Alessandro Di Liegro

JAMILA AND THE OTHERS ...

The EU promoted the Year of Intercultural Dialogue as an instrument to assist European citizens, and all those living in the European Union, acquire the knowledge and aptitudes to enable them to deal with a more complex environment. At the same time, the term 'Intercultural Dialogue' was constantly used to increase the awareness of all those living in the European Union, that it is important to develop an active European citizenship that is open to the world, respectful of cultural diversity and based on common values.

Cultural Diversity is more than a 'buzz word' in Italy. At the beginning of the school year in autumn 2007, there were more than 400 000 foreign children in primary and junior schools testifying to the growing presence of children born to immigrant families living and working in Italy. A recent White Paper published by the Ministry for Education, University Studies and Research (MIUR) demonstrates that a new model of education is gradually developing in small towns and villages as well as in major cities and urban areas.

The presence of different ethnic groups and nationalities is a relatively new phenomenon in Italy and one for which the education system was very much unprepared. In the scholastic year 2007–08 non-Italian students represented 6,4 % of the entire scholastic population, equal to 547 133 units. Primary and junior schools teach 8 % of the entire school population and statistics show that in the last year alone, the number of immigrant children born in Italy, and therefore considered 'second-generation immigrants' represent 72,2 % of all children in kindergarten or infant schools and 41,1 % of those in primary schools. The largest group is from Romania, accounting for 16,15 % of all foreign children in primary and junior schools, followed by Albania, accounting for 14,84 % and Morocco, accounting for 13,28 %. These are all Mediterranean communities and in fact, most immigrants arrive in the southern part of Italy and travel towards the north. Unfortunately, official statistics also show that the majority of immigrant children have learning difficulties due to linguistic problems and social integration into Italian society.

Until recently, many teachers tried to 'integrate' foreign pupils into their classes and the traditional Italian teaching system without paying attention to their individual backgrounds. At the time of writing, reports from the Ministry of Education underlined that teachers were trying to exalt the origins of each child so that they realise that they are heirs to an important culture and history. An education for all children whereby the cultural diversity of everyone is respected and valued is clearly essential for society as a whole. Unfortunately, the Italian school system is still not fully prepared for this monumental change brought about by the increasing number of children from other parts of the Mediterranean, who must learn about European culture and history but will not have access to that of their families of origin.

In line with current Italian governmental policies, the *Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica* contends that all immigrant children have a right to learn about their own heritage and culture and not just that of their acquired country. Obviously, without new school texts this is an arduous task for all teachers, even for those particularly interested in intercultural exchange and dialogue.

THE PROJECT

Jamila and the others is a junior school textbook in three languages: Italian, English and Arabic[1] (Editore Colombo, Roma 2008), and it is the first of a series of volumes being prepared by the Fondazione centred upon the history and role of women making music in the Mediterranean[2]. The book describes those who, according to UNESCO and the UN, are the transmitters of all tangible and intangible culture and reflects the ongoing mission of the Foundation to obtain recognition for women's achievements in culture.

The *Jamila* research and editorial project began in 2004, in collaboration with musicologists, ethnomusicologists and researchers (men and women) from the countries, which historically and geographically constitute the Mediterranean: France, Spain, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Cyprus, Turkey, Greece, Albania, Italy.

1 In Italy, this includes schoolchildren aged ten to 14. However, in some private schools there are children who enter 'Middle School' at the age of eleven.

2 The *Jamila* Project includes studies and contributions from 17 different countries. The publication of a volume from this immense undertaking was originally planned for 2009 but will now take place in 2010. Many different international organisations and universities including the *Arab Academy* back the research project.

This project also received input from the network of the Foundation, *Arab Academy,* the *International Music Council*, and from many Ministries of Culture and universities.

Before the *Jamila* project was started, no music organisation (public or private) had undertaken similar research and certainly not about the presence and history of women musicians. The project is continuing and a volume of scholarly studies with contributions from 30 specialists will be published in mid 2010. Music is an adventure created by men and women and the sound of music goes wherever it will; it knows no frontiers.

Jamila, therefore, identifies a musical heritage common to all Mediterranean peoples while underlining the contributions made by women as creative musicians. It intends to raise the awareness of teachers and university professors, given their importance as facilitators, and underlines that without carefully researched, scholarly and musicological texts the transmission of culture is impossible.

THE SCHOOL BOOK

Although music is a part of Italian primary and junior school curricula[3] it tends to be oriented towards European classical music and this means that children born to Moroccan, Albanian or Turkish parents learn more about Rossini, Verdi and Mozart than about their own music. Few schools have facilities for the study of musical instruments, so children learn about these through illustrations in outdated Italian music history books. This is why *Jamila and the others* was written in three languages: Italian (the language spoken at school), English (the language that all children now study, of the Internet and the European Community) and Arabic (the language that many 'second-generation immigrants' only speak at home and within their communities). Each musical instrument is shown with its name in three languages. The book is beautifully illustrated with original drawings and is donated to the children with a special presentation (sometimes a concert, sometimes through PowerPoint illustrations) and naturally, they take the gift

3 Each region has a number of 'junior schools' that are specialised in music training and education. Regular musical tuition is not part of the normal state school curricula. With the exception of the music history teachers in the aforementioned junior schools, all other staff members are hired on a yearly contract basis. Until recently, a conservatoire diploma was the only academic title requested: All teachers now have to complete a teacher training course (at their own expense) which provides them with a professional 'patent' for the teaching of music in state schools.

home. This should encourage Italian parents to broaden their music knowledge and encourage immigrant families to learn more about their own history. It is to be hoped that immigrant children will take pride in their own roots and that young Italians will understand how much they have in common with all the other peoples living around the Mediterranean.

The Department for Public Education, University and Professional Training of the Lazio region financially sustained this first part of the *Jamila* project. Copies of the book are distributed through this department to the 'junior schools' in the region and it is hoped that others will be distributed throughout Italy in the course of the 2008–09 school year.

THE CONTENTS

Djamila or Jamila[4], the composer, musician and music director whose name has been used as the title of the entire project, also known as the 'Queen of the Quainat', was born in Medina, where she died in 725. Unlike other *quainat* (singing women and itinerant musicians in pre-Islamic times), she was born a free woman into the Banu Bahz tribe. After marriage, her home became a centre for all the musicians in Medina. She gave performances of her own music, taught singing, trained younger singers and instrumentalists and her pilgrimage to Mecca with 50 singing women was one of the great musical events of the Umayyad period. All the principal musicians, male and female, took part in this pilgrimage together with poets and music lovers. A series of musical festivities celebrated their arrival in Mecca and on their return home; Jamila was acclaimed the artistic sovereign of all musicians in Arabia.

The first professional musicians in the Mediterranean were women who worked as priestesses in the city of Ur, directors of music ensembles in Asia Minor and as sacred songstresses in Egypt. The sound of their voices accompanied the harvesting of grain, the arrival of the new moon and welcomed the men home from hunting. Women left prayers inscribed in cuneiform characters on stone tablets and on papyrus rolls, and all of this over 3 000 years ago …

Although the Egyptians have remained famous for their architecture, the pyramids and the tombs of the Pharaohs, music was also very important in daily life and considered a gift of the Gods to such an extent that many deities are depicted holding musical instruments. Music was essential for rituals in the temples, for festivities in honour of the kings, and the cutting of grain. After one of the longest periods of drought in the ancient world in the 13th century

4 There are many different ways in which the name Jamila can be rendered in Italian and English: Djamilah, Djamileh, Gamila', Gamilah. The Foundation chose to use the name Jamila in order to avoid confusion.

before Christ, many Sumerian people emigrated to Egypt taking with them women musicians, singers and dancers. These had little difficulty in finding work in the temples.

Within the Roman Empire, singing and instrumental music were part of the rituals in the temples where one could hear the *lyre* and the *tibia*. As we can see from numerous bas-reliefs and frescoes, women participated actively in musical life. The historian Titus Livius recorded: "The Pontificate arranged for three choirs each with nine girl singers to take part in the celebrations in honour of the goddess Juno" (Guidobaldi 1992). Gaius Sallustius Crispus (34–86 BC) thus described one Roman matron: "She plays the cetra and dances even more elegantly than that which should be normal for an honest woman. I eventually had to scold Sempronia not because she did not know how to dance, but because she danced too well."(Lugd. Batav. et Roterod 1665)

In all earlier Mediterranean religions, women held responsibility as priestesses or vestals for rituals and ceremonies. In Christianity, the ecclesiastical hierarchy excluded women. An epistle from Saint Paul to the Corinthians states quite clearly that, in Church, women should remain silent: "[T]he women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says" (1st Corinthians 14: 34).

During the first centuries of Christianity, women sang in church and were musical directors, but could not enter the presbytery during liturgical celebrations. They did, however, participate in the performance of sacred music in places other than churches.

We have little information about music and its practice in the pre-Islamic period but know that it was considered a woman's profession and that the style of the music was similar to that which was popular in Mesopotamia, Syria and Persia. Sixth-century poets described the dances of Virgins around the *Kaaba*, who were accompanied by hand clapping and percussion instruments. The seventh-century poet and musician Yunus Ben Sulaimān al-Kātib wrote books on music theory and history (the first in the Arab world) including one about girl singers *kitab al-qiyān.* The great Arab music tradition was born shortly before the arrival of Islam, and at the time of Muhammad, the *qainat* played an important role in society. Music probably reached its finest moment under Abbasid rule (750–909). The most famous singing schools were those of Mecca and Medina. The Arab tradition of women's orchestras arrived in Spain (Andalusia) and influenced the performance of music in the Muslim and Christian courts.

Music schools for women were common in the Mediterranean. The Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Spaniards all believed that it was useful for their female slaves to have a good musical education so that they could have background music for feasts and dinners. However, it would be incorrect to assume that only slave girls received a good musical education.

During the research for *Jamila*, much material referring to the education of nobles and well-born women was found and will be presented in a forthcoming scholarly edition. During the Arab invasion of Spain there were many well-known musicians (some born into the wealthiest families) representing the three religious communities: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. In El-Andalus, every palace had an orchestra, and while Christian orchestras consisted of men and women, those in the Muslim courts were women only, in Arabic *sitāra al-mugannyyat*.

The characteristics that made Arab-Andalusian poetry and music so popular, especially in the courts of Cordoba and Granada, can be found in a poetic form that flourished in southern France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in the region known as Provence, and remembered as one of the most important artistic movements in medieval Europe: That of the *trobadors* and *trobairitz* (female troubadours).

From the 13th century, Italy had an expanding number of women composers, singers and instrumentalists who were daughters of professional musicians. The courts of Florence, Mantua, Milan, Ferrara and Urbino became important cultural centres and here all the children born and living in the courts (nobles, courtiers, and servants) took part in music making. The courts often employed famous composers and musicians to train their own performers and give lessons to the women of the courts. Since the men were often away for political reasons, or at war, the wives and daughters left at home took over the organisation of festivities, entertainment and the organisation and performance of music.

THE WOMEN WHO CREATED MUSIC

Jamila and the others begins with a description of music making in Sumerian temples and moves on (with the biblical migration of Abraham from the city of Ur) to Egypt, and then around the Mediterranean, describing the music of women in Roman times, Byzantium, the growth and development of Arab music up until the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, and the blossoming of courtly music in Provence and medieval Italy. The authors describe the common music history of the Mediterranean, a history that exalts modal music (even today) and has seen the birth and development of many important musical instruments (harps, flutes, cymbals, *oud*, violins), not to forget the women (princesses or nobles, as well as many talented slave girls) who also 'created' music. For the first time, many women musicians are finally 'visible' in a school textbook where they are presented by name and with information about their musical activities.

The short paragraphs below are taken from the book itself (Adkins Chiti and Carboni 2008)[5]:

> **Enheduanna,** 2285 approx. to 2250 BC, is the first composer and poetess in history. *Enheduanna* means high priestess of the goddess Inanna. Her official home was the *giparu,* a series of buildings in the centre of the city of Ur, in a temple dedicated to Inanna. Enheduanna's hymns to Inanna represent the first human description of a deity described as the "*most powerful amongst the Gods because She renders their decisions active*." She left three very long poetic hymns and forty-two sacred hymns for use in temple liturgies.
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> Egyptian paintings and sculptures show women dancing and playing musical instruments: professionals (often foreigners) and talented aristocratic amateurs. They worked in the courts of the Pharaohs as performers and directors of musical bands and in the temples as *sacred songstresses* or *songstresses of Amon,* the god who protected the city of Thebes. **Iti**, born during the fifth dynasty in the reign of Neferefre, also a sacred songstress, was one of the most celebrated music directors in Egyptian history. Famous in life, after death merited an important tomb in a cemetery for nobles, near Gizeh. Iti is shown with a hand over one ear as if she wanted to be sure that she was singing the right note, while beating time with the other hand for the famous harpist, **Henkenu** (2563–2423 BC), accompanying her.
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> **Miriam,** sister of Aaron and Moses, born 1200 years before Christ, has been described as a singer and a dancer who played a tambourine – *Miriam Toph* – and was the Bible's first female choir director. When Moses led his people towards the Promised Land, he had to cross the Red Sea. Miraculously this opened to allow fleeing families to cross and safe on the other side Miriam picked up her tambourine and, with all the other women, intoned: *"Sing to the Lord because he has triumphed; horses and chariots have been drowned in the sea".*
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> Among the many Roman matrons who wrote poetry, composed music and danced, the foremost was probably **Calpurnia** (born in Como in 86 AD), the daughter of Calpurnus Fabatus. She married the famous lawyer and writer Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus (61/62 AD–113 AD), who left documents and letters describing

5 This abstract is taken directly from the children's book *Jamila and the others …* and there are no footnotes or bibliographic references in this volume.

private and public life in Rome during the first century, and in which he made frequent reference to the music composed by his wife and which she performed on a *pandura* (double flute).

Polygnota, was the daughter of the Theban harpist Socrates who, in 186 BC, travelled to Delphi to participate in the opening ceremony of the Pythian Games. The opening was delayed and a competition for the best musician took its place. Polygnota won first prize playing the *chelys* and earned 500 drachmas. She and her descendants were granted Delphic citizenship, the right to consult the Oracle, to speak first in a lawsuit, to live tax-free, to own a private house and to have a seat in the front row for the games.

Kasia, Ikasia or Cassia (810, Constantinople, to 843 or 867 AD) was a noble courtier who did not marry Emperor Theophilos (because she had too strong a character), and preferred to become a nun. Kassia wrote 261 secular verses in the forms of *epigrams*, *gnomic verses*, and *moral sentences.* She is the only woman featured in a *Triodion,* a Lenten liturgical service book printed in Venice in 1601, containing portraits of leading hymnographers. In 843 she founded her own monastery, on the Xerolophos, the seventh hill of Constantinople, where she lived for the rest of her life composing music for religious ceremonies and writing liturgical and secular verses.

Badhl was a slave, a *qainat,* born in 820 AD, in Medina and educated in Basra by Ibrahim al-Mosuli*,* the most eminent musician of the period. She was owned first by Ja'far Ibn al-Hadi and then by Mohammed al-Amin. She had a repertoire of over 30 000 songs and compiled a collection of 12 000 pieces of music for Ali, Sheik of Hishām*,* for which the latter paid 10 000 silver coins. Badhl accompanied her singing with the *oud,* and in a competition with Prince Ibrahīm ibn al-Mahdī*,* sang 100 original songs. She was killed during a concert when a guest from the Tabanistan hit her on the head with his *oud.*

Andalusia was already important during the Roman domination when it was known by its Latin name *Baetica,* and the women singers and dancers from this region were justly famous. During the long Arab conquest, some performers were so outstanding that their names travelled far beyond Andalusia. They were intelligent and well-versed in music as well as arithmetic, poetry, painting and the Koran. Emir Abd al-Rahmān II (822–852) founded a school, as remarkable as

that of Medina, and employed many women musicians in his court including **Qalam**, who was not Arab but Basque. She originally studied music in Medina and was applauded as a writer, poetess and historian. Many splendid musicians worked with her including two slaves who had belonged to the Caliph of Baghdad: **Fal** and **Ilm**. These musicians came to be known as 'the Medina Three'.

Among the large number of historically recorded troubadours, the names of only twenty-one women have been found. One is **Countess Beatrice of Diaz**, who lived between Provence and Lombardy (Italy) in the second half of the eleventh century. The only complete work of hers with words and music is a song (*canso*) *A chantar.* **Maria of France,** a contemporary of Beatrice of Diaz, was famous for her collection of *Twelve Lays* celebrating magic and love and is considered the first woman writer in the French language. Another *trobairitz*, **Azalaïs de Porcairagues,** (Portiragnes 1140–1177) is recorded as being: *"kind and gentle a woman who knew how to be a troubadour and write beautiful songs".*

Antonia Pulci (1452–1501) was the daughter of a Florentine banker and the wife of the poet Bernardo Pulci. She composed sacred dramas or miracle plays and lauds produced by Religious Confraternities and Convents. Of the three remaining *"miracle plays"* for which Antonia wrote both text and the music, we only have a date for *Santa Domitilla*, 1483. She also wrote *San Francesco, Santa Guglielma, La Rappresentazione del figliuol prodigo, Sant' Antonio Abate,Festa di Rosanna,* and *Santa Teodora.* After her husband's death, Antonia retired to the convent she had built, and lived there for the rest of her life with a group of Augustinian laywomen.

CONCLUSIONS

Jamila and the others was first presented during the Ministry of Culture's opening ceremony for the Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Successively it was well advertised in the national press, on radio and television and through many websites (including those for women's studies, intercultural dialogue and music history) and was also distributed to junior schools in the Lazio region. It was also the central and starting point for a number of symposiums and meetings where teachers, psychologists and intercultural workers discussed, evaluated and commented on the contents and usefulness for their own syllabi. The volume also inspired a large number of public

concerts from November 2007,[6] which included those given in Rome in December 2008 by the Canadian ethnomusicologist Judith Cohen.[7]

8 000 copies of the book were distributed free of charge to middle school children in the Lazio region and a further 1 000 copies were sent to music academies and conservatoires in Europe, the Middle East and in North America.

Feedback arriving at the Foundation confirms that there are, unfortunately, no other junior music schoolbooks covering the same period, no multilingual music textbooks in Italy – and we assume that the same is true elsewhere in Europe and lastly, there are no school books mentioning women as musicians and creators of music.

Italian school music textbooks are extremely old-fashioned in content, layout and quality; they feature traditional illustrations (usually photographs from museums) and have been written without reference to the music traditions of the Mediterranean.

Some very simple research in the libraries of ten junior schools in the Lazio region (with good reputations for the quality of the music education offered), shows that current music history texts begin with polyphony and end with the operas of Puccini and Mascagni. From what was seen we assume that junior schoolchildren receive the same information as that given to their grandparents. When the book is presented in schools,[8] children are encouraged to ask questions or make comments and it is interesting to note that all learn to play

6 The first concert planned as a sort of 'anticipation of the book project' was that presented in November 2007, as part of the ExTra Project, in the Historic Library of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in Rome, to celebrate the visit to Italy of the Director General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura. Medieval and Renaissance Music from the Persian and Arab worlds was programmed alongside the music composed by early Renaissance Italian women musicians. The same concert (together with an *anteprima* of the book) was repeated in schools in the Lazio Region and for the *Centro delle Donne*, in Rome.

7 Judith Cohen, an internationally-renowned ethnomusicologist, consultant and contributor to the *Jamila* project is on the faculty of York University, Toronto (Music Dept) and General Editor, Spanish Recordings, of the Alan Lomax Collection. She presented women's music from the Sephardic tradition from all the countries around the Mediterranean using hand percussion (derbukka, pandero, adufe); oud and viela. When her concert was repeated in a Roman 'junior school' the children were enthusiastic because, finally, they could see the instruments presented in the book, and hear them played.

8 The presentation of the book in schools, universities, teachers training colleges, training forums for intercultural workers etc, is ongoing. A large number of presentations will be made in 2009, and it is highly possible that the book will be reprinted for distribution to other Italian regions.

western classical music. Many of the children from immigrant backgrounds say they have music lessons or learn an instrument because "their parents want them to"[9] but that it would be "good to know something about their own music". North African children, in particular, have reacted in a very positive way to the book – many 'second-generation immigrants' were excited to see that "their countries" are part of history and that the book is in Arabic, "their language".[10] When the book is presented in schools with a high ratio of different ethnic groups, the questions and reactions of the children, and their comments, are even more interesting.[11] One of the frequently asked questions regards the development of musical instruments; another is "how do you play that one?" Teachers have subsequently commented that the illustrations in the book, combined with instruments belonging to the schools (guitar, small percussion instruments, recorders), have helped them to underline that, in the Mediterranean at least, there is a history which is common to all peoples. In one school, there was a long conversation between the musicians and the children, who wanted to know why catgut was still used. Other frequently asked questions were about the women themselves: When did they make music, where did they sing and play, which instruments did they play, who wrote the words, how was the music transmitted, how did it get from one country to another?[12] Interestingly too, the questions were asked by boys as well as girls.

There is obviously much that could be done along this path and it is to be hoped that *Jamila and the others* will be translated into other languages and travel around Europe.[13]

9 The remarks made by the children interviewed in the framework of the research have been placed in quotation marks.

10 During one of Judith Cohen's concerts, in a large junior school in central Rome, her daughter, Tamara, sang a Sephardic wedding song from Morocco and 'ululated'; she then quickly found herself with an 'ululating chorus' as children from Maghreb joined in.

11 In one school in central Rome with 47 different ethnic groups present, children from Latin and South America and from Asia wanted to know when the Foundation would be writing a book about 'their music and traditions'.

12 Teachers noted that this kind of question had never been made in class before, even though children were introduced to many male composers and musicians.

13 The copyright for the book belongs to the *Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica*, but the Foundation would be very happy to consider publishing the book in different languages.

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