Patricia Adkins Chiti

IMMIGRANT MUSICIANS IN AN URBAN CONTEXT

FOREWORD

During discussions chaired by the *European Music Council* in Bonn (between 2004 and 2007) with colleagues from different parts of Europe, it clearly emerged that very little field research into the presence of immigrant musicians in our communities has been undertaken. In most of the EU countries one can find and enrol in music courses for the study of Indian songs, Nigerian drumming and dancing, Turkish folk traditions or Indonesian Gamelan techniques, and there are many European provincial and local music schools, conservatoires and music academies with first or second generation immigrant students who may eventually find work with professional choirs, orchestras, jazz bands, rock groups and as teachers.

It is generally assumed that all immigrant musicians play within their own communities but there is little documentation about what they do, or when or how they do it. It appeared essential, therefore, to finally have some original data about these musical activities, and, in the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, it was felt that more should be known about the musicians themselves; who they are, where they come from and their relationship to the music making in the country in which they now live.

From an Italian point of view we determined that it was essential for us to know something about the contact between immigrant and Italian musicians, between an eventual immigrant and Italian public. We asked ourselves whether the immigrant musicians went to concerts or events organised by Italians, or whether an Italian public would turn up at a Singhalese 'pop' concert, or a Philippine choral festival. We also felt that 'our point of view' was no longer sufficient – it was now time to 'give voice' to the 'other' musicians in our midst.

Without previous documented material on this subject we began by drafting a very long questionnaire which started with questions referring to the status of the musician, his/her name, family, country or origin, and reason for arrival in Italy. Subsequent questions delved into, and around, each individual's personal experience with music and performance,

participation in paid and unpaid music making and the 'professional' or 'financial' expectations (if any) of each musician. Once all the questionnaires had been filled in we were able to draw up lists of the kinds of music performed and the venues (with or without payment) for performances. We soon learned that earnings through music making were important for nearly all the musicians interviewed since the majority had come to Italy to make money and to support a family either in Italy or in their homeland.

The research project undertaken took far longer than we had originally envisaged because each interview turned into a person-to-person conversation: None of the musicians we met and spoke with had ever had this kind of contact with Italian citizens or with Italian musicians.

It is our hope that this study will encourage the preparation of others, thereby enabling the entire European music community to reflect upon the ways in which all citizens (whatever their status) and musicians can participate in the adventure of 'music making' and 'listening'.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Italy is home to over three million immigrants representing more than 1 540 different ethnic groups. The most numerous communities are those from Morocco, Albania, Ukraine, China, Philippines, Tunisia, and India, followed by Bangladesh, Peru, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Macedonia, Senegal, and Pakistan. The oldest are those from Albania, the Philippines, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Peru, Ecuador, Sri Lanka, and Senegal. According to studies published at the beginning of the year 2008 by the Italian Caritas and migrants organisations in *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione*, immigrants account for 5,6 % of the total Italian population with important variations: 0,5 % coming from the new EU member countries (Romania and Bulgaria) and between 4 % and 8 % from other parts of the EU. Two thirds of the immigrant population are composed of non-communitarians: 32 % from non-EU Europe (Russia, Turkey, and the Balkans), 22 % from Africa (of which two thirds come from North Africa), 16 % from Asia, and 15 % from the Americas (mainly from Latin America).

The number of legal immigrants should be easy to calculate, but many of the statistical sources are often incomplete. The status known as 'legal presence' covers both residents registered with 'municipalities' and short-term residents. Occupation is the consequence of these demographics and the revenue accrued by immigrants accounts for 6,1 % of the Italian national income. The weight of this workforce reaches 66,2 % in domestic work with families, 20,6 % in agriculture, 20,4 % in hotels and restaurants, and 19,4 % in construction. Women make up 40 % of employed workers and

16,2 % of small business owners. The 150 languages spoken by immigrants can be heard daily in 172 radio programmes, 20 television programmes and read in 29 newspapers: Seven in Spanish, three in English, three in Portuguese, two in Chinese, Albanian, Ukrainian, Romanian and one in Punjabi, French, Polish, Bulgarian, Urdu, Russian, Tajik and Arab. Both RAI (Italian radio and television) and the Vatican broadcast programmes in all of these languages.

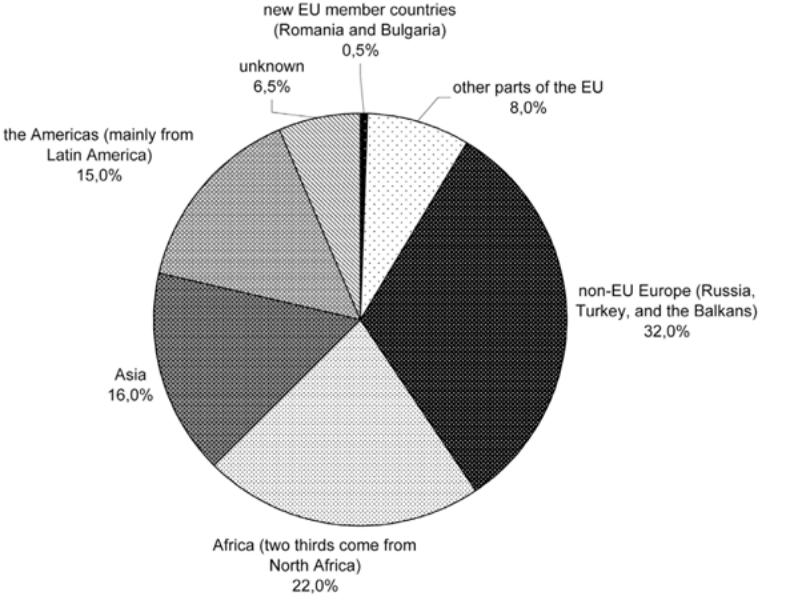

Fig. 1 – Geographical origin of immigrants living in Italy.
Graph by *European Music Council*. Source: Dossier Statistico Immigrazione, 2008

MUSIC AND IMMIGRANT MUSICIANS IN LAZIO

The publicity for the music and events programmed in auditoriums, concert halls, theatres and cultural centres in the Lazio region, reflects the tastes and musical traditions of the majority of the inhabitants: Classical music, opera, jazz, rock and occasional forays into contemporary music, tangos, Arab classical music with a sprinkling of hip-hop, electronic music and concerts by military bands. If, instead, one looks at the black and white

photocopied posters taped to the gates of parks, hung from lamp-posts and decorating telephone booths, it is clear that that there is a parallel world of music and events for people speaking other languages: Serbo Croatian, Hindi, Tagalog, Chinese, Arabic, etc. The Peruvian community is the only one that prints posters in Italian. The featured artists publicised in the foreign language posters are unknown outside their communities; they are immigrants with double lives, earning a living in fields that have nothing to do with music:

- Sonia X, married with a family in Sri Lanka, a popular national recording artist and a graduate from an Indian university, is a house cleaner with a legal permit. She sings and teaches for Sri Lankan communities but has no contact with Italian musicians.
- Bill YY, an illegal immigrant drummer from Nigeria working on building sites is married with children and learned to play in his village. He performs with Nigerians and has no contact with Italians.
- Maria Z, a choirmaster and hymn writer for a Philippine choir in a central Roman church, with a regular work permit, is a single mother with one child, working as home-help for an elderly family. Her employers listen to her choir at Easter and Christmas.

There are countless immigrant musicians living and working in Rome, the capital of Lazio. Many have no legal entry documents, no means of support and scrape a living from busking on the streets or in the entrance tunnels to the underground railways system. In their own countries they were farm labourers, factory hands, artisans or housewives.

- M. A. A., a middle-aged Albanian violinist, illegal itinerant immigrant, plays in railway stations. Married with children near Tirana, he never went to school and has no other means of earning a living. No contact with other Albanians.
- S. B. B., a 40-year-old Roma from Bosnia, completed junior school and learned songs and dances from her mother. She sings in streets and fairs but declares that having an income is not as important as singing and dancing.

There is, however, a third category of immigrant musicians. Often highly educated with university degrees and specialised training in conservatoires or music schools, they came to Italy to seek the fame and fortune they were unable to obtain in their homelands. Although supported by friends and members of their communities, only a few perform regularly within the mainstream of Italian music and production. Those from Eastern Europe

find seasonal contracts with orchestras or choirs, while those from Asia, Africa and the Americas work in fields that are nearer to 'crossover' or 'world music' than to their own traditional music. Some have made a name for themselves as soloists or group leaders, while others work with rock groups or the famous Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio, described in the appendix to this paper.

- A. W., a 25-year-old woman from Senegal with a literature degree, is a self-taught vocalist and hip-hop artist. She has a regular entry permit and since arrival in Italy, with community help, has appeared on Italian television as a dancer, but is not interested in a milieu that exploits her looks but not her talent. She is a member of a Senegalese hip-hop group.
- J. O., 50 years old, from Morocco with conservatoire diplomas from Tangiers and Verona in violin, pianoforte, percussion, and classical Arab music. He is now an Italian citizen working professionally with musicians and groups in the fields of folk and traditional music. Thanks to his highly professional preparation, he is much in demand.
- F. V., 45 years old, is a self-taught Brazilian percussionist with Italian citizenship working with Italian musicians and record companies, playing Latin music, jazz and blues. Interested in music from his childhood, his extreme poverty led him to make his own instruments. Well informed about all the latest trends in European music, his first love is jazz.
- A. T. T., 40 year old musician from the Ivory Coast with a residence permit, earned degrees in anthropology, art, and popular traditions in Montreal where he studied percussion, African music, reggae and rock. No longer working full-time as a musician (he once played with top pop stars), he now runs a rehearsal and dance hall in the suburbs while dreaming of an intercultural theatre for younger musicians.
- E. N., Hungarian, arrived in Italy in 1994 and completed cello studies at the Conservatoire of Milan. She performs with the Regional Symphony Orchestra of Lazio, in backing groups for rock stars, in the Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio and teaches privately.
- S. de S., in her 40s from Brazil, gained conservatoire diplomas in singing, Brazilian music and jazz. She is an Italian citizen and featured vocalist for international festivals and jazz clubs. She teaches Brazilian music privately and works for television and radio convinced that her success is due to her strong character and hard work.

So is there any interaction between these very different worlds? Does the Italian music community know anything about the immigrant music communities, and do the poorer members of these have any contact with

those who appear to be fully integrated into the Italian scene? Apparently not, and our research left us with the feeling that the left hand does not seem to know, nor even want to know, what the right hand is doing.

Even before we began the preparation of the questionnaire, we knew that Rome was the home for a considerable number of musicians who work professionally on the Italian music scene but that the majority of the other immigrant musicians appeared to have little 'exchange' or 'musical experience' with Italians. For every musician like Pablo C. (Costa Rican classically trained composer, married to an Italian musician, teaching privately and writing music), there are 80 others who live on the outskirts of society, sometimes with only sporadic contact with their own communities.

If, at the start of this project, we had known what we know now, we would have investigated the interaction between the various communities and not just those between immigrant and Italian musicians and music making.

The five state conservatoires in the Lazio region do not offer courses in music history or instruments outside the western tradition. Most state schools do not teach a music curriculum and do not give an initiation into the world of music. Music participation comes primarily from families, parish communities and private local schools (for choirs and wind orchestras).

The empirical study described here is about how immigrants and migrant communities in the Lazio region make music and see themselves as musicians.

FINDING AND CHOOSING THE PARTICIPANTS

We began by identifying 16 countries with strong communities: Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia, Romania, Bulgaria, Brazil, Ukraine, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Ivory Coast, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and the Roma. Meetings were arranged with the official associations for each community to help identify musicians who could participate in our research. Some communities – from Albania, Ethiopia, China, India –, although numerous, are unfortunately absent from this study. The Albanians we talked with were all illegal foreigners who did not want to be traced. Ethiopians refuse contact with Italian organisations even though many have been residents for over 20 years. Indian musicians made appointments to which they never came, and then (this was a frequent problem not just with Indians and is a common experience of field studies) asked how much they would be paid: "What is in all of this for me?"

The Chinese community in Lazio is difficult to approach and very little is known about their legal status or how they live. Conservatoire classically

trained musicians come to Italy to study in opera houses and then return home to work. There seem to be no traditional Chinese musicians in Italy. When necessary they are 'imported' from England, Paris, and Beijing.

The materials we collected confirm that the music traditions of the migrant communities are unknown by Italians living and working in the same territory – even by musicians. 41 % of all musicians interviewed only perform within their own community. 44 % have some contact with Italian organisations or the public (i.e. their employers come to attend a Peruvian/Moroccan/Brazilian evening). 4 % claim to have regular contact with Italians because they play in mixed bands, bars, or on the streets! The remainder are professional musicians (often with Italian or EU citizenship) working with Italian organisations.

This Foundation regularly programmes concerts including immigrant musicians. The Ministry of Internal Affairs invited us to organise an event for the opening of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue (Basilica of Santa Maria in Ara Coeli, Rome). We contracted Sri Lankan singers and dancers, a Philippine choir and an Italian vocal ensemble. The concert was planned for the one day in the week (Thursday) on which most workers are free, but the ratio of Italians to non-Italians in the public was three to one. Nearly 200 different communities were contacted, telephonically, by post and electronic mail. When we asked performers why there were so few of their friends in the audience, they answered: "We can hear our musicians whenever we want to". Some who came said "Well, you're doing a good job and I'd like to participate as an artist next time ..." Instead, the Italians in the public were enthusiastic and wanted to hear more.

During our research we learned that, with the exception of Filipinos, Peruvians, and some Eastern Europeans, the motivation to respond to our approach seemed to be the chance of visibility for 'their music' and – more pragmatically – a possible 'payment'. To some extent the presence of an Italian ensemble on the above occasion seem to have allowed both sides to listen to music from other traditions for the first time.

One of the most important results from this project was that all interviewees expressed their delight at not being considered second-class citizens any more, but as musicians and artists. They devoted time to the questionnaire and interview because of their love of music, realising that this could bring them visibility, and because they felt 'understood'. The most collaborative were musicians from Ecuador, Senegal, Brazil, Ukraine, the Philippines and the Roma. The latter participated with their association Unirsi, since they saw this as a way in which they could convince the Italian community that they were also artists.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The project included two parts: The compilation of questionnaires followed by in-depth interviews with 120 musicians. All interviewees assumed we knew they were in Italy to earn money for their families and/or to send home, and that it was easier to enter Italy than other European countries.

One of the initial problems was the general diffidence to any kind of questioning, especially from an official Italian cultural institute. This diffidence disappeared when they realised that we are a music organisation with a library of music and recordings, carrying out research and producing books as well as organising public concerts.

In addition to the work undertaken by the Foundation's staff, we employed a professional researcher, Elisabetta Pucinischi, with experience in intercultural dialogue and degrees in Philosophy and Social Sciences. Her particular field is the Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauritania) and she speaks English, French, and Arabic. She resolved all sorts of problems thanks to her personal contacts with immigrants who accompanied her to meetings and on her rounds at the central station in Rome.

THE QUESTIONS[1]:

- Name, Surname, Age, Gender.
- Country of origin, nationality, or ethnic group.
- Address in Italy.
- Family status (single, married, separated, cohabiting) including number of children or family members supported, with information about formal education for children.
- Education received by the musicians (schools, programmes)[2].
- The legal status of the interviewee in Italy: With entry and work permit, political exile or refugee, with temporary permits for health, professional training or temporary work[3], with Italian or European citizenship. Since many immigrants said they had regular entry and work permits they were asked whether they had one full-time job, temporary or occasional

1 For the sake of brevity we have 'condensed' the questions into sectors. The entire questionnaire was extremely detailed but the main 'sectors' are those described above.

2 In their own countries above all.

3 Often given to nurses, technicians and specialised workers in factories, industry and agriculture.

work, or many different jobs. To those without legal entry permits we asked how they managed to live.
- We asked where the musician had learned to play an instrument or sing, begin to participate in music making.
- What instruments did they play and how did they judge their level of proficiency?
- What kind of music did they present: traditional, classical[4], folk, western, popular, dance, religious, disco or commercial (this for some meant jazz, rock or hip-hop, for most interviewees it meant 'crossover'or 'fusion')?
- We asked if any money was earned through music making, where, when, with whom and how often. If this music making was carried out only within their own community how often they performed, what, when and with whom?
- Were there any musical contacts with Italians and if so how, when and where did these contacts take place?
- Did the immigrant musicians ever go to concerts or events organised by Italians?
- Was there any contact with Italian media – radio, television, record companies, and newspapers?
- How many languages did the musician speak and could they read, write, or annotate music[5]?

PERCENTAGE OF INTERVIEWEES

- Senegal: 6 % (5 % men, 1 % women)
- Morocco: 12 % (7 % men, 5 % women)
- Roma: 9 % (from Bosnia 2 %, Croatia 1 %, Serbia 1 %, Romania 1 %, Kosovo Albania 1 %, others 3%) (7 % men, 2 % women)
- Tunisia: 2 % (men)
- Romania: 10 % (7 % men, 3 % women)
- Bulgaria: 5 % (3 % men, 2 % women)
- Brazil: 5 % (3 % men, 2 % women)
- Ukraine: 6 % (3 % men, 3 % women)
- Ecuador: 8 % (7 % men, 1 % women)

4 'Classical' as applied to the music history of the country of origin.

5 Reading music was normal for most musicians from Eastern Europe and from Commonwealth countries, but unheard of for those from North Africa. Clearly, those who had received 'formal music training' all read sufficiently to be able to play with other 'trained' musicians. Very few of the singers (in any community) knew how to read and appeared to learn everything by ear.

- Bolivia: 1 % men
- Chile: 1 % women
- Cuba: 1 % (men)
- Ivory Coast: 1 % (men)
- Peru: 5 % (2 % men, 3 % women)
- Philippines: 19 % (10 % men, 9 % women)
- Sri Lanka: 9 % (2 % men, 7 % women)

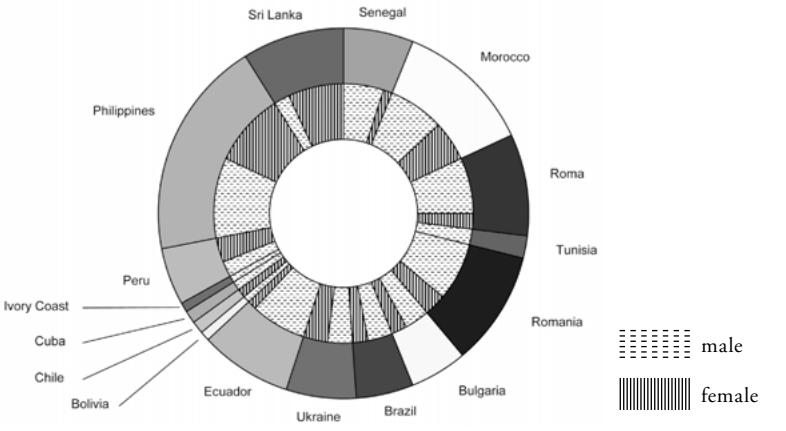

Fig. 2 – Origin and gender of the interviewees.
Graph by *European Music Council*. Source: Dossier Statistico Immigrazione, 2008

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

Start-up

We initially contacted the organisations representing immigrant communities listed in the annual reports published by the Italian Caritas organisation, and on the website set up by the city of Rome (www.romamultietnica.it). Unfortunately, apart from the contact with the Roma community, this method turned out to be useless and a complete waste of time. Some associations said they were not interested unless there was a payment (or rehearsal hall facility). The majority of the official associations for immigrants did not appear to have any contact with musicians and were more interested in political and legal issues. We believe that most of these associations are under-staffed and that the request for contacts with musicians was not part of the daily workload. A contact with the Ukraine Cultural Institute was more fruitful and led to meetings with their musicians. The Moroccan

community was particularly negative even after appointments had been arranged with embassy staff and the official association in Italy. We spent months while the embassy and the association passed the ball from one to another. On the other hand, the Brazilian Embassy immediately contacted one of their most popular artists in Italy, who was interviewed and who in turn introduced other colleagues. The network of Philippine church choirs, and choristers, in the capital (more than 60 different music groups) was very helpful and turned out to be that which most enjoyed using email. All other contacts were made by word of mouth, on the street, in bars, restaurants, at concerts and events and in the underground entrances to the subway.

Once contact had been made, an appointment was planned and many musicians chose to come across the city to the Foundation's offices while others preferred meetings after church, or in areas near where they lived. Some were interviewed in coffee shops, the subway, rehearsal halls and in private homes. Other appointments were set up in the community associations' offices and this meant that the interview was often carried out with a translator and some information may have been 'lost in translation'. Clearly too, all those interviewees in 'official circumstances' declared that they had been granted legal entry and work permits.

The interview normally lasted from 20 to 30 minutes and the length depended upon the linguistic knowledge of the person being interviewed. Some interviews were carried out by electronic mail. This allowed participants to 'talk' online when they had time and avoided travel across the city. Those using this method gave clear answers and were enthusiastic participants but we did not have the musician in front of us thereby limiting interaction. 2 % of the interviews took place over the telephone because the musicians did not have free time in which to meet us and did not use electronic mail.

Identification of the person being interviewed

Each musician was invited to give his/her name, age, gender and country of origin. This information was given by all interviewees without any difficulty. At the beginning we asked each musician for an identity document (to assure us that we were being given authentic information) but this led to problems (between 2 and 3 % of the interviewees) and we had to give up the idea. All of the musicians replied to the questions about their family status.

Legal and civil status

Current legislation in Italy determines that in order to be employed, enjoy social security and welfare benefits, a legal entry permit is required, followed by a work permit, and after six to ten years, citizenship is possible. We successively calculated that probably only 64 % of the interviewees had legal entry documents, 19 % were already EU or Italian citizens, thereby

leaving 17 % who were illegal foreigners. 3 % of all those interviewed refused to discuss their status and it is to be assumed that they had no entry documents. These percentages did not coincide with declared employment and we assume that many 'invented' occupations because of their fear of being sent away. Interestingly, only one musician from Senegal held political refugee status.

Immigrant musicians can work for Italian organisations if they are (a) part of an amateur ensemble, (b) legally resident with work permits, or (c) members of the European Union or Italian citizens.

Education

We wanted to have a clear idea of where and how the musicians had been trained or educated. While many of them only received primary or junior level education (particularly the Roma), many others had completed a secondary education gaining official diplomas and a large number had studied in universities or conservatoires where they obtained degrees, and this was especially true for musicians coming from Ukraine, Morocco, the Ivory Coast, and the Philippines.

Immigrant women are usually considered less educated than men but the women interviewed for this project were more highly trained than their male counterparts. This was reflected by their 'other' job. Men interviewees worked as labourers, in the fields or in restaurant kitchens. Women worked in hospitals, clinics, private homes, boutiques and schools for their communities as well as for Italian associations.

4 % of all those interviewed had not frequented a school of any kind. 8 % had only completed primary school education, whereas 88 % had completed secondary school education 26 % had studied in a university, 7 % in a public music school or conservatoire and 73 % considered themselves self-taught musicians.

Music education

The central part of the questionnaire was about the musical preparation of the interviewees, and we asked about 'formal training' and the way in which they had begun their musical activities and the instruments played. We learned that many had started their musical activities as children (within families or communities) or considered themselves as self-taught. With those who had studied in academies, conservatoires or universities, we discussed the music curricula covered and asked whether they thought of themselves as 'professionals' or 'amateurs' living with earnings from other jobs.

The expectancies of musicians were decidedly different and we learned that Peruvian and Philippine musicians, even with specialised school or conservatoire studies, considered themselves as 'amateurs' happy to

make music for their community or in church. Several immigrant groups, including those from Senegal and Sri Lanka, have their own traditional schools for children. The Filippinos teach choral singing and guitar, while some private Italian schools employ Ukrainian, Romanian and Bulgarian musicians for pianoforte, flute and violin. The participants coming from EU countries and having received conservatoire or university training were all able to read music. Many of the musicians interviewed said that they learned by ear and this was especially true of the Roma and Latin Americans performing with song and dance ensembles. The overall impression gained throughout the meetings was that the majority of the 'non-professional' musicians would probably not have used their music making as a form of 'earning power' in their own countries but that they were doing so in Italy in order to have some extra income.

Instruments played

All the musicians interviewed could sing and dance. The choice of musical instruments was determined by the traditions of the country of origin. The most popular instruments were the guitar and percussion instruments followed by the violin, accordion and a variety of other traditional instruments including: *kora*, saxophone, *bollonka*, *darbuka*, pianoforte, mouth organ, drums, flute, *bandura*, double bass, *charango*, banjo, Andean flutes, bagpipes, *quena*, *balafoon*, *djembe*, xylophone, organ, clarinet, and *sitar*.

Languages spoken

This question allowed us to understand to what extent the musician interviewed could find and forge useful contacts with Italian musicians. Many of them, although living for years in Italy, did not have a good knowledge of the Italian language and we often had to interview them in another language (Arabic, French, English, and German) or through an interpreter. Those from the Americas and Eastern Europe all spoke Italian reasonably well; the Filippinos and Asians preferred to speak English while those from North Africa spoke French. Some, as the result of the Italian public school education of their own children, were learning to speak Italian.

The professional musicians had a far better knowledge of Italian than 'amateurs' working in other fields, who had a better knowledge than those 'busking' or living by expediencies.

Money makes the world go round

The question of earnings from music making was central to the questionnaire. Here again, the results were extremely diversified even amongst the 'professionals'. We interviewed musicians living from their earnings (in

different situations as far as venues, quality, number of performances and earned income were concerned) and others earning extra money through music performance but living primarily on the income earned from their official job or jobs.

44 % of all of the musicians interviewed stated that they earned money from performances and that 30 % of these earnings came from concerts, festivals, and community events. 10 % earned money playing in the streets and subway stations, 4 % played in pubs and nightclubs, 3 % had money from recordings, while 7 % stated that they earned money without clearly saying how. 22 % of all those interviewed played and sang for free in churches, religious centres, for marriages, national festivities and events organised by their communities.

The majority of those who participated in this research performed as 'occasional' musicians. The Romanians, Bulgarians and Ukrainians had all received excellent music education in conservatoires and universities and then found temporary work in Italy with public organisations, semi-professional choral and instrumental associations and private teaching, usually in Italian families (pianoforte, violin, music theory). They complained that it was difficult to live as musicians and we pointed out that this is true for most European musicians (including Italian conservatoire graduates), but obviously unexpected for those coming from an ex-Soviet system. None of the new EU artists knew how to go about finding professional opportunities and could not understand that the current production of classical and contemporary music is less energetic than the commercial and popular fields.

We tried, with the help of the Roma community association, to determine whether their musicians considered themselves 'professional' or 'occasional'. The replies received mirrored those of many other musicians. Music performance is central to the Roma way of life and all members of a community are expected to sing traditional songs and participate in traditional dances. Those moving from one part of Europe to another tend to consider earnings from public music performance as an 'extra'. The resident Roma have followed Italian educational routes and often have conservatoire diplomas. They teach in schools and universities and run professional music ensembles representing traditional Roma music in festivals and concert series.

Relationships between Italians and non-Italians in the musical field

We wanted to determine whether or not there is any collaboration between immigrants and Italians and if the music of the immigrant community is known or promoted by the Italian media. The professional musicians working with Italian organisations record for radio, television and record

companies and appear to be well informed about work possibilities. They go to concerts and are knowledgeable about the 'Italian scene'. Where the immigrant musicians have little contact with their own associations (which in turn have even less contact with the Italian musical world), a lot of potentially interesting talent and musical energy is lost or 'underused'. All the musicians interviewed, whether professional, occasional or amateur, perform for their own communities: At weddings, funerals, national and religious festivities.

When we asked whether they would be interested in going to concerts of Italian music, we were told that tickets cost too much, and although this may be true for performances at the opera house or in the *Parco Della Musica*, it is certainly not true for hundreds of other initiatives that are free. Another reason given for not going to Italian music performances was the lack of free time.

Contact with the media (television, radio, and newspapers)

The Italian television and radio networks all have programmes centred on the activities of immigrant communities. Occasionally a musician is featured and these are normally the professionals described earlier.

Only 38 % of those interviewed appeared to have any contact with the media of any kind and 27 % had worked for television. These were the Roma (participation in debates and non-music programmes or working as actors/extras in TV drama series or soap operas) and the Sri Lankans (who have their own television station in Rome).

7 % had been interviewed or recorded by a radio station (usually transmitting in their language) and 4 % had seen their names written in an Italian newspaper.

The communities organising concerts were unaware that they could publicise their events, free of charge, in many daily newspapers and through a myriad of online websites. None of those contacted, or any of the individual artists (professional or not), had ever made proposals to television networks (not even smaller regional stations).

Occupation

The percentages calculated for those working with regular work permits appear plausible but, in fact, it was never very easy to understand if the job referred to was full time, part time or occasional. 62 % of all those interviewed declared that they had a paid occupation: 17 % worked as labourers, 9 % as musicians, 3 % as teachers, 24 % as home-helps for the elderly, 9 % in restaurants. A further 3 % were homemakers and mothers, 18 % declared that they had part-time or occasional work and 10 % were students. 3 % were extremely unclear as to what they did or how they lived.

In theory, the 62 % with regular work should have been confirmed by the same percentage for those with regular entry permits but we had the sensation that this was not truly the case. Of the 9 % working as professional musicians, only one was a woman.

CONCLUSIONS

Having completed the interviews, read the questionnaires and worked on a statistical 'content analysis' before writing this report, the first reaction was that "had we known then what we know now" we should have extended the range of contacts to other communities outside the original 16. Obviously, this would have meant a longer period for the entire project and far greater economic means than we were able to invest.

What is sad, for a music organisation like ours[6], is the feeling that none of the musicians interviewed (with the exception of those teaching) really felt that they needed to promote 'their music'. If they are called to perform by an Italian organisation then they are very happy to do so and love having an appreciative public. This raises questions of whether our instruments of promoting and supporting music of migrant communities are applicable or appropriate and in what ways the dialogue could be triggered from the Italian side.

The impact of this research has been rather like waking a sleeping dragon. We are now being called by immigrant musicians volunteering to work with us, often offering their services without payment, prepared (or so they say) to carry out research into the music of the women of their countries or ethnic groups. This is an extraordinary result because immigrants very rarely think of proposing themselves to Italian organisations. We therefore realise that it is important for 'host' communities to make special efforts to identify and invite immigrant musicians to participate in the organisation of music events. This would certainly be useful for intercultural dialogue and could encourage younger talented immigrants to undertake the training necessary to equip them for musical careers in their new countries.

6 *Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica*.

APPENDIX

The Orchestra of Piazza Vittorio

Piazza Vittorio is a multicultural district in Southern Rome with streets full of small stores reflecting the many nationalities of the inhabitants of the district. The musician Marco Tronco was inspired by the many musicians who lived or worked near the Piazza and with Agostino Ferrente and the Apollo 11 Association set up a multi cultural band: L'Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio. Many musicians, each one unique in terms of origin, instrument, and musical experience, form an orchestra that reinvents music from all over the world.

From the first concerts in 2002, the orchestra has achieved success and self-finances itself. Most of the musicians have more than one job, this means juggling timetables for rehearsals and performances, but also that they bring different kinds of musical inspiration to the works they create. The ensemble performs abroad causing headaches for the administrator who has to worry about entry visas and work permits for people whose legal situation is often far from clear.

The members of the orchestra are: **Houcine Ataa**, Tunisia – vocals; **Peppe D'Argenzio**, Italy – sax, bass clarinet; **Evandro Cesar Dos Reis**, Brazil – vocals, classical guitar, cavaquinho; **Omar Lopez Valle**, Cuba – trumpet, flugelhorn; **Awalys Ernesto 'El Kiri' Lopez Maturell**, Cuba – drums, congas, hands, feet, background vocals; **John Maida**, United States – violin; **Eszter Nagypal**, Hungary – cello; **Gaia Orsoni**, Italy – viola; **Carlos Paz**, Ecuador – vocals, Andean flutes; **Pino Pecorelli**, Italy – double bass, electric bass; **Raul 'Cuervo' Scebba**, Argentina – marimba, glockenspiel, congas, percussions, background vocals; **El Hadji 'Pap' Yeri Samb**, Senegal – vocals, djembe, dumdum, sabar, shaker; **'Kaw' Dialy Mady Sissoko**, Senegal – vocals, kora, feet; **Giuseppe Smaldino**, Italy – French horn; **Ziad Trabelsi**, Tunisia – vocals, oud.

Comments from some of the players

Houcine Ataa from Tunis studied with his father, a well-known singer, and was an entertainer on cruise ships. "The orchestra is unique because there is no other such organisation with so many international musicians taking part. Each has one role and one very precise musical personality. The orchestra will surely have a great future."

Ziad Trabelsi is also from Tunis with a music degree from the Conservatoire of Tunis and in mathematics and science from the university in the same city. "[…] Under the guidance of Mario and Pino, I am discovering myself as a composer. The idea of writing for the western ear is very different from that of Arabic music. This new experience is helping me

to build a bridge between harmony and melody that includes reality with all of its problems, included those tied to a work permit."

Carlos Paz from Ecuador: "I am the new Latin American man: I am not Indian and I am not Spanish. My culture is western, I speak Spanish, I dress western, and I bring something of the native culture." Carlos also performs in the streets with a group of musicians from the Andes but considers himself an 'urban musician', not merely a 'street artist'.

Daddy Yeri Samb from Senegal: "I want to transmit my country's music, the rhythms, the songs, the dances […] In a few years, when I have finished the projects that are keeping me here I want to return to my country. But the orchestra I will leave never because all the musicians are my brothers."

Within the Rome's music-going public there are mixed reactions to the music presented. Purists consider the entire project 'commercial', or 'bending over backwards to a public that no longer understands classical music and knows nothing about traditional music.' The younger public is enthusiastic about the mingling of rhythms, instruments and music traditions. However, even within the immigrant communities there are contradictions. A performer from Senegal says that he is happy to play with western groups using his traditional instruments and does so following 'western rules' since he does not want to 'downgrade' his own background and culture.

The history of music is that of a 'mongrel art form' taking inspiration and colour from whatever the wind blows in. For this reason it will be interesting to see where the Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio goes, or has gone, ten years from now.

Reference

Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS, ed. 2008. *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione Caritas/Migrantes*. Roma: Edizioni IDOS.