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MUSICIANS' MIGRATORY PATTERNS: THE ADRIATIC COASTS

CMS Cultural Expressions in Music

Edited by
Franco Sciannameo



Musicians' Migratory Patterns

Musicians' Migratory Patterns: The Adriatic Coasts contains essays dedicated to the movement of musicians along and across the coasts of the Adriatic Sea. In the course of this book, the musicians become narrators of their own stories, seen through the lenses of wanderlust, opportunity, exile, and refuge. Essayists in this collection are scholars from Croatia, Italy, and Greece. They are internationally known for their passionate advocacy of musicians' migratory rights and for their fidelity to the lesson imparted by the history of immigration in the broadest of terms.

Spanning the Venetian Republic's domination, the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the European nationalistic movements of mid-nineteenth century, the shocking outcomes of World War I, and the dramatic shifts of frontiers that continue to occur in our time, the chapters of this book guide the reader on a voyage through the Adriatic Sea from the Gulf of Venice to Albania, the island of Corfu, and other Ionian outposts.

Franco Sciannameo is College Distinguished Teaching Professor of Musicology in the College of Fine Arts at Carnegie Mellon University. He is Visiting Professor of Applied Musicology in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Cultures at the University of Leeds, UK.



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Musicians' Migratory Patterns

The Adriatic Coasts

**Edited by
Franco Sciannameo**



Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2018
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Sciannameo, Franco, editor.

Title: Musicians' migratory patterns : the Adriatic coasts /
edited by Franco Sciannameo.

Description: New York : Routledge, 2018. | Includes index. |

Description based on print version record and CIP data provided
by publisher; resource not viewed.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017048327 (print) | LCCN 2017052919 (ebook) |

ISBN 9780203702024 | ISBN 9781138572508 (hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: Music—Adriatic Coast (Balkan Peninsula)—History
and criticism. | Music—Italy—Adriatic Coast—History and criticism.

Classification: LCC ML250 (ebook) | LCC ML250 .M94 2018 (print) |

DDC 780.9182/24—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017048327>

ISBN: 978-1-138-57250-8 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-203-70202-4 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

**In memory of Predrag Matvejević
(1932–2017)**



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Series Foreword

Created in 2009, *Cultural Expressions in Music* began as a series of monographs that sought to promote and share the diversity of perspectives, cultures, experiences, philosophies, and contributions of The College Music Society's membership and the music community at large. This series has now entered a new phase. The volumes published under this rubric follow the tenets of geo-musicology, an interdisciplinary outreach of recent coinage, which integrates musical expression, geo-political thinking, and migratory movement of musicians, musical genres, styles, repertoire, and practices. Forthcoming monographs and edited collections will urge readers worldwide to reflect, musically and culturally, upon one of the most pressing issues of our time: immigration.

Franco Sciannameo
Series Editor

Preface

This book, *Musicians' Migratory Patterns: The Adriatic Coasts*, heralds the new CMS Cultural Expressions series of monographs, whose goal is to provide informed and urgent messages about one of the most pressing issues of our time: immigration.

It is not a guide book about the coastal Adriatic people and their musical expressions but rather a collection of scholarly reflections on the disparate predicaments that led legions of musicians to wander along and across the Adriatic Sea in search of work opportunities, adventures, exile, and desperate refuge. Although these migratory patterns have remained unchanged over the centuries, the beacons of light that once consoled the migrants' anguish and guided them to safety are no longer beaming. The Adriatic lighthouses have become tourist attractions that resemble quixotic windmills unwilling to tell the stories they witnessed. This book of reflections wishes to bring the lighthouses' spirit back and shed new light upon their memories.¹

Our hypothetical voyage among the Adriatic lighthouses begins with Dinko Fabris's reflection dedicated to the memory of Predrag Matvejević, the great Mediterranean scholar who, born in Mostar in 1932, died in Zagreb in 2017 after a life spent between asylum and exile from Yugoslavia to Paris and Rome. Furthermore, Fabris's reflection elaborates on the issue of geo-musicology, an interdisciplinary outreach of recent coinage that integrates musical expression, geo-political thinking, and the migratory movement of musicians in time and space. This book's itinerary follows then Fabris's opening chapter *Adriatic Geo-Musicology: A Premise* to Venice, the city many see as the womb of some kind of voracious aquatic monster that emerges from the Laguna, gives birth to the Adriatic Sea, and commingles birth, death, and rebirth in a dark cycle of immortality. This allegory fits the narrative of Chapter 2, *Tragedy and Hope in the Strait of Otranto*. In it, the author reflects on the story of a gondola, a battered patrol boat, and two musicians, framed in time and space between the Venetian Laguna and the Strait of Otranto, the geographic bookends of the Adriatic Sea.

The passing, along the Canal Grande, of a funeral gondola carrying the body of a young chorister to the Venetian cemetery on the island of San Michele, made a strong impression on an American traveler in 1876. His was a portentous sight that anticipated by six years the creation of a remarkable piano piece inspired by the passage along the Canal Grande of another funeral gondola, observed, that time, by Franz Liszt. He expressed his melancholia in *La lugubre gondola*, a piece he wrote in memory of the future: the impending death of Richard Wagner, his beloved father-in-law.

On March 28, 1997, in the Strait of Otranto, 430 nautical miles south of Venice, the Albanian vessel *Katër i Radës* was rammed and sunk by the Italian Navy. The vessel carried a clandestine human cargo of 122 people who had left the port of Vlōra in search of a better life in Italy. Eighty-one men, women, and children lost their lives in what was reported to be a most egregious breach of maritime protocol and, according to many, a deliberate criminal act on the part of the Italian government, carrying out its anti-immigration policies. The composer Admir Shkurtaj, an Albanian émigré, wrote a heartbreaking opera, *Katër i Radës, il naufragio*, in which he described vividly and dolefully the tragic migratory patterns that fate had forced upon his people. This one-act opera, commissioned by the 2014 Biennale di Venezia, premiered in Venice.

The Venetian Republic's culture, political savvy, diplomatic connivance, and military strategies form the backdrop of the rich panoply of people, music, influences, information, and events that made the island of Corfu, the Ionian Islands' administrative center and their preeminent step into the Adriatic Sea, a privileged crossroad between East and West, where cultures and religions meet, blend, and collide. In *Music Migrations and Creative Assimilations: The Ionian Islands* (Chapter 3), the Corfiot musicologist Kostas Kardamis discusses, among many migratory patterns to and from Corfu, the emergence of a Greek art music identity born out of the cultural merging that was forged on the island. Kardamis's documentation then extends north of the Ionian Islands toward the Dalmatian coast and joins the ethnomusicologist Jakša Primorac's intense comparative study of traditional choral settings, suggestively entitled *The Sailors' Chord: Comparative Research on Traditional Singing in the Quattro Province, the Ionian Islands, and Dalmatia* (Chapter 4). Primorac's study reveals remarkable structural similarities among popular choral settings practiced not only along the eastern Adriatic coast but in the Quattro Province area, located in the northwestern Apennines and along the Tyrrhenian Sea. It is extraordinary how the *cori d'osteria* (tavern choral songs) of the Quattro Province,² the *kantades*, *arietes*, and *arekia* of the Ionian Islands, and the Dalmatian *klapa* served to lift the communal spirit of thousands of people as they migrated from place to place. Their singing became then a sort of lingua franca, notwithstanding

their different textual languages. In his research, Primorac employs a contemporary means of communication, YouTube, a novel and very efficacious comparative research tool.

Once the *cori d'osteria* have taken us to the western Apennines, the musicologist Francesco Zimei's reflection *Musicians on the Move in the Early Modern Era: An Instrumental Pilgrimage to L'Aquila* (Chapter 5) is set in the Abruzzi region across the Dalmatian coast. The author examines a trove of archival findings. These newly discovered documents concern the centuries-old tradition of instrumental music performed by musicians from all over Italy who gathered in the town of L'Aquila each year in May and August in the sixteenth century for the celebratory feasts in honor of Saint Peter Celestine. Complementing his historical narrative with strong archival, musical, and statistical documentation, the author pays particular attention to the sources of mid-Adriatic provenance—from Marche to northern Apulia, with emphasis on the Abruzzi, focusing on various instrumental combinations, their players, and possible repertoires.

Zimei's archival spirit also informs Maja Milošević's essay *The Migration of Seventeenth-Century Music Repertoire to the Cathedral of Hvar in Dalmatia* (Chapter 6), which takes us to the beautiful island of Hvar off the Dalmatian coast. Milošević's formidable archival research brings to light not only the migratory patterns established by the seventeenth century's musicians leading to and from the Venetian Republic but the actual "migration" of manuscripts and printed sheet music, which often preceded the presence on the island of composers and performers. These findings, writes the author, "serve as a strong and very rare evidence about musical practice in seventeenth century Hvar and Dalmatia in general."

Finally, regarding the eighteenth century, another distinguished Croatian musicologist, Vjera Katalinić provides, in Chapter 7, *Migration of Musicians as an Integrative Principle: The Case of the East Adriatic Coast in the Eighteenth Century*, a series of case studies conducted throughout the territories of Istria, the Croatian littoral, Dalmatia, and the Republic of Dubrovnik/Ragusa as part of the Italian/Mediterranean cultural circle. Although these lands lived through various political reconfigurations, they experienced a steadiness in terms of cultural issues. The constant need for educated musicians and repertoire for various occasions stimulated their migration in both directions: the locals searched for education in Italian centers, and Italian musicians searched for adequate jobs in eastern Adriatic towns and institutions. Katalinić's essay points to some models of migration as well as the specific merging of imported cultural layers with local traditions and needs in various aspects of musical life and culture, which were greatly facilitated by the internationalized musical style of the period.