudhuri, *Archives for the Future. Global Perspectives on Audiovisual Archives in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Calcutta: Seagull Press (2004). <http://www.seagullindia.com/archive/download.html>.
- 22 There are a vast number of online archives. Let me just mention the ones that inspired me most in my present fieldwork: the Centre de Recherche en Ethnomusicologie (<http://aesc-cnrs.fr/crem/>), the Indiana University Archives of Traditional Music (<https://www.indiana.edu/~libarchm/index.php>) and The Smithsonian Institution (<https://www.si.edu/>); Ethnographic Video for Instruction and Analysis ([www.eviada.org](http://www.eviada.org)).
- 23 See Faro Convention 2005, article 2 point b: “a heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.” (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/0900001680083746>). For a more recent discussion of the use of the terms, see Emma Waterton and Steve Watson, eds., *Heritage and Community Engagement: Collaboration or Contestation?* (London: Routledge, 2011).

essentialising tendencies to conceive of community in this sense as a stable and absolute configuration.”<sup>24</sup>

When I started to really think about publishing the archive online, I realized that usually we had not sufficiently involved the communities, creating a rather classical fieldwork documentation. For example, every event and any detail of the events was important to us, while only some of them were significant for the people in the process of maintaining their heritage.

Moreover, not every performance event can be disseminated, because of the delicacy of the images and their appropriateness. Only the owners of this heritage have the right to select what to make public in an online archive. And I am also willing to re-do the documentation for the archive from scratch. Our process of selection opens issues such as hegemony; the disparity of power between me and them and within their groups cannot be ignored. “Most communities are divided along class, gender, hierarchy and religious lines that can result in collections that reveal as much bias as colonial ones, albeit biases of an internal nature.”<sup>25</sup> Both communities and archives need to establish clear ethical positions that can be explained to the public. I normally ask for consent and permission to record for educational and archiving purposes only. For dissemination, we have to create a new path together.<sup>26</sup> A simple solution to manage sensitive data can be a multimodal website: we can use just pictures or only sound or sound with pictures instead of videos.<sup>27</sup> But this is only a point of departure.

Fortunately, nowadays there are many innovative and creative ways to manage, preserve, use and re-use materials uploaded online, to create platforms that are mutually beneficial for scholars and heritage holders. One example is *FirstVoices*,<sup>28</sup> an open-source platform of texts, videos, games and more recently even iPhone applications created to support Aboriginal people engaged in language archiving, language teaching and cultural revitalisation projects. “In keeping with established community protocols and well-defined cultural norms, only some of these archival collections are publicly accessible, while others remain password protected at the request of an individual language community.”<sup>29</sup> What particularly strikes me about this project is the collaboration between the elder members of the community, who are the keepers of the knowledge, and the younger, tech-savvy ones, who become engaged in the archiving techniques. “The digital age has intensified and changed discussions of repatriation in ways that are sometimes

24 Clara M. Chu, Rebecca Dean, and Patrick Keilty, “EPILOGUE: Meditations on the future of Latina/o archival and memory practice, research and education,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 5, no. 1 (2009): 3.

25 Seeger and Chaudhuri, *Archives for the Future*, 25.

26 I am grateful to the Ethics Committees of SEM, ICTM and BFE for the wonderful work they do, which is the point of departure for my reasoning with the heritage communities. See Swijghuisen Reigersberg Muriel E, “Policy Formation, Ethics Statements and Ethics in Ethnomusicology. The Need for Increased and Sustained Engagement,” in *Applied Ethnomusicology in Institutional Policy and Practice*, ed. Klisala Harrison (Helsinki: Collegium for Advanced Studies, 2016).

27 Far from a mechanical and objective process of capturing and fixing, the act of recording involves technical, theoretical and aesthetic abilities and choices and is often guided by specific working hypotheses that can have a decisive impact on key technical features. To be honest, my first interest was to document in such a way that could best comprise the whole performances. The idea was to have a fixed camera for the whole event and a movable camera focused on the specificities of the kinds of music involved. Nevertheless, I could not always have two cameras and not always were my students able to use them well. Sometimes the need to realise recordings useful for analysis conflicted with the aim of high-quality recordings.

28 <http://www.firstvoices.com> has been in operation since 2003, and is funded by the First Peoples' Cultural Council.

29 Mark Turin, “Orality and Technology, or the Bit and the Byte: The Work of the World. Oral Literature Project,” *Oral Tradition* 28, no. 2 (2013): 176.

unpredictable. One such shift is away from legal definitions and assumptions about repatriation to more inclusive notions of digital return and community stewardship.<sup>30</sup>

A second inspiring example is that of the University of Alberta Ukrainian Folklore Audio, a site where the public can listen to songs, stories and beliefs recorded in Ukraine and among the Ukrainian Diaspora of Kazakhstan. “The data found on this site are minimally processed, a situation that is beneficial for researchers because of the wealth of information included, but a hindrance to non-academic users. To make the material I collected in Ukraine accessible to the non-specialist, it needed to be trimmed down to select items, transcribed, and translated.”<sup>31</sup> This is an open-source platform where registered volunteers who wish to transcribe the recordings or translate them can check out the item that interests them and work on it. All completed transcriptions and translations are available for public use. Because of the registration requirement, the authors consider the site as a modification of crowdsourcing into “groupsourcing”.<sup>32</sup>

In both cases, collaborative archiving in an open-source setting is essential to avoid the risk of creating *monumenta* for the communities that can become models. Even if a restricted number of people will be involved in the creation of the online website, *groupsourcing* allows a larger number of people to be involved, in an informal way.

To understand how and if it was possible to realize an open online archive of this kind, I observed how the associations and musical realities of foreign residents in Cremona present themselves on the Web. What emerges is that they often have both an institutional page and a Facebook page. If the former publicises events related to integration (as happens with ASCAP, the Senegalese Association) or presents the community outside the community (as in the case with *Orizzonti Latini*, the Romanian Association), the Facebook page is mostly used to present micro-stories and share events, a kind of reminder for both those who were part of them and those who were far away (as with the *Chorale de Saint Michel Archange*, made of Ivorian Christian believers). It is a more intimate and familiar, a more emotional world that is hardly oriented towards outsiders. The Facebook sites and sometimes the websites are not updated frequently and present several technical problems, such as the quality of posted videos and pictures.

It is interesting to note that even though I gave all the recordings I made to most of the archives two years ago, they have not used this material. Not to be rude, I haven't asked why. I'm afraid that the reason is that there are no “cultural professional specialists”<sup>33</sup> to take care of the matter. Moreover, not all the communities have the same access to technologies or high levels of computer literacy. Since foreign residents in the province of Cremona work mainly on farms and in factories, they have extremely demanding working times, and they are scattered throughout the territory. Over the years when we organised dissemination events together what already emerged is that these conditions complicate their direct participation in any project.

I have tried to solve the problem by planning a high-school student internship at the University to build the inventory of the Archive. To my mind, this should have a double

30 Ibid., 177.

31 Natalie Kononenko, “Ukrainian Folklore Audio,” *Oral Tradition* 28 no. 2 (2013): 246.

32 <http://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/folkaudio/>, accessed in February 2019.

33 Seeger and Chaudhuri, *Archives for the Future*, 25.

effect: the dissemination of the recordings to non-foreign young generations and the involvement of second-generation descendants. To date, a girl from Cremona has inventoried part of the recordings of the performances of the Oghene Damba Cremona Boys Musical Theater Group,<sup>34</sup> and a Romanian boy has inventoried and classified part of the recordings of the Orthodox Romanian Church. This process and the workshops in the schools made us realise that the new generations have little competence in their own cultures. This has meant that, in order to classify the recordings, we need the collaboration of the whole community. This is exactly what happened with the Romanian student, who had to interview the priest to fully understand the recordings.

Planning the work of archiving as a collaboration between various generations can probably also avoid the aforementioned problems of super-diversity<sup>35</sup> and hegemony. This could also help in the process of selecting materials for the online archive. Not only do we have the problem of sensitivity about content, but also the likelihood of being understood or appreciated by those who are not involved in the community. The scarce competence of young generations can work as a test of the efficacy of the selected images: their poor knowledge of their own cultures can be a help in understanding what is and what is not comprehensible for everyone and in finding the right words to explain it to people outside the community. When I write *outside the community*, I am not only thinking of Italians, but also of the many different proveniences of foreign residents.

I will try to create working groups by mixing different communities.<sup>36</sup> This will help realise shared principles of selection and explanations. It could also serve a broader aim, namely establishing contact between the various communities that otherwise would not meet. Resistance to diversity is not only between Italians and foreigners, but also between foreigners. This might not be as easy as it seems:

*There is a school of thought in social psychology that suggests regular contact between groups may mutually reduce prejudice and increase respect (cf. Hewstone and Brown 1986). Yet "Habitual contact in itself is no guarantor of cultural exchange" (Amin 2002, p. 969). Indeed, regular contact can entrench group animosities, fears and competition. More research is needed here to test these hypotheses and to identify key forms of space and contact that might yield positive benefits. Further, as Jane Jacobs and Ruth Fincher (1998) advocate, in many cases we need to consider the local development of "a complex entanglement between identity, power and place", which they call a "located politics of difference". This entails examining how people define their differences in relationship to uneven material and spatial conditions.<sup>37</sup>*

If we apply this to the situation in Cremona, for example, there is an imbalance between communities simply due to their sizes. The larger the community, the more easily it can recreate the right conditions to express its culture and its music.<sup>38</sup> In some cases, when

34 A group of asylum seekers born in the Cremona Diocese Reception Centre.

35 Steven Vertovec, "Super-diversity and its implications," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 6 (2007).

36 Thanks to a suggestion I was given during the last BFE annual conference by Lee Watkins, Director of the International Library of African Music.

37 Vertovec, "Super-diversity and its implications," 1045-1046.

38 See Caruso, "Faire de la musique ensemble," 161-178.

the community is very small, the rituals can still exist but be quite simplified. Just to give an example, when we documented the masses of the Orthodox Ukrainian Church, the priest invited us repeatedly to go to Brescia, where there are a lot of Ukrainians and a large choir, instead of documenting a very small community. This means that not all the musics are equally represented. As mentioned before, the documentation we put together shows an imbalance between different religions and communities, and I would like to avoid having this emerge in the online archive.<sup>39</sup>

Even in a small urban situation/environment like the one in Cremona, the super-diversities are evident. Every foreign resident belongs to a different reality and positions himself or herself differently on each occasion. In some cases, nationality is less representative than religion, as in the case of the Romanians, who have one church for the Orthodox and another for the Catholics. In other cases, as with the Islamic Cultural Centre, we have several different nations of origin united by the same religion. The Latin Americans have decided to gather in a single cultural association, which promotes all the various cultures, because of the feebleness of single-nation representatives. And let us not forget the transnational correlations between different cultural expressions or between old and new forms produced in their homelands. One example is that of the Ivorian *Chorale* mentioned above, whose repertoire is renewed with chants coming from the Ivory Coast thanks to both the Internet and, even more, the chants brought by those who go back home for their holidays. The group sings mostly Ivorian songs, but it can also perform songs of other origins, because their condition of migration brings them into contact with other realities, be they local ones, such as the Christian community of Ghana in Cremona, or more distant ones, such as the Francophone Christian communities of Lombardy and Italy. For example, they love singing *Asen papa* at their masses, which they actually learned from the Ghanaians and which was composed by an African-American in the US. These super-diversities must be represented in the “group sourcing” process.<sup>40</sup>

How can all this be represented in an open online archive? How can the data be organised without essentialising or simplifying all these complexities? How can we prevent the people involved from opting for the more *typical* examples? One other factor that makes our project delicate is that we are dealing with heritage communities far from home. This means that, as underlined above, not only can the heritage be unravelled and fragile, but also the emotions involved may be stronger than at home, which makes the task even more delicate. We are trying to avoid giving a simplistic interpretation to this cultural expression as merely being a nostalgic attempt to recreate a portion of a real or imagined birthplace. The behaviours of foreign residents fluctuate between a myriad of possibilities that also depend on positioning in a specific moment and place.

Even if Italy has historically been a place of transit and resettlement, Italians seem to have forgotten their past and still have to process multiculturalism. Even the internal

39 For my analysis of musical behaviours in resettlement, all this has been very interesting, but when speaking about restitution and even giving space and dignity to these realities, things change.

40 See Fulvia Caruso, “How do we go about singing a new song about migration?” in *Travelling Musics/Musicians/Musicologists. Selected essays from the XXXIIth ESEM*, eds. Ignazio Macchiarella (European Journal of Musicology, forthcoming); Fulvia Caruso, “The Chorale Saint Michel Archanges in Cremona (Lombardy, Italy) between locality and translocality,” *Philomusica on line* (forthcoming).

migration from South Italy to North Italy has long been opposed and disapproved by the inhabitants of the North, and still there is a high level of intolerance for foreigners. In time, this slowly shifted from southern Italians to foreigners. This is one of the reasons why, over the last few years, we have witnessed an increase in racist actions, culminating in killing for no other reason than the colour of a person's skin. For 2018, this can be labelled institutional racism: circulars, directives and new rules such as those contained in Law 132/2018 demonstrate a high level of discrimination against migrants. There are also local, regional or national "creative" measures that attempt to circumvent the law to exclude foreign citizens from access to certain services or from carrying out certain activities.<sup>41</sup>

### 3. An imposed silence or a chosen invisibility?

As Roger Zetter and colleagues point out, "In the present climate of immigration policy, there are good reasons why minorities may wish to remain invisible to outsiders and resist forming themselves into explicit organisational structures."<sup>42</sup> None of this is to say that community organizations no longer have a place in bridging migrant groups and local authorities or service providers. Such bodies remain crucial to the process, but should be recognized as only partially relevant with regard to their representativeness and scope.<sup>43</sup>

I started this article writing about the invisibility of foreigners in Cremona. Based on my conversations with foreign residents in this town, it is evident that their behaviour is a result of the widespread distrust that Italians still show towards them. The only exceptions are the associations of foreigners, which are also all charity-based. They try to fight discrimination by conducting charity campaigns and organising public events aimed at demonstrating their cultural richness.

My space for this article is at its end, and I cannot give more details about this, but the foreigners' events go in broadly different directions, depending on the cultural-political intentions. Such behaviours range from staging exotic performances to raise funds more easily, to making complex and delicate events public, such as the celebration of Amadou Bamba's birthday for the Senegalese Sufi Muridiyya brotherhood.

To try to find the right way to give voice to these communities in a participatory way and also to investigate the reactions of the Cremonese in these days of increasing racism, I decided to suspend for the moment the creation of the online archive and organise some public events with the collaboration of the associations and stable cultural realities like stable choirs.

I was wondering what to organise and how, when the Municipality of Cremona opened the call for applications for the funding of cultural events in the city for 2019

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41 See *Il razzismo nel 2018 tra rimozione ed enfaticizzazione*, Focus 1/2019, Lunaria Association, and the website *Cronache di ordinario razzismo* (Chronicles of ordinary racism), a site edited by Lunaria that since 2011 has reported daily and institutional racism (<http://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/il-razzismo-quotidiano/>). It also hosts a database with more than 6,800 brief accounts of racist episodes.

42 Roger Zetter et al., *Immigration, social cohesion and social capital: What are the links?*, (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005), 14.

43 Vertovec, "Super-diversity and its implications," 1045-1046.

dedicated to “the heritage of Cremona revealed to the Cremonese by the Cremonese”. I decided to apply with those communities of resident foreigners I knew best: the Senegalese association, the Saint Michael Archangel Chorus and the Sikh Sewa Society.

In recent decades, the conception of cultural heritage has made important progress, thanks to two fundamental events: the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Heritage and the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society. I’m aware of the debate among scholars about the effects they produce. Nevertheless, it is evident to me that, at least in Italy, these two Conventions have spread two pieces of fundamental knowledge, namely that there is a cultural heritage that is volatile and immaterial and not inscribed in objects but in people and that the communities themselves must identify, enhance and safeguard their material and immaterial cultural heritage. Taking care of one’s cultural heritage does not mean wanting to sequester oneself in the distant past, but involves manifesting the pride and will to bring an extraordinary wealth made up of identity, values and know-how with us into the future.

The Lombardy Region has been farsighted about intangible heritage, approving a law on safeguarding Lombard intangible heritage in 2008 and creating the REIL (Net of Intangible Lombard Heritages), a sort of mapping of a multimedia archive of Lombard cultural expressions, mostly available online. Obviously, no foreign resident’s cultural expression is documented in this archive. But Cremona’s violinmaking craftsmanship is included, and the Lombardy Region supported its nomination for inscription on the Representative List of UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage. The process of nomination, and even more its approval, sensitised both the population and the municipality. This is why our request for funding and patronage is based on the dialogue between tangible and intangible heritages in Cremona.

Intangible heritage is inherently inclusive, living and procedural, linked to people and not places. From this point of view, why not consider the cultural expressions of communities of economic migrants that are now established in Lombardy as part of the region’s cultural expressions? The three cultural realities accepted my invitation to reflect on how to underline the coexistence of heritages and cultures of different origins in Cremona. We decided to create a dialogue between the Cremonese material culture inscribed in the objects preserved in civic museums and the intangible cultural traditions of the world that have long been consolidated in the city of Cremona and its province. The project *Culture in dialogo* (dialogue between cultures) was born. Luckily, the municipality approved the project and a dialogue was set up between the three realities and the Archaeological Museum, the Museum of Natural History and the Museum of Rural Civilization. We began inside the three museums, visiting them and their respective directors and planning what to do. This resulted in the organisation of three events, one per museum and community: in April 2019, the Chorale of Saint Michel Archangel in the Archaeological Museum; in May, the ASACP (the Senegalese Association) in the Museum of Natural History; and in June, the Sikhi Sewa Society in the Museum of Rural Civilization. The Chorale decided to organise the event, alternating a PowerPoint presentation and songs. The presentation was about the Ivory Coast’s ethnic groups, linking them to places and productions, in dialogue with some objects from the everyday life of the Ancient Romans. Even if the Museum is housed in a church

(one of the reasons for choosing this museum), instead of performing the usual religious songs, which are mostly in French, they chose to sing all the songs of welcome in *Baulé-Agni*, the language shared by the singers of the Chorale who participated in the project.<sup>44</sup> I cannot say much about the other events, because they will be held after my writing. Having participated in the preparatory meetings, I can say that the upcoming events will alternate between presentations of the more “traditional” aspects, expressed in music, and of the contemporary realities of their respective countries.

There have been other similar experiences in Italy involving migrants in museums, such as in Rome the *Imagine, Shoot, Tell* photographic training course addressed to the asylum seekers of the Reception Center in the *Decima* neighborhood, in collaboration with the Luigi Pigorini National Prehistoric Ethnographic Museum,<sup>45</sup> and the project at the Florence Uffizi Museum in 2018, in which some migrants were trained to be tour guides in the museum. The Luigi Pigorini Museum has also organised several other cultural events involving foreign residents in the past, connecting them with their heritages preserved in the museum.

It seems to me that opening up to the idea of *new Lombards* instead of *resident foreigners* means understanding these cultural expressions, not as mnemonic tools to recreate a past or a place, but as lively and constantly evolving cultural manifestations, which give an account of the current situation in Italy and the world, in which we can no longer speak of national identities, but of cultural, economic and media frames. “We must, in other words, investigate particular places of identification and not be content with referring to countries of origin that equal certain ethnic identities, and we must look at processes of social interaction and not assume the existence of stable, unchanging local communities.”<sup>46</sup>

We shall have to see where this path will bring us and if the open access database will come to life.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The Chorale is made up of about 20 to 25 people, but they almost never manage to be present at the same time or all together at either the mass that is celebrated for the Ivorian community once a month or in public events like this.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.altrephoto.it/index.php/storico-eventi-eattivita/45-eventi-progressi/284-immagina-scatta-racconta>.

<sup>46</sup> Fog, “Notions and practices of difference,” 473.

<sup>47</sup> Thanks to the lapse of time between the writing of this article and its publication, I can say that the other two events have had growing success both in the size of the audience and in its participation in the dialogue. The success achieved has led the Municipality of Cremona to support the initiative also for the next year. We are planning to involve the Romanian association Orizzonti Latini, the Latin American association and the Islamic centre La Speranza.

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## POVZETEK

Od leta 2014 skupaj s sedanjimi in nekdanjimi študenti izvajamo projekt akcijskega raziskovanja glasbe in migracij na območju med Lombardijo in Emilijo - Romanjo, v osrčju Padske nižine.

Izhodiščna predpostavka raziskave je, da je glasba pomemben medij ne le za oblikovanje novega razumevanja transnacionalne kulturne identitete, temveč tudi kot ustvarjalni poseg pri oblikovanju javnega mnenja o kulturni, etnični in verski raznolikosti v sodobni Italiji. V Cremoni in njeni okolici so ekonomski migranti, četudi so v Italiji že desetletja, večinoma nevidni in ne sodelujejo v razpravi o svoji vlogi v italijanski družbi. V sodobnih diskurzih o priseljevanju, nacionalnosti in veri v Evropi so priseljenci v glavnem opisani kot problem. S svojim delom želimo izraziti kritiko tega stališča.

Poleg zbiranja podatkov o glasbenih praksah in kulturnih izmenjavah prirejamo tudi dogodke, na

katerih z Italijani delimo glasbo, ki jo spoznamo. Del tega procesa je ustvarjanje podatkovne baze na spletu, ki bo predočila resničnost ekonomskih migrantov. Literature o vplivu arhivov na ohranjanje kultur je ogromno, vendar mi ni uspelo poiskati veliko informacij o javnih spletnih arhivih, ki bi ljudem omogočali prepoznavnost, ne glede na značilnosti repertoarja ali kakovost izvedbe. Ugotavljam, da naloga ni tako enostavna, kot sem mislila ob začetku projekta, zlasti zato, ker sta se razizem in netoleranca še okrepila, medtem ko sem zbirala podatke. Zaradi iskanja načina, kako dati glas tem skupnostim in tudi kako raziskati reakcije lokalnih prebivalcev v dneh vse večjega razizma, sem se odločila, da za trenutek prekinem ustvarjanje spletnega arhiva in organiziram nekaj javnih dogodkov v sodelovanju z družtvi in na ta način pripravim nove temelje za ustanovitev javno dostopnega spletnega arhiva.