

## Sicily

### Navigating Responses to Global Cultural Patterns

*Sergio Bonanzinga*

Traditional Sicilian culture, from its language to cooking, from its working techniques to ritual celebrations, is the result of a stratification of elements attributable to each of the diverse ethnic stocks which in turn dominated this great island, located in the centre of the Mediterranean. Phoenicians, Ancient Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Islamic Berbers, Normans, Swabians, Frenchmen, and Spaniards endowed it with a uniquely intricate heritage. As Buttitta (1995, 3) observed, the various occupying cultures, rather than simply canceling each other out, superimposed themselves palimpsest-fashion in layers “. . . here impermeable and there interfused through a process of osmosis.” Such was the influence of historical and cultural continuity—Sicily, after all, was the cradle of both Greek bucolic poetry and of the Italian vernacular—that interaction rather than separation has characterized relations between social strata (hegemonic-subordinate, rural-urban) and mediums of cultural transmission (oral-written). Throughout the island, folk customs are the result of a continual interplay of ancient and modern genres, coexistent in diverse sociocultural milieux. With respect to the music, Ottavio Tiby (1957, p. 23) remarked on the mingled waves of the great river of tradition, “. . . where distinctive musical forms of expression succeeded each other, and the populace listened in turn to the Greek *nomos*, to Byzantine hymns, to the Arab *maqam*, to the courtly *canzons* of the Provençal troubadors, to the Minnesänger’s *lied*, up unto the opulent polyphony of the fifteen hundreds!” It is a river that yields no melodic currents traceable to the pure sources imagined by the pioneers of comparative ethnomusicology; but which offered distinct possibilities for exploration in the tangled vortices of its currents, as it continues to do.

Until the 1950s, production activities and lifestyles in Sicily still had traditional features. Farmers harvested wheat manually during long summer

days, and then threshed it with the help of animals. Fishing, sheep-breeding, salt production, and mineral extraction techniques had undergone minor changes since ancient times. Rites and ceremonies still marked the phases of community life (birth, childhood, marriage, death), as well as the passing of seasons. Bad road conditions made it difficult to be in contact with the most isolated communities, often preserving peculiar customs. Widespread illiteracy and the limited influence of the mass media (in Italy, television started broadcasting in 1954) favored the persistence of an extraordinarily rich oral tradition (songs, fairy tales, music, dramas, beliefs, etc.). News was still spread by municipal drummers, and the most effective advertising method was the itinerant sellers' and workers' modulated shouting. Stories of French Paladins were staged in marionette theaters or narrated in public squares by ballad singers in the presence of an interested audience. Religious events were celebrated all year round by blind street musicians who specialized in a sacred repertoire and performed inside private homes in exchange for money. This world did not differ much from the one described in folklore literature by such authors as Lionardo Vigo, Giuseppe Pitrè, Salvatore Salomone Marino, Corrado Avolio, and Serafino Amabile Guastella. On the musical side, Alberto Favara, a musician and composer, directed Palermo's Conservatoire and provided the broadest Italian folk music repertoire written on staff paper: a *corpus* of 1090 Sicilian melodies collected and partly analyzed between 1895 and 1923 but not published in a complete edition until 1957 (Carpitella 1973; Carapezza 1980; Bonanzinga 1995a).

The reasons for such a substantial permanence of the folk universe are related to the social and economic processes occurring in Sicily in the first half of the 1900s. Since the unification of the Kingdom of Italy in the 1860s, deep contradictions emerged to characterize the relationship between a rapidly industrialized North, and a languishing rural South still subjugated to the tough rules of large landed estates. Suffice it to note that, in 1946, around one thousand Sicilian families still owned almost one third of the entire territory, whereas hundreds of thousands of farmers eked a living at subsistence levels (Renda, 1990, III: 200). Not to mention the very hard working conditions in sulphur mines, where children were employed without any form of control; or the tough situation of fishers, who ran enormous risks without being covered by any welfare schemes or professional guarantees.

Liberal tendencies derived from partisan and anti-fascist fighting involved Sicily only partially, whereas a reactionary separatism grew stronger after the Second World War, characterized by armed banditry. One of the most obscure pages of Sicilian history deals with the massacre of Portella Della Ginestra on May 1, 1947, when the men of Salvatore Giuliano's gang shot at farmers gathered to celebrate Labor Day. Farmers opposed the

still-prevalent large-landed-estate system and were in open conflict with the hegemonic ranks that tried to keep their privileges with the support of the separatist movement. With the backing of leftist parties and labor unions, fighting for agricultural reforms and work contracts started, and continued, for about twenty years. Thus, in the 1950s, a difficult and overdue democratization process was set in motion, which would eventually lead to the breakdown of the feudalistic order. Yet, the crisis of the old regime did not induce the much-desired passage to a modern economy based on a revival of agriculture, livestock, and handicraft activities along with well-balanced industrialization and qualified tourism. Instead, an acute crisis of traditionally productive sectors took place, which drove people to emigrate again to northern Italy and abroad.

In this climate of strong political and social tensions, intellectuals started to denounce the subordinate classes' existential and material straits. A new sympathy for southern Italy's folklore emerged in literature, painting, and cinema as well as in sociological and ethnological scholarship. The battles for the land, along with the Sicilian farming unions demands, have been described by Ignazio Buttitta in vernacular poetry (Buttitta 1997, 1999), whose verses were often sung in public by *cantastorie* (ballad singers) as Ciccio Busacca and Vito Santangelo: *Lu pani si chiama pani* ("They call bread bread," 1954); *Lamentu pi la morti di Turiddu Carnivali* ("Lament for the death of Salvatore Carnevale," 1956); *La vera storia di Turiddu Giulianu* ("The true story of Salvatore Giuliano," 1963). While Renato Guttuso, Salvatore Fiume, and Giuseppe Migneco painted the anguished face of a Sicily in transformation, neorealist films featured social commitment, as in Luchino Visconti's *La terra trema* (*The Earth Trembles*, 1948), dedicated to the desperate lives of fisherfolk from the village of Aci Trezza; Roberto Rossellini's *Stromboli terra di Dio* (*Stromboli, God's Earth*, 1949), depicted an archaic way of life in the Aeolian Islands; Pietro Germi's *In nome della legge* (*In the Name of the Law*, 1949), dealt with the difficult issue of the mafia; and Germi's *Il cammino della speranza* (*Journey of Hope*, 1950), described the tragic living conditions of emigrants. Documentaries also touched on aspects of traditional culture (celebrating the work of peasants, fisherfolk, and miners; puppet theater): These were the documentaries produced by the "Panaria film" of Palermo (1947–1948), and directed by Mario Verdone (1954) and Vittorio De Seta (1955; now reissued in a beautiful DVD-box set). Subsequently, the first sociologic and ethnologic studies were carried out, in which political militancy was often parallel to the needs of documentary filmmakers. In Sicily, credit for the revival of anthropologic subjects at the university, which starts at the beginning of the century when Pitre begins to teach folk psychology at the University of Palermo, should mainly

be given to Giuseppe Cocchiara and his followers, Giuseppe Bonomo, Antonino Buttitta (son of the poet Ignazio), Aurelio Rigoli, and Elsa Guggino.

In Italy's social and cultural postwar picture, the Centro Nazionale Studi di Musica Popolare (National Center of Folk Music Studies)—since 1989 named Archivi di Etnomusicologia (Ethnomusicology Archives), a non-Sicilian institution based in Rome—focused on ethnological and musical research, sponsoring the first surveys using tape recorders. Musicologist Giorgio Nataletti was appointed director of the Center, which was established in 1948 on the joined initiative of Santa Cecilia National Academy and RAI National Radio Corporation. Since it was established, and until the late 1960s, the scholars at the Center worked intensively, producing one of Italy's most extensive music and song databases. It is no coincidence that such research began in Sicily, a region that drew several collectors of folk song texts and music. Musicologist Tiby from Palermo actually made the first field trip, with the aim of reconciling the content of Favara's *corpus* with sound. From 1951 to 1953, Tiby, who was Favara's son-in-law, carried out research mainly in the provinces of Palermo and Trapani. In 1954, Diego Carpitella and Alan Lomax continued his work, undergoing the first extensive fieldwork of the musical folklore of Italy's regions. Some of the songs collected on Sicily have been included in a recording published in 1957, but a wide selection of these recordings is now available on a CD as a part of the "Italian Treasury" collection, edited by Goffredo Plastino (see Carpitella-Lomax *cd.* 2000).

A new research team was organized in 1955, with the participation of Italian scholars (Giorgio Nataletti, Ottavio Tiby, Giuseppe D'Anna) and non-Italian ones (Maguy Andral, Paul Collaer, Claude Marcel-Dubois, Marius Schneider). Their main objective was to verify the reliability of Favara's *corpus* and to fill in its gaps; the recording was done mainly in eastern Sicily. That year, due to the untimely death of Tiby (who had supervised the research together with Nataletti), Collaer was entrusted with the task of processing all the collected materials. With the exception of a "preliminary note" appearing in 1960, the research results was not published in full until 1981.

In the 1960s, besides some monographic research campaigns carried out by Antonio Pasqualino (on ballad singers), Leo Levi and Giuseppe Valentini (on the Greek-Albanian liturgy at Martorana church in Palermo), and Diego Carpitella (on musical traditions of the island of Pantelleria), the most thorough and consistent collaboration with the Center was implemented by a Sicilian teacher, Antonino Uccello. Uccello recorded hundreds of tracks in all of Sicily's provinces between 1960 and 1969, and on one occasion in collaboration with James McNeish, an English scholar who edited an LP featuring a selection of songs and instrumentals (McNeish *d.* 1965). The preponderance of Uccello's work during the twenty-year project (1948–1969) stands out: a

good 920 tracks recorded, out of about 1400 (Nataletti, 1970; RAI documentations and studies 1977, 403–97). Uccello also put together two LPs containing a selection of the collected materials, including prison songs, ritual songs (at Christmas, Holy Week, St. John, St. Joseph, etc.), work songs (peasants, salt workers), and instrumental music (Uccello *d.*1974, *d.*1976; reissued on compact disc with the editing of Gaetano Pennino in 2004).

Two other institutions based outside Sicily promoted ethnomusicological surveys and research after 1962: the Ethnic Linguistic-Musical Archive of the State Record Library in Rome (Biagiola 1986) and the Institute Ernesto De Martino of Milan (Coggiola 1986). The State Record Library released compilations made between 1965 and 1970 by Antonio Pasqualino (puppet theater, bagpipe players, and ballad singers), by Aurelio Rigoli (variants of the ballad of the “Baroness from Carini”), and by Elsa Guggino (carter, peasant, and Holy Week songs). The studies promoted by Institute De Martino were carried out during 1962 to 1973 with the collaboration of several researchers (among them, Gianni Bosio, Danilo Dolci, and Michele L. Straniero), aimed at documenting musical expressions connecting work and ritual and the ballad-singers’ performances.

In 1970, the Folkstudio Association was established in Palermo, on the initiative of Elsa Guggino, the first Sicilian institution established with the express intent of documenting the ethnomusical traditions of the island and making them available to the general public (Guggino 1995, 2004). Among its most noteworthy results were the improvement of field research (now chiefly involving Sicilian scholars) and the publication of books (especially the series *Archivio delle tradizioni popolari siciliane*) and recordings (Guggino *d.*1970, *d.*1974). In the 1970s, the Folkstudio was even supported by a collaborative venture between the institutes of Anthropological Sciences (Professors Giuseppe Bonomo, Antonino Buttitta, and Elsa Guggino) and History of Music (Professors Paolo Emilio Carapezza and Antonino Titone) of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy at the University of Palermo. In the meantime, the scientific value of folk music research was being increasingly acknowledged in Italy, and ethnomusicology was officially recognized among academic subjects through the establishment of professorships at the universities of Rome (1976) and Bologna (1980), respectively, held by Diego Carpitella and Roberto Leydi. In this new academic context, research work carried out by Guggino has been particularly important as she was the first modern scholar to record on magnetic tape and analyze the devotional repertoire of the blind singers of Palermo (the *orbi*) as well as her further remarkable studies regarding the songs of carters (*carritteri*), salt gatherers (*salinari*), and tunafishers (*tunnaroti*) (Guggino 2004). In addition to training a new generation of young ethnomusicologists in the 1980s (such as Girolamo Garofalo, Ignazio Mac-

chiarella, and Gaetano Pennino), the Folkstudio was very active in the folk music revival.

Until 1970, only two Sicilian folk-singers stand out in this field: Giuseppe Ganduscio and Rosa Balistreri. Ganduscio—born in Ribera in the province of Agrigento in 1925 from a family of landlords—was a militant pacifist; his beautiful voice is only preserved on a few records (micro LPs) published between 1962 and 1964, as he died prematurely in 1963 (Marazza 1992). Much more lasting and influential was Balistreri's contribution. Rosa was born in Licata (also in the province of Agrigento) in 1927 from a family of poor peasants. She started her career in 1967, working in theatre with Dario Fo before releasing published ten LPs (1967–1985; all reissued on CDs by the Teatro del Sole label in Palermo from 1996 to 2007). She died in 1990, almost forgotten by the public and the media (Cantavenera 1992). It is relevant to note that both these folk-singers have been greatly inspired by researchers in the fields of ethnomusicology and musicology, such as Roberto Leydi (who promoted Ganduscio's commercial recordings) and Paolo Emilio Caparezza (who taught Rosa many of the songs included in Favara's *corpus* by playing them on the piano).

Ganduscio and Balistreri have been great interpreters of the Sicilian folk song, though they mainly based their performances on written sources (particularly on the above mentioned Favara's *corpus*). The Folkstudio started to propose a totally new formula in its shows: on the stage were scholars, professionals trained in collecting and studying folk music (among them, Elsa Guggino, Fatima Giallombardo, and Salvatore D'Onofrio), together with singers belonging to a real folk context: carters, peasants, and blind street musicians. Although Folkstudio did not publish LPs at the time (a selection of songs were not released on CD until 1993), but its work has given a great impulse to the folk music revival in Sicily, especially from the perspective of a deep knowledge of the oral tradition. In spite of its strategic "invention" since the 1920s—at the time of a rising fascist nationalism—many "folkloric groups" wore "rural" costumes and performed more or less "authentic" songs and dances.

#### FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL FOLK SONG IN SICILY

Among the general features of Sicilian folk song, the text can be either monostrophic, as the *canzuna* ("song") and the *sturnellu* (*stornello* also called *ciuri*, "flower"); or polistrophic, as the *storia* ("story"), a narrative song about various subjects. Sometimes "storia" is in the form of the *cuntrastu* ("contrast"), which contains satirical content or an erotic intention (like the medieval poem

“Rosa fresca aulentissima” by Cielo d’Alcamo). The performing styles can be monodic (with or without instrumental accompaniment) or poliphonic, and very often take their name from a town or a particular trade: *â bbaccillunisa*, *â santaluciota*, *â ciuminisana*, *â nicusiota* (“in the style of” Barcellona, Santa Lucia del Mela, Fiumedinisi, Nicosia); *â carrittera*, *â surfarara*, *â viddanisca*, *â furnarisca* (“in the style of” carters, sulfur-miners, peasants, bakers). Both written and oral sources provide many connections between singing styles and trades or places; similar to practices in ancient Greece, where the *nomoi* (melodic modes) reflected the cultural identity of different peoples (Dorian, Aeolian, Phrygian, etc.).

The melodic structures can be modal or tonal. Modal singing is obviously more archaic and it is specially linked to solo vocal performances: from lullabies to funeral laments, from carters’ to peasants’ *canzuni*. Even poliphonic songs (both religious and profane) can have a modal melody sung by one soloist (sometimes by two leading voices), but a choir sustains it with varying harmonies that coincide with intermediate and final cadences, and employing a principle basically derived from procedures typical of liturgical chant. Tonal songs are mainly performed with the accompaniment of such instruments as the guitar, violin, and diatonic accordion (*organettu*). A frequently reoccurring element in different vocal styles of Sicilian repertoire is a technique of “full-throated” singing where sounds are produced in head-voice, a technique similar to that found in numerous other rural traditions of the Mediterranean.

The *canzuna* is normally consists of eight hendecasyllables with alternating rhymes (and which is why it is also called *ottava siciliana*); however, it is possible to find *canzuni* with texts containing either a lesser number of lines (four, six) or more (but rarely more than twelve). The subject matter of the texts deals with all aspects of human life (from the cradle to the tomb), and the singing can have varied functions (serenading, entertainment, devotion, on a job). *Canzuni* are sung, today as in the past, by people of all social levels, but with a difference: the same *canzuna* can be sung in the carters’ style (*â carrittera*), with a binary modal melody rhythmically free, repeated for each couplet of the text with a precious melismatic ornamentation, or according to a tonal melody accompanied by guitar, with a regular rhythm and very little ornamentation.

*Sturnellu* is composed of tercets or quatrains of hendecasyllables, dealing most often with aspects of love, including satyrs. *Sturnelli* tonal melodies are almost always performed with a characteristic instrumental accompaniment of chord instruments or diatonic accordion. The tradition of improvised *sturnelli* tournaments is still practiced, especially in the province of Messina, for Carnival or different festive occasions (including parties organized by shepherds during the shearing season).

The *storia* typically belongs to the repertoire of professional ballad singers. In twentieth century Sicily, there were two different kinds of singers that specialized in narrative songs: the so called *orbi* ("blind"), who used to perform on guitar and violin the lives and miracles of the saints within the houses of devout families; and the *cantastorii* ("story-singers"), who traveled throughout Sicily and who sung mainly about "happened events"—such as the crimes of the mafia and bandits, sensational murders, or disasters—in the public squares and village fairs, with a self-accompaniment on guitar as well as depicting scenes of each story on a big painted banner. As it was for the broadside ballads of the past, even the Sicilian *storii* were composed in a written form: sometimes the same singers were also poets (*pueti-cantastorii*); otherwise, a vernacular poet was requested to write a particular text (we mentioned the collaboration of Ignazio Buttitta with Ciccio Busacca and Vito Santangelo, but another famous case of co-operation was between the *cantastorie* Orazio Strano and the poet Turiddu Bella). Each stanza can have four, six, or eight lines with eleven or nine syllables; rhymes can be alternate or in pairs. Different meters are associated to a standard number of tonal tunes orally transmitted. It is rare for a new tune to be adopted specifically for a new *storia*. While the last *orbi* disappeared in the 1980s, some *cantastorii* are still active, adapting their performances to contemporary social and political reality.

Another genre of songs still very much practiced in Sicily are the so called *arii* ("airs") and *canzunetti* ("canzonets"). These songs are composed by middle-upper class urban authors (poets and musicians) in a written form, usually with a piano or guitar accompaniment. The vernacular texts deal with erotic, satirical, or parodic subjects. The metrical structure is based on short lines (from five to eight syllables) connected in quatrains or double quatrains. The tunes are strictly tonal and very easy to sing. This repertoire spread out in the eighteenth century and soon attracted the attention of foreign travelers (Carapezza 1977, 1978; Bonanzinga 1989). During the 1800s this semi-art repertoire extended to the *rumanzi*: compositions with the same poetic and musical structure of the sophisticated "romanza" but with a Sicilian text. The well known *Siciliana* from Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* follows this fashion (Plastino 1993), and enjoys a strong following throughout Sicily: In 1992, in a small village near Agrigento, I filmed an old woman threshing wheat with a stick while singing Mascagni's *Siciliana* (Bonanzinga 1995b).

Musicians Giuseppe Burgio Villafiorita and Giovanni Paolo Frontini started after 1870 to arrange folk songs, taking inspiration mainly from the *arii* and *canzunetti* repertoire. They were imitated in the early 1900s by other authors, such as Gaetano Emanuele Calì, Francesco Pastura, and Carmelo Giacchino (Bonanzinga 1995a). Though *arii*, *canzunetti*, and *rumanzi*, together with the lively rhythm of the *tarantella*, the cheerful *sturnelli* and the nostalgic



*canzuni* sung on tonal tunes, have been the core repertoire of the “folkloric groups” from their first appearance in the 1920s, these “author-songs” widely circulated even among Sicilian peasants, but according to the rules of the traditional performing style (Pennino 1985).

This singing “style,” deeply rooted in the ancient Sicilian peasant, shepherd, and fisher cultures, reveals formal features that do not tally with the aesthetic principles of the middle-upper classes of the Western world. It is not that these “rough Sicilian harmonies” disappointed the northern European aristocratic travelers who from the time of the *grand tour* reached Sicily hoping to find there the idealized atmosphere of Arcadia. They actually preferred the *arii*, *canzuni*, and *canzunetti* that were written by poets like Giovanni Meli and Domenico Tempio and arranged for piano (or guitar) by professional musicians: songs much more suitable for a bourgeois salon in comparison with the “full-throated” modal singing more fitting to the open spaces of the countryside.

As observed by ethnomusicologist Diego Carpitella, Sicily (as with other Italian regions) boasts two different “ranges” of folk music: one, more ancient, can be defined as “rural”; the other, much more recent, “artisan-urban” (Carpitella 1973). To many people around the world, this artisan-urban repertoire, derived from semi-art songs and dances, epitomizes “Sicilian folk music.” The same repertoire started in fact to circulate globally with Sicilian emigrants, and especially in the United States, as the 78 rpm records market clearly shows (Fugazzotto-Sarica *cd*.1999).

#### A DISCUSSION WITH CARMINE COPPOLA

Even if these Sicilian author-songs never reached the universal success of the so called *canzone napoletana* (Neapolitan song), we have to recognize that they gained a wide popularity in the first half of the twentieth century. I distinctly realized how much this repertoire was beloved by Sicilian-Americans in the fall of 1989, when I happened to meet Carmine Coppola, father of Francis Ford Coppola, and composer of, among other things, a portion of the soundtrack of *The Godfather* movie trilogy (1972; *Part II*, 1974; *Part III*, 1990). Coppola was in Palermo while the crew were shooting scenes of the third film. He wanted to meet a Sicilian ethnomusicologist in order to obtain information about several musical passages he wanted to use in the soundtrack. We broadly discussed his artistic contribution to *The Godfather*, and in particular the kind of music listened to, and produced by, Sicilian emigrants in the United States. Carmine Coppola was a good musician—he was first flute in the NBC Symphony Orchestra of New York; and, himself the son

of Italian emigrants (from a Lucanian village), he knew the emigrant's world well. We had an interesting discussion; he stated the philological precision of the musical choices he made in the three films, which mirrored, in turn, the real diffusion among Sicilian emigrants of songs by unknown authors such as "Mi votu e mi rivotu" ("I Keep on Turning Round," a beautiful love-*canzuna* collected in 1870 by Giuseppe Pitrè); "A lu mercatu" ("To the Market Square," a typical children's rhyme); "Lu sciccareddu" ("The Little Donkey," about a poor peasant who has lost his favorite animal); "C'è la luna mmenzu u mari" ("The Moon Shines over the Sea," an amusing satire about a girl of marriageable age), "Ciuri ciuri—"ciuri" means "flowers"—a *sturnellu* about unrequited love), and "Vitti na crozza" ("I've Seen a Skull," a sad *canzuna* about a dead person without a tomb, originally included in Germi's movie *Journey of Hope*). I replied that I had heard some songs collected by Anna Lomax, from the Sicilian-speaking communities in the Niagara Falls region of Canada and the United States (Lomax, *d.*1986), that instead show the persistence of a "rural" singing style not different from that which I was still documenting in my field-research in Sicily. Coppola argued that what I called "rural repertoire" was more a matter of "family *memoirs*" and that these productions would never be heard on shows, at celebrations, or on radio broadcasts. On the contrary, he maintained, the "urban folk-songs," joining the evocative power of a lyrical text with the efficacy of a charming melody, are easier to remember and to reproduce without the "roughness" that characterizes the peasant's singing style, and perfectly reflected the affirmation of a new Sicilian identity, according to a very different context from the sufferings of a backward and challenging rural life.

From the mid-1970s, folk-music experienced a revival in Sicily with the creation of groups on different parts of the island: These include Taberna Mylaensis (Milazzo), Legenda Meligunis (Lipari), Kunsertu (Messina), the Cilliri (Siracusa), the Dioscuri (Agrigento), the Lautari (Catania), and the Gruppo Popolare Favarese (Favara). What had changed in their repertoire is that some of the songs and tunes performed on stage were directly collected on the field by the musicians (as the Folkstudio had done in the previous years). They even composed new songs liberally inspired by traditional examples. This creative relationship with folkloric roots is motivated by political and social reasons: As the years passed, the hard rural life of the past became more distant from the standard behavior of the upper class.

In the 1980s, field research greatly improved, thanks to such institutions as the Folkstudio, the Centro per le Iniziative Musicali in Sicilia (Center for the Musical Initiatives in Sicily), and the Institute of Folklore Studies of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Palermo (Bonanzinga 1997). The same faculty, in 1993, established the first Sicilian chair of Ethnomusicology, held

by Elsa Guggino until 1999, followed by Giovanni Giuriati, and by the author since 2005. Another important development has been the setting up of the Laboratory of Ethnomusicological Performance, run by Girolamo Garofalo.

### TRENDS

During the last twenty years, Sicilian singing has been experiencing a number of trends. First, there persists an orally transmitted repertoire, functionally connected to ritual celebrations (Christmas, Easter, feasts of patron saints), or still practiced for amusement in various occasions, and sometimes upon request of research workers. Second is the lingering *cantastorie* tradition, still embodied by a few interpreters, such as Nonò Salomone, Franco Trincale, and Vito Santangelo. Third, the continuation of above-mentioned urban repertoire, with the introduction of elements mainly taken from published books or recordings, performed on stage by a large number of folkloric groups wearing “traditional” customs. And, lastly, a completely new repertoire, open to the influence of “world music,” offering an original twist to the traditional canon, carried on by artists coming from all parts of Sicily, as well as from descendants of Sicilian emigrants abroad. All together, one can consider these as the heirs to the old revival movement as well as the contemporary makers of a new fusion of Sicilian songs, often based on a good knowledge of traditional singing.

### CONCLUSION

Oral tradition, academic research, revival performances, and new Sicilian author-song are obviously very different things, but they share the same necessity of “local resistance” to the spread of behaviors suggested by “global cultural patterns.” Even if their products are set at the fringes of the commercial musical market, the contemporary Sicilian singing identity still navigates between the tested harbors of the past, in continuity with a *longue-durée* musical competence, and the opportunities offered by an unknown future. Meanwhile, Sicily today has become a place of immigrants (mainly from African and Asian countries), which makes it difficult to forecast future directions to its culture and traditions.

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*d.* = LP edition; *cd.* = CD edition

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