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Made in Italy

Studies in Popular Music

Edited by

Franco Fabbri and
Goffredo Plastino

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Contents

List of Illustrations

Figures

Musical Examples

Tables

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Series Foreword

Popular music studies have progressed from the initial focus on methodologies to exploring a variety of genres, scenes, works, and performers. British and North-American music has been privileged and studied first, not only for its geographic and generational proximity to scholars, but also for its tremendous impact. Everything else has often been relegated to the dubious "world music" category, with a "folk" (or "roots," or "authentic") label attached.

However, world popular music is no less popular than rock 'n' roll, r&b, disco, rap, singer-songwriters, punk, grunge, brit-pop, or nu-gaze. It is no less full of history and passion, no less danceable, socially relevant, and commercialized. Argentinian tango, Brazilian *bossa nova*, Mexican reggaeton, Cuban *son* and *timba*, Spanish and Latin American *cantautores*, French *auteurs–compositeurs–interprètes*, Italian *cantautori*, and electronic dance music, *J-pop*, German cosmic music and *Schlager*, Neapolitan Song, Greek *entechno*, Algerian *raï*, Ghanaian highlife, Portuguese *fado*, Nigerian *jùjú*, Egyptian and Lebanese Arabic pop, Israeli *mizrahit*, Indian *filmi* are just a few examples of locally and transnationally successful genres that, with millions of records sold, are an immensely precious key to understanding different cultures, societies, and economies.

More so than in the past, there is now widespread awareness of the "other" popular music: however, we still lack access to the original sources, and to texts to rely on. The *Routledge Global Popular Music Series* has been devised to offer scholars, teachers, students, and general readers worldwide direct access to scenes, works, and performers that have generally not been considered much or at all in the current literature, and at the same time to provide a better understanding of the different approaches in the field of non-Anglophone scholarship. Uncovering the wealth of studies flourishing in so many countries, inaccessible to those who do not speak the local language, is by now no less urgent than considering the music itself.

The Series website (www.globalpopularmusic.net) includes hundreds of audiovisual examples that complement the volumes. The interaction with the website is intended to give a well-informed introduction to the world's popular music from entirely new perspectives, and at the same time to provide updated resources for academic teaching.

Routledge Global Popular Music Series ultimately aims at establishing a truly international arena for a democratic musicology, through authoritative and accessible books. We hope that our work will help the creation of a different polyphony of critical approaches, and that you will enjoy listening to and being part of it.

Franco Fabbri, University of Turin, Italy
Goffredo Plastino, Newcastle University, UK
Series Editors

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Preface

There must be music Italians listen to. Stereotypical representations of Italians in Hollywood films or TV soaps almost invariably place music in the background: arias, mandolins, and the unavoidable accordion spreading its sound around a Baroque fountain, in immortal Rome. Yes, Italy is famous for its theatres, for its operatic singers (from Enrico Caruso to Beniamino Gigli to Luciano Pavarotti), for its conductors (Arturo Toscanini, Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Muti), and instrumental soloists. It is famous for Vivaldi, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, Puccini, Leoncavallo; for Nono, Berio, Rota, and Morricone. Of course, almost everybody knows popular singers of Italian origin, from Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin (Dino Crocetti) to Perry (Pierino) Como and Frankie Laine (Francesco Paolo LoVecchio), from Frankie Avalon (Francis Avallone) and Connie Francis (Concetta Rosa Maria Franconero) to Frank Zappa, Laura Nyro (Laura Nigro), Madonna (Ciccone), Lady Gaga (Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta), and Paolo Nutini.

Italy has a rather large population: with more than sixty million inhabitants it is the fourth largest in the European Union, after Germany, France, and the UK. There are hundreds of local radio stations, at least a dozen national radio networks, and nine major national TV channels, including MTV Italy. If they are to resemble radio and TV stations in other countries, in order to gather large audiences and collect advertising revenues they must broadcast a lot of music—hours and hours of popular music, day and night. Would anyone expect them to just broadcast Beyoncé, Robbie Williams, or the Arctic Monkeys? There must be Italian popular music Italians listen to.

Those who are old enough will probably remember Domenico Modugno. His "Nel blu dipinto di blu" (also known as "Volare") was number one in the US charts in 1958, and in 1959 won the first Grammy as Record of the Year and Song of the Year (a prize awarded later to songs such as "Strangers in the Night," "Mrs. Robinson," and "Hotel California"). Younger people may have heard of Laura Pausini, who won a Grammy for best Latin Pop Album in 2006 (with *Escucha*, the Spanish version of her album *Resta in ascolto*), and three Latin Grammies in 2005, 2007, and 2009. Travelers to continental Europe (from Portugal and Spain to the Nordic countries, from France to Germany, to Poland and Russia, even during the Cold War years), and the people who live there, may have heard of Mina, Adriano Celentano, Raffaella Carrà, Albano e Romina, Pupo, Toto Cutugno, I Ricchi e Poveri, Lucio Dalla, Angelo Branduardi, Franco Battiato, Paolo Conte, Eros Ramazzotti, Andrea Bocelli. Fans of singer-songwriters with a world-music flavor, or of avant-rock, may have known Fabrizio De André, Area, or Stormy Six. And there are thousands who have bought at Disk Union in Tokyo, or on eBay and Discogs, some of the exact Japanese replicas of Italian progressive rock bands' complete discographies released on vinyl and CD, which goes to show that Italian prog is known worldwide, loved, and avidly

collected as much as English prog. In short, Italian popular music is more varied than many scholars and occasional listeners have probably imagined. So varied, in fact, that it was impossible to cover all of its genres and scenes in one book: the series' website (www.globalpopularmusic.net) is a helpful tool for those who would like to know more.

Some Anglophone scholars have written about Italian popular music—just as a number of Italian scholars have written essays about the Beatles, Cuban *timba*, Joe Hill and Woody Guthrie, Greek *rebetiko*, Chico Buarque De Hollanda, flamenco, Russian singer-songwriters, and so on. Popular music studies in Italy date back to the 1980s, with some important antecedents in the 1960s and 1970s. As editors of this book and of this Series, we felt that there were quite a number of interesting studies on Italian popular music—by Italian musicologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and cultural studies scholars—that deserved to be known abroad, and could offer an ample, albeit not exhaustive, perspective on Italian popular music: its history, its economy, its ideology, and the aesthetic, social, and political values Italian audiences have attached to it. The goal of this book is therefore more ambitious than simply to provide a perspective on the popular music of a more or less "remote" country: it offers examples of different ways to approach popular music, which can be applied to other genres and scenes.

Those who are acquainted with mainstream Anglophone popular music studies will find in this book some disciplinary approaches that may look familiar. From the very beginning, Italian popular music studies have been strictly related to an international context: suffice it to say that the second conference of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) was held in Reggio Emilia in 1983 (another was held in Rome, in 2005). The work of pioneering scholars such as Philip Tagg, Richard Middleton, Simon Frith, and Charles Hamm had an immediate influence on Italian studies. At the same time, Italy's cultural history has been quite different from that of Anglophone countries, partly thanks to the important cultural work of left-wing publishers such as Einaudi and Feltrinelli (to name just two). Theodor Adorno's essays on music were translated into Italian as early as the 1950s; Roland Barthes's writings appeared in Italy in the early 1960s, Michel Foucault's and Jacques Derrida's just a little later. By the end of that decade Umberto Eco's studies were ready for the systematic formalization that led to his 1976 *Theory of Semiotics*. In the 1970s and 1980s, *nouveaux philosophes* such as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari were at the center of Italian cultural and political debates, and enormous interest developed around Jacques Lacan, so much so that extensive essays elaborating a Lacanian analysis of the popular voice were given away with avant-garde albums (the interest, however, was short-lived, with Lacan falling out of fashion by the late 1970s). If there aren't many references to some of these thinkers in the work of current Italian popular music scholars, this isn't because they—and their continuing presence in international popular music studies—are ignored, but because in Italy they seem to belong to a rather distant past. This may sound odd to some, refreshing to others. Of course, it doesn't mean that "Italians do it better" (as Madonna proudly stated on her t-shirt in the 1986 "Papa Don't Preach" video); it means that the chapters in this book are written by people who grew up in Italy, were educated within—and against—its cultural traditions, and are as familiar with its popular music culture as, so to speak, native speakers.

Some time in the 1980s Miles Davis landed in Palermo, Sicily, to perform there. During the taxi ride to the hotel, he wanted to listen to the songs of a Neapolitan pop singer, being played on the car cassette player. "Who's that?" he asked. "Nino D'Angelo," the taxi driver replied. "I wanna buy his records," said Miles. The driver then stopped at a friend's music shop, but it was closed. So he took Miles and his chaperone to the Vucciria, Palermo's most famous outdoor

market, and there Miles eventually bought all the illegal tape copies of D'Angelo's albums he could find. A few days later, the singer read in the newspapers: "Miles Davis is in Naples and wants to meet Nino D'Angelo." Not knowing who this guy Miles Davis was, he first thought he was a new player of Napoli Football Club. Later somebody told D'Angelo that Miles was one of the most famous jazz musicians ever, and that he also declared to the press: "I like Nino D'Angelo, and I'd like to play his music."

Miles was neither the first nor the last to be bewitched by a Neapolitan voice; stories like these have been told around the world for about 150 years. But he surely was an open-minded musician, never satisfied with the status quo: an attentive wayfarer. We would also like to think of this book as a useful guide that may help any inquiring traveler to take in a real and imaginary country, and to make many unexpected musical encounters there. Have a good journey.

Acknowledgments

We are particularly grateful to a number of scholars who encouraged us in pursuing the project of this book; not only because we had been thinking for quite a while about a collection of studies on Italian popular music, but also and especially because, as the project proceeded, we realized we could conceive a whole series on global popular music. We would like to thank Philip V. Bohlman and Simon Frith for their useful advice in that early phase.

A book such as this and the series in which it appears couldn't have been thought of if the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) had not existed. We would like to thank Richard Middleton, Philip Tagg, and all friends in IASPM who shared their vision of popular music as a global phenomenon for their support; we believe that our work is a way to implement one of the aims of IASPM's statutes.

We are indebted to Constance Ditzel at Routledge for having made her own the idea of a series based on this book, and for her kind and punctual advice. We thank Elysse Preposi and the editorial staff at Routledge for their diligence; we also thank the anonymous reviewers who encouraged us to continue our efforts.

The formula "this book could not have been possible without" applies in our case, with an especially warm accent, to Melinda Mele: as a native American English speaker, with a long acquaintance with international and Italian popular music studies, Melinda revised all texts, making them more readable, while respecting the particular shape ideas take when they are born in a different cultural and linguistic context. Of course, we also thank all authors for agreeing to write their contribution in a language that is not primarily their own.

Thanks also to Alessandro Lannocca, who transcribed our long conversation with Ennio Morricone.

Franco Fabbri and Goffredo Plastino
Milan and Newcastle upon Tyne, February 2013

Introduction

An Egg of Columbus: How Can Italian Popular Music Studies Stand on Their Own?

Franco Fabbri and Goffredo Plastino

The Name of the Rose

This book is about Italian popular music. But how would its subject be referred to in Italy? Which terms do Italians use to designate the concept usually referred to, in English, by the expression "popular music?"

A minority of Italian speakers actually uses the English term: academics and students (not all of them), music critics (not all of them), musicians and people in the music business (just a few). But it can be said that the number of Italians who understand the meaning of this expression—as intended by popular music scholars around the world—is increasing. "Popular music" began to appear in Italian in the 1980s and 1990s, when the first wave of international popular music studies found its way into Italian journals such as *Musica/Realtà*, and when some early "classics" were translated into Italian. The proceedings of the Second International Conference of IASPM (Italian version) were published in 1985, with the title *What Is Popular Music? 41 saggi, ricerche, interventi sulla musica di ogni giorno*; the translation of Richard Middleton's *Studying Popular Music* was published in 1994 as *Studiare la popular music*; a collection of essays by Philip Tagg, which came out the same year, was titled *Popular Music. Da Kojak al rave*; and the 2002 second edition of Franco Fabbri's *Il suono in cui viviamo* was subtitled *Saggi sulla popular music*. Of course, at least since the 1960s many Italians had been aware that "pop music" (in Italian: *musica pop*) was an abbreviation of "popular music," but they understood it as a foreign genre that some Italian musicians were copying. Starting from the 1970s, and especially during the 1990s and early 2000s, there was an attempt to use the expression *musica popolare*, a literal translation of "popular music," to designate the same semantic area covered by the English term—a symptom of the growing influence of Anglophone music journalism and popular music studies. Yet *musica popolare* had been widely used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to refer to folk music (orally transmitted, traditional music), and as such it had been appropriated by folklorists and ethnomusicologists.[1] To avoid possible semantic and academic conflicts, the term *musica popolare contemporanea* was introduced, and enjoyed some support by music critics and politicians. It was used in the text of a legislative proposal presented to Italian Parliament, aiming to modify existing regulations on the public

financing of music events. The bill was never passed, partly because of the stern opposition by classical music advocates. At any rate, the most frequent objection to the term *musica popolare contemporanea* is that it is ambiguous (it could refer to contemporary folk music, which does exist), limited in scope (isn't old popular music popular as well?), redundant (if what it refers to is today's popular music), and bears traces of the hegemony of classical music discourse (as the adjective *contemporanea* is used to designate modern classical music).

The oldest term that partially covers the same semantic space as "popular music" is *canzone* (song), used as a *pars-pro-toto* synecdoche, as in *Festival della Canzone Italiana*, or in genre labels such as *canzone napoletana* (Neapolitan Song), *canzone dialettale* (song sung in any dialect), *canzone d'autore* (literally "author's song," or the singer-songwriter genre), *canzone politica* (political, topical song), *canzone popolare* (folk song, but also popular song), *canzone comica* (comical song), and so on. The term (a vocal composition in its original meaning) was defined by Dante Alighieri in his *De vulgari eloquentia* (1303–1305; see Fabbri 2001, 552), and has been used with various meanings in Italian for centuries: in the Renaissance *canzona* was an instrumental piece, while in the nineteenth century *canzone* and *canzonetta* were short vocal pieces, written by operatic composers for the bourgeois parlor market. The usage of *canzone* as a genre label was already common at the end of the nineteenth century. *Canzone* (along with the slightly derogatory *canzonette*, in the plural) is used currently as an *almost* all-encompassing term that might have functioned as a translation of "popular music" (historically, as we have just seen, it was also applied to instrumental music), if it hadn't been for the semantic opposition, established during Fascism and continued during the 1950s and 1960s—and in some respects still valid today—between Italian *canzone* and foreign popular music, especially music of African-American origin. Even though the racist overtones of the Fascist era and Cold War conservative aesthetics have vanished, the cliché that *canzone* and rock (and jazz, blues, r&b, reggae, rap, as well as any danceable music of Latin American origin, from rumba and mambo to salsa, merengue, reggaeton, etc.) represent opposing poles still has currency in Italian music business and journalism. If this had been a book on Italian *canzone* (and not Italian popular music), it wouldn't have included chapters on *bitt* and progressive rock, on the Naples music scene in the 1970s, or on rocker Ligabue, most of the other chapters would have been limited in their scope, and a conversation with Ennio Morricone (albeit on his work as an arranger) would have appeared somehow out of place.

A definite conservative connotation is attached to *musica leggera* (light music), an expression that came to be used in the final decades of the nineteenth century, to indicate music that wasn't "serious," including songs, dance music, and even operetta (an equivalent of German *Trivialmusik*—see Dahlhaus 1983, 35–37). The term was codified by Italian radio during Fascism (in the late 1920s), excluding operetta (which probably wasn't light enough, and not as popular). *Musica leggera* is still used, especially by classical music advocates, with an even more distinct derogatory tone than a century ago, although it is sometimes adopted by people in the popular music business with a polemical attitude (not unlike musicians from the Appalachians in the 1920s, who accepted being dubbed "hillbillies," even though the term was derogatory). The problem with *musica leggera* is that many genres/scenes born in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s were to some extent shaped against *musica leggera*, or perceived as oppositional to it (Italian rockers or *urlatori*, political songsters and folk revivalists, singer-songwriters, progressive rockers, punk rockers, etc.), so the usage of *musica leggera* as a comprehensive category is contradictory. The acceptance or refusal of the term is a reliable indicator of an ideological shift: until recently, music teachers in Italian conservatories would use *musica leggera* referring to all music that

was banned from their teaching (not jazz, which had come to be respectable much earlier); a few years ago, courses were opened on *musica d'uso* (applied music), a fig leaf to cover the actual content (popular music). Finally, a number of conservatories launched BA and MA courses on popular music, using the English expression. Of course, there is nothing wrong in calling Italian popular music up to the mid 1970s (or even later) *musica leggera*, as that (along with *canzone*, and even *canzonette*) was the term accepted by most Italian speakers. Yet when a popular music scholar is said to be interested in *musica leggera*, meaning that he or she doesn't apparently deal with "serious" music, the ideological bell starts ringing.

In intellectual circles, from the late 1950s until very recently, under the influence of Adorno's writings (published very early in Italian, with the interesting exception of *On Popular Music*, which had to wait until 2004), the most common expression used to refer to popular music was *musica di consumo* ([mass] consumption music). The assumption behind the usage seemed to be that "serious" music is never mass consumed or, if it is, it ceases to be "serious," and isn't worth studying. Needless to say, *musica di consumo* is favored, as we will see, by conventional musicologists.

Another interestingly connoted term is *musica moderna*, which literally means modern music. Since in Italy the music of modern (or modernist) classical composers is called *musica contemporanea* (or *musica del Novecento*, twentieth-century music), the adjective *moderno* was to some degree devoid of established meanings, so it has come to be employed by popular music professionals who don't like to adopt the English term, and find *musica leggera* and *canzone* to be limited and outdated. The expression *musica moderna* is indicative of a professional pride, of an implicit claim that using the English term is an act of snobbery, and perhaps of the desire to be accepted in conservatories as those who deal with popular music (but as something that can be fully understood by using exactly the same language and categories developed for the study of classical music).

Haunting Adler

As it clearly appears from the discussion above, the issue is not simply a terminological one. The ongoing debates in Italy about the semantic field of "popular music" reveal an intense ideological and academic struggle, at the core of which is the recognition of popular music studies as an autonomous, fully fledged discipline within Italian universities. To provide some simple data:

> According to the June 2007 issue of *Il giornale della musica*, there are in Italian universities 121 teaching posts in various musicological disciplines (such as music history, music theory, etc.), and 14 teaching posts in ethnomusicology. The figure for popular music studies (and film or television music studies) is zero.
>
> (Plastino and Santoro 2007, 385).

These data have changed slightly since 2007, as a few lecturers whose main focus is popular music have been hired as ethnomusicologists. Yet, as of 2013 there is still not a single teaching post for popular music studies in Italian universities: the only two legitimate music disciplines are musicology and ethnomusicology, and their ministerial descriptions do not include the term "popular music" (or any equivalent term, unless by oblique allusions).

In the most recent official document, the 2011 ministerial decree aimed at a reform of hiring procedures, they are defined as follows:

> Musicology is the study of music intended as an art and a science, including paleography, theory, organology, philosophy, and the study and management of documents (*documentalistica*) as applied to music, music teaching, and the preservation of musical heritage. Ethnomusicology is the study of the plurality of musical forms, objects and behaviors in societies and cultures (especially those characterized by a prevailing oral tradition), of *musiche popolari (anche contemporanee)*, their production and circulation (also mediatized), and the relations between musical and cultural systems.[2]

In the context of Italian ethnomusicology (and of Italian linguistic usage) *musica popolare* corresponds to folk/traditional, orally transmitted music, and *anche contemporanee* (also contemporary) is a way to allude to popular music without actually mentioning it. To say that the study of ethnomusicology includes contemporary traditional music, also when media-distributed, is a truism, a phrase that keeps conservative ethnomusicologists on the safe side while offering others a chance to expand their research activities, without acknowledging that in many other countries popular music studies are not a sub-discipline of ethnomusicology, but an interdisciplinary, autonomous field.

This extraordinary situation, even more surprising if one considers the wealth of studies produced in Italy since the early 1980s and the constant presence of Italian scholars in international popular music associations, debates and publications (of which this book is apt evidence), has a lot to do with the ways in which musicology and ethnomusicology were historically integrated into Italian higher education. While in 1959 the situation of musicology was described as fundamentally meager, with some occasional chairs established for purely hedonistic reasons (Allorto and Sartori 1959, 10), a co-authored survey published about twenty years later quite proudly stated that "specifically during the 1960s and 1970s, Italian musicology achieved the solid academic status that it previously lacked" (Gallo et al. 1982, 7). The survey is telling for the musicological map it sketches: the Italian discipline was subdivided into historical musicology (the Middle Ages, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), systematic musicology, and ethnomusicology, mirroring Guido Adler's 1885 taxonomy save for the substitution of ethnomusicology for comparative musicology. The system, fully established by the early 1980s, is in fact—albeit with some inconsequential changes, as we have just seen— the same one in place today, holding out against popular music studies. Moreover, the reasons for its cultural lag are ironically exactly those underscored by the authors of the investigation, that is, the centralization of Italian university's structures, and its outstanding lateness in the "compliance with the disciplinary . . . demands" (ibid., 8).

The 1982 survey is revealing also from another angle, namely the role granted to ethnomusicology in the Italian musicological framework. Even the space dedicated to this discipline within the text (three and a half pages on seventy-six), clearly indicates its subordinate and effectively marginal position: Italian ethnomusicology had produced internationally relevant works as early as the 1950s, but was able to emerge as a university discipline only in the mid-1970s, after the definitive and dominant establishment of musicology. While we are not interested in elaborating here the political and cultural history of the musicological field in Italy (though we believe it is a topic in need of urgent investigation), we feel compelled to point out the overriding reason for the ongoing exclusion of popular music studies from the official Italian

academic panorama, namely that in Italy both musicology and ethnomusicology were founded against popular music, and later reaffirmed against popular music studies. If, on the one hand, musicology was and still is dominated by an overwhelmingly Adornian high-brow perspective, on the other hand, ethnomusicology has until very recently defined the field of *popolare* in opposition to *popular*. Let's consider, for example, the two "founding fathers" of Italian ethnomusicology: Diego Carpitella and Roberto Leydi. In 1955 Carpitella described *musica di consumo* ([mass] consumption music) as just the reverse of *musica popolare*, and as an "individual product [that] circulates raising given economic interests, [and that] is leaning toward the satisfaction of the greatest number of people according to an average *standard*" (Carpitella 1992, 43). In 1991, Roberto Leydi, closing a long discussion about the relationships between *musica colta* ("cultured," i.e., art, Western classical music) and *musica popolare*, while acknowledging the unsuitableness of ethnomusicological theories for the understanding of the contemporary musical scenes, avoided any reference whatsoever to popular music studies (Leydi 1991, 129–163, 159).[3] Many other examples could be made[4] but suffice to say, here, that if in Italy *popolare* circumscribes folk/traditional music as an object of study and ethnomusicology as a discipline, this was made possible in ideological agreement with musicology, at the expense of popular music studies and through their constant marginalization.

The Times, Are They a-Changin'?

In November 2002 Il Saggiatore Musicale, an association of musicologists based at the Department of Music and Performing Arts of the University of Bologna, organized a round table on *Musicologia storica e musica di consumo* (Historical musicology and [mass] consumption music) (Tavola rotonda 2003). The workshop was introduced with a keynote by musicologist Paolo Somigli, who underlined the difficulty of bringing together "historical musicology" and "popular music," "two perspectives heterogeneous even in their denominations, and nominally remote up to the immeasurable"; in addition, he provided a clarification about what *musica di consumo* is, from the perspective of a contemporary Italian musicologist:

> [A] music spread through the media, often produced and reproduced through electronics, and enjoyed by audiences that are typologically different from those of jazz and art music: this is particularly evident in live performances, where these audiences do not assume an attitude of contemplation but rather of active and even physical participation.
>
> (Somigli 2003, 321–322)

Many readers will probably find it easy to criticize such a theoretical perspective, based on assumptions of cultural, social and even behavioral differences; we mention it here simply to show how entrenched the Adlerian–Adornian mindset still is in Italy.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that there has also been a shift in Italian musicology in general. Quite recently, for instance, there have been public debates over the potential concurrence of ethnomusicology and popular music studies (Seminario 2007). Musicologists and ethnomusicologists (and other scholars) have also collaborated in investigating specific popular music repertoires or events, such as English progressive rock (Borio and Facci 2006) or the Sanremo Festival (Facci et al. 2011). Yet while these new efforts should be seen as positive improvements in an otherwise rather stagnant disciplinary field, we can't help noting that they often reflect a core contradiction. The new interest shown by some ethnomusicologists towards specific

popular music repertoires looks more like a way for them to escape from the *popolare* (folk/traditional, rural) cage that the discipline has built around itself over the decades, like a shy exit strategy, devoid of theoretical afterthought, in which the same methodological viewpoints remain virtually unchanged.

In other words, the main inconsistency still lies in the (partial) approach to popular music as an object to be studied, and not as a field of studies. A new interest in some popular music scenes on the part of certain areas of Italian musicology likewise reveals the essential need to keep the same interpretative standards by just re-employing them in the analysis of different musical scenes, repertoires or settings. Neapolitan Song is a poignant case in point. The genre was academically hegemonized first by "Neapolitanologists," who produced countless studies based on a strictly historicist perspective, and elaborated a canon of epochs, singers, composers, and classics (Plastino 2007, 430–431). Initially, ethnomusicologists were marginally interested in Neapolitan Song, considered above all as *musica di consumo* (Carpitella 1992, 49) and as a repertoire that conveyed a clichéd folk; more recently (since the 1990s) they have been, albeit still marginally, interested in tracing the alleged *popolare* origins or diffusion of some selected compositions, or in the features of Neapolitan voices. Musicologists have recently produced several analytical works on Neapolitan Song, after quite a long period of substantial indifference; after reducing the repertoire's multifaceted elements to written sources (i.e., into scores and notations), they subsequently considered some compositions by applying conventional formal, thematic, and motivic analysis (Privitera 2011, 13–14).

Despite the fact that Neapolitan Song is clearly a Tin Pan Alley-like, heavily mediated popular music (Fabbri 2011)—or, we might say, exactly because of this—Italian ethnomusicology and musicology have not been able to come to terms with it: they can only understand it by employing their ideologically biased prerequisites, and by repeating the same methodological approaches over and over again. That is to say, Neapolitan Song, and in general more other popular music genres or repertoires, have now become a call for new old disciplinary games in Italy.

Mapping Italian Popular Music

Which music genres exist in Italy? And, to be more precise, which Italian popular genres?

To answer these seemingly simple questions, we first need to clarify the meaning of "existence" of a music genre. If genres are cultural units, or concepts, then their existence is testified by their presence in a culture's semantic field, as entries in that culture's semantic encyclopedia (see Eco 1976, 66–68; 98–100; 112–114). In other terms, a genre exists if it is conventionally accepted as a concept, that is, if a word labeling it (a name for that concept) is recognized by members of a community, who may be more or less informed about the meaning(s) attached to that label. A genre exists if it's part of a shared common sense. Yet this may not be enough to answer our questions about genres in Italy, because genres are concepts referring to musical practices, and one could legitimately ask not only whether a genre is a recognized concept in a given culture, but also whether the corresponding practices are current and can be found: a recognized genre, for example, can belong to the past. Moreover, genres can be "foreign," if they were first acknowledged in another culture (as rock 'n' roll was in Italy), or if corresponding practices can only be found elsewhere. In addition, in their passage from one culture to another concepts can be transformed, or misinterpreted. One can't be sure whether the same name is associated with the same meaning(s) in different cultures: *chansonnier* has a different meaning in France and Italy, and has been used for some time in Italy as a label for a genre

including artists—such as Brassens, Ferré, Brel—who were categorized differently in France. To further complicate matters, different communities within the same (national, regional, etc.) culture may attach different meanings to the same label, so they may have different concepts/genres represented by the same word: to use terms familiar to anthropologists, an etic description of a set of music events (made by an outsider of the community participating in those events) can be different from an emic description of the same set (made by an insider). The most straightforward examples of such a distinction can be found in the domain of localized "ethnic" cultures, for example the tradition of *pizzica*: a dance and therapeutic culture in its Southern Italian area, Salento, as perceived and described by its original rural community, and as studied by music anthropologists, but also as a mediatized nationwide music culture, with its respective emic and etic aspects (Pizza 2004; De Martino 2005). Similar phenomena, however, also apply to typical urban or delocalized communities (or sub-communities), such as those of music professionals (musicians, technicians, promoters, critics, DJs), fans, and so on, who are linguistically and socially identifiable by means of their respective jargons. Not only may different genres imply different music competences, but music competence also varies *within* genres, according to the linguistic and practical needs of community (or sub-community) members (Stefani 1987).

To sum up with an example all the obvious and less obvious problems encountered when trying to answer questions about existing genres, let's ask: is there an Italian popular music genre named *Italo disco*? Entries about it exist in Wikipedia, in various languages, including Italian. From these we learn that the term was invented in the 1980s by a German producer, Bernhard Mikulski[5]; we also learn that the French also call the genre *disco italien*,[6] and that:

> the presenters of the Italian music show *Discoring* (produced by RAI [Italian radio and television broadcasting corporation]) usually referred to Italo disco tracks as "rock elettronico" (electronic rock) or "balli da discoteca" (disco dance) before the term "Italo disco" came into existence.[7]

However, it doesn't seem that *Italo disco* was ever established in Italian linguistic practice outside the community of professionals (record producers, DJs, performers) who had an interest in marketing their products abroad; and even in that community, the genre was often named *la dance italiana* (Italian dance music). And—regardless of what the author(s) of the English Wikipedia entry have written—there is no evidence that the term *Italo disco* was ever used by RAI presenters and DJs *after* it came into existence.[8] Both English and Italian Wikipedia entries are accompanied by long and rather heated talks questioning the very need for such an entry,[9] and asking whether *Italo disco* isn't simply an Italian version of disco music.[10] In fact, sometimes the authors of the Italian Wikipedia entry call the genre simply "Italian disco music."

So, does *Italo disco* exist? Undoubtedly, there is a community (albeit small) that acknowledges the concept, and corresponding practices (as described by that community) exist, or have existed. However, the concept is hardly rooted in Italian linguistic and musical common sense as solidly, for example, as *canzone d'autore* (the singer-songwriter genre). An encyclopedic entry for a genre, reflecting a community's semantic encyclopedia, or any scholarly description of it, should include reference to the community acknowledging that term as a genre label.

A methodological issue, then, is inevitably raised: how can the existence of genres be detected? By exploring the media? By ethnographical research? At what level? More generally, how does one collect knowledge about genres? Browsing the web? Reading newspapers and magazines?

Listening to (and recording) radio or television programs? Visiting record shops? Attending music events of any kind? Being involved in the creation of music events? Interviewing people? (And who: colleagues? Students? Neighbors? Musicians?). Exploring one's own memory? All methods seem to be good, all have been used in scholarly research, none probably are valid if used in isolation, and at the same time no research has been done yet involving all such approaches in combination.

Perhaps, in order to overcome the feeling of discouragement and discomfort generated by the above questions, one could shift the focus of this discussion into another frame, and wonder, for example, how equivalent knowledge could be collected about food. Which dishes exist in a certain culinary culture? How can we gather information about them? Are some acknowledged by many? Are some others restricted to small communities of gourmets? Do we need to be able to prepare a dish to talk about it competently? Do we need to eat it? How does one compare the knowledge acquired watching a TV program with that obtained from an old or new cookbook? Should one read gastronomy columns in newspapers? Visit restaurants, or diners, or college cafeterias? Interview professional cooks, or grandmothers? Why grandmothers and not grandfathers? And so on . . . Would it make sense, then, to give a list of the main dishes in Italian cuisine (or French, or British, or Spanish, etc.), introducing a book on that subject? That is to say, *without* making precise references to the sources of that knowledge, without displaying documents and ethnographies that allow us to say that spaghetti, pizza, cannelloni, gnocchi, prosciutto and melon, etc. are among the existing and favored dishes in Italy?

Yes, it does make sense. So, even though a thorough research on existing genres, based on the interrelation of different sources, has yet to be carried out probably anywhere in the world, we would nevertheless like to provide such a list for Italian popular music.

A survey conducted in 1983 and published in 1985 (Ala et. al 1985a; for an abridged version in English see Ala et. al 1985b) listed eighty-eight genres that the authors thought to be recognizable by interviewees in two Italian cities, Milan and Reggio Emilia. Genres were grouped into superordinate categories: *musica leggera*, rock and black music, jazz, ethnic music, *musica colta* ("cultured" music). Both the list and its internal groupings were devised to reflect musical and linguistic common sense, rather than offering a "scientific" taxonomy. The list was far from perfect, suffering from shortcomings in the survey's methodology, and also from unresolved semantic contradictions, inherent in linguistic common sense. But it served its purpose well. An approximate list of Italian popular genres can be obtained from that source if all non-popular entries and all "foreign" genres (that is, genres specifically based on foreign practices and repertories, such as Brazilian popular song or French *chanson*, without a recognizable local scene in Italy) are removed.[11] Here is the resulting list, where an "Interest Index" (II) follows each of the genres (interviewees were asked whether any of the genres were of interest to them, and the top choice was assigned 100): *canzone leggera italiana* (Italian mainstream pop) (100); *canzone d'autore italiana* (singer-songwriters) (47.9); *canzone "sofisticata"* (the genre of classy female performers, and crooners) (58.2); *canzone "all'italiana"* (old-style Italian Song) (38.5); *canzone napoletana* (Neapolitan Song) (15.5); *canzone di altre tradizioni regionali* (songs from other regional traditions) (8.5); *liscio* (ballroom dances) (32.4); *musica leggera strumentale* (instrumental light music) (22.1); *arrangiamenti di musica classica* (classical music arrangements) (9.4); *canzone per bambini* (songs for children) (9.9); *canzone politica* (topical and protest songs) (3.3); cabaret (7.0); *canzone religiosa* (religious songs) (2.3); *inni, cori alpini e marce* (hymns, choirs from the Alpine tradition, marches) (11.3); *musica da film* (film music) (23.9); pop (26.8); mainstream rock (42.6); heavy metal (6.1); new wave and avant-garde (7.4); reggae (15.8); punk

(1.3); rock 'n' roll (9.2); beat (27.9); blues-rock (11.6); folk rock (2.4); country rock (15.3); progressive rock (2.4); jazz-rock and fusion (4.8); soft rock (9.7); disco music (15.8); soul and rhythm & blues (4.2); funky (7.4); blues (43.1). The inclusion of so many genres of Anglo-American origin is of course related to the existence of an Italian scene for those genres, although obviously some of the genres wouldn't have generated much interest in interviewees if only Italian artists had been included. Of course, all genres that became known in Italy after 1983 (including *Italo disco*, but also hip-hop, world music, grunge, Brit pop, etc.) are not represented in the list. The Interest Indexes are of course outdated after thirty years, and would have raised some perplexities even in 1983: however, it can be said that progressive rock (II=2.4) was completely out of fashion in 1983 Italy, that blues (or, better, blues-rock: but it was called blues by practitioners and fans) was especially popular in Milan (II=43.1) in the early 1980s, thanks to a budding local scene (with Italian performers), and that *liscio* (ballroom dances) was declining after its boom in the late 1970s (and the II was anyway 60.9 in Reggio Emilia, at the center of an area where the genre has its historical roots). Of course, a methodological flaw of any survey of this kind is that a high II can be generated if the genre is identified more easily from the names of very popular artists (beat, therefore, the Beatles: everyone in Italy remembered the Beatles in 1983, although probably very few would remember Italian beat, or *bitt*); on the other hand, it must be said that interviewees were a representative sample of the population in the 15–80 age range, as the survey was aimed at understanding patterns of music consumption throughout the population, rather than only among young people. And it must be pointed out again that the survey was conducted in Milan and Reggio Emilia, a big city and a medium-sized town in Northern Italy: results in Rome, Naples, or anywhere else in Central and Southern Italy would have been different.

A tentative list of the main current genres in Italian popular music can be drafted by combining the results of the 1983 survey with some more recent, mainly common sense-based knowledge. It can be presented as an update of the original list submitted to interviewees, not as the result of specific research (as in the past thirty years there has been none of the same kind and scope). But we think it summarizes the way Italian popular music is perceived and categorized as "everyday music."

Canzone italiana (Italian mainstream pop), *canzone d'autore italiana* (singer-songwriters), rock (Italian individual rockers, and bands), *canzone napoletana* (Neapolitan Song) and *neomelodici*, *musica strumentale* (instrumental music, especially in a neo-minimalist or neo-classical style), *musica da film* (film music), Italian electronic dance/techno, Italian hip-hop, Italian jazz, *canzone politica* (topical and protest songs), cabaret, *canzone religiosa* (religious songs), *canzone per bambini* (songs for children), Italian heavy metal, Italian prog, Italian punk, Italian reggae, Italian world music/Mediterranean music. Some of the genres included in the 1983 survey still exist in smaller communities, or are of historical relevance; others have lost their distinctive quality and have been incorporated into more mainstream genres.

100% Made in Italy

This book covers only a part of the spectrum of the Italian popular music just mapped. Some chapters deal with specific aspects of individual genres, others offer more general overviews, and many of them highlight relations among various genres and scenes. Some genres, however, are completely absent; however, if one looks at the IIs from the 1983 survey, most genres that seem (or seemed) to be "important" are included. A complete coverage of the whole system

would have required much more space. It is also clear that as editors we had to mediate between completeness and respect for the authors' own scholarly interests: in this sense, it can be said that the contents of this book do reflect the state of the art of Italian popular music studies.

The very fact that an entire section is dedicated to *canzone d'autore* is proof that this genre has polarized discourses on popular music in Italy over the past thirty years; however, chapters in that section (Part II) should not be taken as a direct outcome of those discourses, but as a much needed response. Namely, as we shall see, the untimely deaths of two of the best known Italian singer-songwriters at the end of the 1990s (Lucio Battisti and Fabrizio De André) prompted an editorial flood: biographies, commented lyrics, and celebrative essays, written by journalists, fans, and also by a few literary critics. This wealth of qualitatively uneven material has offered popular music scholars good reasons to delve more deeply into the same subject. On the other hand, Italian academia has been (and still is) more keen to offer space for popular music subjects (but as we have seen *not* for an open discussion on popular music studies and their methodologies), if the subjects themselves appear to be more "respectable": poets and poetry are considered so, as "difficult" music is, the preference for some genres (singer-songwriters, progressive rock) can be explained.

However, Italian popular music scholars have also written on less academically "respectable" topics, and their work is documented here. Although studying such subjects is not a novelty in Italian popular music studies (a paper on the Sanremo Festival, the main event in Italian mainstream popular music, was presented at the third IASPM conference in Montreal, in 1985), there lately has been a debate among Italian scholars about the need to focus on "really popular" popular music, or at any rate on genres, scenes, artists that have been neglected to date. A 2013 conference on dance music at the University of Cremona, and a research project on mainstream pop and chart hits recently presented at the University of Turin, are among the first practical responses to that debate. In order to pursue a broader view of popular music subjects, the collaboration with scholars in other disciplinary fields (media, cinema, theatre, dance studies) seems to offer better chances than trying to have research plans supported by conventional musicologists and ethnomusicologists, involved in defending their disciplines' traditions. In this respect, we hope recent changes in the Italian public university system may have positive effects, as disciplines are now grouped in larger sets and, at the same time, larger departments favor an interaction between previously more "distant" scholars. Notwithstanding ministerial decrees and their hints at "contemporary" and "mediatized" *musiche popolari*, it is easier to collaborate on a dissertation or a doctoral thesis about record production or about the evolution of saxophone styles with a media or a cinema scholar than with a musicologist or ethnomusicologist. On the other hand, contacts between music and media scholars on one side, and sociologists and cultural studies scholars (a rather undeveloped disciplinary field in Italy) on another, are not institutionally encouraged, and are less frequent than, say, in the USA or Britain. For historical reasons, popular music studies in Italy have leaned much more towards the musical rather than the sociological side, more towards the textual (both lyrics and music) than the contextual. The whole matter of interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, or multi-disciplinarity is, however, currently at the center of an international discussion among popular music scholars, suggesting that Italy's position may be anomalous for its prevalence of music studies, but not for the scarcity of truly interdisciplinary collaborations.

Years ago, IASPM's founder Philip Tagg argued that while at the beginning, in the early 1980s, there were practically no posts available for popular music scholars in universities, at some point, and in some countries (the USA, or Canada, or the UK, or Nordic Countries),

being an officer of IASPM became a useful title for getting one. It is still hardly so in Italy: we could argue, on the contrary, that being an IASPM officer may be a good reason *not* to get an academic post in Italy. Nonetheless, popular music studies are established in Italy, and the local IASPM branch is one of the oldest and largest in continental Europe. So, in a way, this book is the result of a long struggle for survival. Since we aren't social Darwinists, we don't assume that just for that reason the chapters that follow are any better than others. But we believe that they will be fascinating and rich in suggestions for anyone interested in popular music.

Notes

1. Rigolli and Scaldaferri 2010 is an interesting attempt at establishing a fruitful debate around the Italian meanings and uses of *popolare* (folk and/versus popular); however, most of the contributions in the book revolve around only one of the various interpretations.
2. *Decreto Ministeriale 29 luglio 2011 n. 336*, attachment B, available at: http://attiministeriali.miur.it/media/174801/allegato%20b_def.pdf, accessed February 26, 2013.
3. Both Carpitella and Leydi were excellent jazz scholars, but they didn't consider jazz as popular music.
4. From the vehement attack against the Italian folk music revival and *musica leggera folklorizzata* (folkloric light music), considered as extreme examples of falsification and commercial exploitation, published in the proceedings of the first conference on Italian ethnomusicology, held in Rome in 1973 (Lombardi Satriani 1975); to the plea for an unitary Italian musicology (i.e., the merging of musicology and ethnomusicology), which highlights the relevance of some new theoretical perspectives, such as those of ethnography, cognitive anthropology, music psychology, music semiology, but not popular music studies (Giannattasio 1994, 596); to the 2003 special issue on world music of the ethnomusicological journal *EM*, in which the genre is viewed through the lens of cultural imperialism (and with overtones that recall the 1970s vilification of folk music revival).
5. http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italo_disco, accessed February 25, 2013.
6. http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italo_disco, accessed February 25, 2013.
7. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italo_disco, accessed February 25, 2013.
8. "Italo" is only used in Italian as a prefix in adjectives such as *italo-americano* (Italian-American); it was a common name in the first half of the twentieth century for patriotic reasons, and was then abandoned for its Fascist and nationalistic connotations; the only recent usage is for a high speed train, which began service in 2012 (marketing and touristic overtones, as in the case of dance music, are evident).
9. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Italo_disco, accessed February 25, 2013.
10. http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discussione:Italo_disco, accessed February 25, 2013.
11. We have also removed jazz genres originally included in the survey's list (ragtime, Dixieland, mainstream jazz, swing, be-bop, hard bop, cool jazz, third stream, free jazz, creative music, folk jazz), although in some cases a lively Italian scene existed in 1983, and still exists. This does not imply, however, that we accept the self-exclusion from the domain of popular music practiced by a number of (also Italian) jazz musicians, critics, and historians.

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