



15TH SYMPOSIUM

MEDITERRANEAN MUSIC STUDY GROUP

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TRADITIONS OF MUSIC AND DANCE

# The Body in Action: Performance, Work, Ritual and Dance

hosted by

Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum  
ISMEO - The International Association for Mediterranean  
and Oriental Studies

23-26

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PALERMO



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## CALL FOR PAPERS

The next symposium of the MMSTG will highlight the relationships between the body, music, and sound. It will examine the roles bodies play in the sonic and physical dynamics of performances in Mediterranean cultures. We want to consider the body as a site of communication and expression in musical contexts, emphasizing the body's crucial influence on human understanding of the world. We seek to explore how the body is experienced in performance, represented in music and visual images, perceived by self and others, written about and learned from.

Bodies and musical corporeality act as containers and creative vectors for composition, performance and engagement. As a source and producer of lived experience through speaking, singing, dancing, and playing instruments, the body itself is an instrument as well as a phenomenological tool for perception. The body can appear to be open or closed, and its musical expression often draws from their perceived opposition. Early research investigating music and the body focused on rhythmic motion and movement in ancient cultures (Schaffner 1933, Sachs 1943). Later, French semiologist Roland Barthes wrote 'The Grain of the Voice' (1977), an essay on song, in which the voice 'has us hear a body which has no civil identity, no "personality", but which is nevertheless a separate body'. 'The "grain" is the body in the voice as it sings'. Barthes stresses the importance of the materiality of sounds produced through interaction with the body. Mladen Dolar's *A Voice and Nothing More* (2006) separates the sound (phono) from idea (logo), and establishes the voice as the lever of thought, as one of the paramount embodiments of the psychoanalytic object and Nina Sun Eidsheim's work addresses the racialization of timbre (2019). Many have expressed vocal textuality as the pinnacle of embodied relationship with music. Others have also written about the conception of the composer's body present in music, locating within its musical phrases, gestures and tempo changes, signs of the composer's own body beating, indicating movement or the intention to speak (Leppert and Lipsitz 2000). Recent work on embodiment in music reminds that cognition is not exclusively disembodied intellectual perception, but often is most effective when practiced in non-linear and non-textual manners. This elicits questioning on whether one can "practice" cognition, and whether embodied forms of knowledge are always non-linear, placing the discussion around embodiment squarely into a non-dualistic relationship of body-mind symbiosis. Embodied memory—conveyed in gestures, the spoken word, movement, dance, song, and other performances—offers alternative perspectives to those derived from the written archive and is particularly useful to a reconsideration of historical processes of transnational contact (Taylor 2003). Recent research on race, dance, and gesture in this region (Goldberg 2018 2022, Llano 2023) confirm the use of embodiment and music for knowledge-transfer.

Clayton, Dueck & Leante's 2013 volume *Embodiment in Musical Performance* concludes by expressing that music "is also embodied in that we make sense of music through metaphors derived from our general bodily experience of the world as well as through our specific bodily experiences of engaging with music. In the *phenomenological embodiment* category we can therefore discuss a wide range of music-theoretical concepts such as melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm and form that are experienced in relation to embodied image schemas such as *path*, *cycle*, *balance*, *attraction*, *centre-periphery* and *collection*." This perspective entangles performance, cognition, creation and theory.

Researchers attempted to evaluate the impact of the body to fulfill a spiritual and sacred function (Rouget 1980), for example enticing the spirit through music to descend into or haunt the body of the devotee (Becker 1994, Kapchan 2007, Jankowsky 2007, Turner 2021). Others maintain the notion of "physiological aesthetics", considering the "manual technique" as an element of mediation between "corporeity" and "conceptuality" (Leroi-Gourhan 1964). Another central issue is that of gender and musical performance (Ciucci 2022, Elbaz 2016 Roving Olsen 1999, Magrini 2003), where groups or individuals try to establish or break down alterities or emphasize biological difference through hierarchical gaze. The body is also a site of cultural resistance or protest (Fanon, 1963), a means of experiencing identity or belonging (Serres 2017), and an expressive vehicle in popular culture (Aistrope 2020, Kristeva 1980).

### Links:

Mediterranean Music Study Group, MMS: <https://www.ictmusic.org/studygroup/mms>  
Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum: <https://www.museodellemarionette.it/>  
ISMEO - International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies: [www.ismeo.eu](http://www.ismeo.eu)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

<b>DAY 1</b> <b>Monday</b> <b>23<sup>rd</sup> Sept</b>	<b>14:00 - 15:00 Registration – Welcome Drinks @ Lecture Hall in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
14:30-15:00	<b>WELCOMING REMARKS @ Lecture Hall in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
<b>MMS/ICTMD</b> <b>Panel 1</b> 15:00-17:00 15:00 15:30 16:00 16:30	<b>The body and Movement</b> Chair: Vanessa Paloma Elbaz  Clara Wenz, University of Würzburg, <i>Under Sensory Siege: Egypt's Dancing Horses</i>  Corinne Frayssinet Savy, Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, <i>Poétiques du sonore incarné dans la danse flamenca d'aujourd'hui</i>  Dorit Klebe, Berlin University of the Arts, <i>The Performance of Aşuk ile Maşuk [Lover and Beloved] – a burlesque dance with belly, pelvic and abdominal muscles' movements</i>  Elena Murarotto, Università degli studi di Padova, <i>Arab and Turkish dances in early 19th century Sudan in the testimony of Gian Battista Brocchi</i>
17:00-17:30	<b>TEA/COFFEE @ Main entrance in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
<b>MMS/ICTMD</b> <b>Panel 2</b> 17:30-19.00 17:30 18:00 18:30	<b>The Body and Masculinity</b> Chair: Sergio Bonanzinga  Alenka Bartulović, University of Ljubljana, <i>Sevdalinka as an »infection«: Bodies, affect and men in the Balkans</i>  Jane Sylvester, University of Missouri-Kansas City, <i>Puppetries of Verismo: Destabilizing Masculine Autonomy in Post-Unification Italian Opera</i> [online]  Terence Sinclair, University of Cambridge, <i>Fireworks and heritage: the sound of the castrato in the 1870s</i>
<b>DAY 2</b> <b>Tuesday</b> <b>24<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	<b>9:00 - 9:30 Registration @ Registration – Book display, Museum tour @ Lecture Hall in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
<b>MMS/ICTMD</b> <b>Panel 3</b> 9:30-11:00	<b>The Šiḥāt's Legacy: Body and Gender in Moroccan Popular Music</b> Chair: Hélène Secheyaye

9:30	Ghassan El Hakim, Independent researcher, <i>Archéologie de la 'aiṭa : Réinventer un corps au mot 'aiṭa</i>
10:00	Amine Nawny & Cheikha Warda, Independent artists, <i>La gender fluidité dans la danse et le chant ša'bi</i>
10:30	Laïla Amezian & Hélène Secheyaye, FRS-FNRS, Laboratoire de Musicologie, ULB/Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles, <i>Ġannayāt and ša'bi in the diaspora: Static Bodies Generating Trance</i>
11:00-11:30	<b>TEA/COFFEE @ Main entrance in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
<b>MMS/CTMD</b>	<b>The Body and Femininity</b>
<b>Panel 4</b>	Chair: Salvatore Morra
11:30-13:00	
11:30	Bàrbara Duran, Universitat de les Illes Balears, Institut de Musicologia Pau Villalonga, <i>The female body as a tool of vindication: the case of the dimònies of Manacor (Mallorca, Balearic Islands)</i>
12:00	Olivier Tourny, IDEAS, CNRS, Aix-Marseille Université, <i>The 'angel's voice'. When a female voice invites itself into the sacred polyphony of the male brotherhood of Speloncato (Corsica)</i> [online]
12:30	Ruth Davis, University of Cambridge, <i>'Embodying the Sacred Feminine: Songs for the Ghriba of Djerba'</i>
13:00-15:00	<b>LUNCH @free</b>
<b>MMS/CTMD</b>	<b>Materialities of Engendered Bodies</b>
<b>Panel 5</b>	Chair: Maria Rizzuto
15:00-16:30	
15:00	Firdevs Mizan, Independent researcher, <i>Effect of Gender Role on The Dhikr Experience: Body Movement Differences</i>
15:30	Rachel Pinhasi, Oded Erez, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, <i>On Livelihood: All-women DJ courses between the material and the spiritual</i> [Q&A online]
16:00	Alma Bejtullahu, University of Würzburg, <i>The transformation of the body and gender in cases of Kosovan</i>
16:30-17:00	<b>TEA/COFFEE @ Main entrance in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
<b>Panel 6</b>	<b>Body in Sacred Movement</b>
17:00-18:30	Chair: Ruth Davis
17:00	Mohammed Hamdouni, University of Bologna, <i>Role of Non-Verbal Communication in Regulating and Organizing Ritual Performances: A Case Study of Gnawa Ritual Ceremonies</i> [online]

18:00	Sara Antonini, Sapienza. <i>Analysis of a ḥaḍra in Gorjani: music, spiritual figures and dance</i>
18:30	Meriem Alaoui Btarny, University Cote d'Azur – LIRCES, <i>Gnawa musicalities and variations in dancing bodies</i>
<b>19.00-19.30</b>	<b>PUPPETS SHOW, <i>Opera dei Pupi</i> @ Lecture Hall in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
<b>DAY 3</b> <b>Wednesday</b> <b>25<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	<b>9:00 - 9:30 Registration @ Registration – Book display, Museum tour @ Lecture Hall in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
<b>MMS/ICTMD</b>	<b>The Body, Music and Health</b>
<b>Panel 7</b>	Chair: Ignazio Macchiarella
09:30-11:00	
09:30	Simona Frasca, Università di Napoli Federico II, <i>The body, memory and care through music</i>
10:00	John Plemmenos, Academy of Athens, <i>The “silent flesh” and the “singing heart”: Aspects of corporeal communion with the sacred in modern-Greek liturgy</i> [online]
10:30	Girolamo Garofalo, Università degli Studi di Palermo, <i>Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord [...] praise him with the timbrel and dance</i>
<b>11:00-11:30</b>	<b>TEA/COFFEE @ Main entrance in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
<b>MMS/ICTMD</b>	<b>The Body and Dance Practice</b>
<b>Panel 8</b>	Chair: Simona Frasca
11:30-13:00	
11:30	Sara Islán Fernández, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, <i>Govend in transition: an ethnographic exploration of govend dances' s commemorative and performative power in two different contexts or practice</i> [online]
12:00	Liqaa Marooki, Sorbonne University-France, <i>Between Cosmic Samâ'; and Communal Govand: The Representation of the “Sacred” in the Gestural Codes Used in the Ritual Dances of the Yezidi Community in Northern Iraq</i>
12:30	Simona D'Agostino, University of Rome Tor Vergata, <i>The ritual tarantella. Devotional dance practices in Calabria and Sicily</i>
<b>13:00-15:00</b>	<b>LUNCH @free</b>
<b>MMS/ICTMD</b>	<b>Body, Analysis and Methodology</b>
<b>Panel 9</b>	Chair: Placida Staro
15:00-16:30	
15:00	Francesco Magarò, Conservatorio "L. Perosi" - Campobasso, <i>Imitating and creating mimetic learning as a tool for cross-generational social and performative mediation. The case of Le Mystrere de voix calabrese in the Italian province of Catanzaro</i>

15:30	Eliana Danzi Università degli studi di Palermo, Ignazio Macchiarella, Università di Cagliari, <i>Music embodiment: an interdisciplinary research experience</i>
16:00	Salvatore Morra, Università degli studi della Tuscia, <i>Making the Tunisian 'Ūd 'Arbī, Crafting Wood by Hands</i>
16:30-17:00	<b>TEA/COFFEE @ Main entrance in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
17:00-19.00	<b>BUSINESS MEETING @ Lecture Hall in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
20.00	<b>SOCIAL DINNER @ Rastaurant La Cambusa</b>
<b>DAY 4</b> <b>Thursday</b> <b>26<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	<b>9:00 - 9:30 Registration @ Registration – Book display, Museum tour @ Lecture Hall in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
<b>MMS/ICTMD</b>	<b>The Body, Sound and Intimacy</b>
<b>Panel 10</b>	Chair: Dorit Klebe
9:30-11:00	
9:30	Abigail Wood, University of Haifa, <i>Embodying the sounds of celebration: Reflections on Palestinian Arab wedding musicians in the Galilee region</i>
10:00	Placida Staro, Independent researcher, <i>Inclusion, Brotherhood, and Intimacy in Dance and Music</i>
10:30	Vanessa Paloma Elbaz, University of Cambridge, <i>Mediatic Inscriptions of Sonic Technologies: Physical Scriptory Reduction and Sonic Expansion as Body Phenomenology in Ottoman Jewish Sound</i>
11:00-11:30	<b>TEA/COFFEE @ Main entrance in The Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum</b>
<b>MMS/ICTMD</b>	<b>Intersection between Environment and Material Culture</b>
<b>Panel 11</b>	Chair: Abigail Wood
11:30-13.30	
11:30	Ed Emery, SOAS - University of London, <i>Bodies in stasis. Bodies in flight. New musical inflections of the body. The Harraga songs of trans-Mediterranean small-boat migration from c. 2010</i>
12:00	Kawkab Tawfik, Institut français d'archéologie orientale/CEDEJ, <i>Embodying the water: performing Salīla's zār ritual [online]</i>
12:30	Sergio Bonanzinga, University of Palermo, <i>Technical rhythms and expressive values: the body as an ergological "instrument"</i>
13:00	Marco Lutz, Università di Cagliari, <i>Investigating musical gesture through new technologies in the launeddas (Sardinia)</i>
13:30-15:00	<b>LUNCH @free</b>
<b>MMS/ICTMD</b>	<b>The Body and Spirituality</b>
<b>Panel 12</b>	Chair: Marco Lutz
15:00-17:00	

15:00	Emanuele Tumminiello, Sapienza Università di Roma, <i>The centrality of the body in the rites of the Ghanaian Christian community in Palermo (Sicily)</i>
15:30	Maria Rizzuto, Università degli studi di Palermo, <i>From Chanting to Silence Music and Experience in the Body in the Christian Communities of the East in Today's Sicily</i>
16:00	Giuseppe Sanfratello, University of Catania, <i>The body of the voice in the liturgical chant practice of Lixouri</i>
16:30	Naomi Cohn Zentner, Bar Ilan University, <i>Religious Ritual Reenacted</i>
17:00-18:00	<b>CLOSING</b>



## ABSTRACTS

*Under Sensory Siege: Egypt's 'Dancing' Horses*  
**Clara Wenz** (University of Würzburg)

Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork in Cairo and the Nile Delta, my paper focuses on a popular Egyptian tradition known as *raqs al-kheil* ("dance of the horse"). The *raqs al-kheil* is a form of individual equestrian ballet that is performed during wedding celebrations, life cycle events as well as designated festivals and national competitions. Accompanied by the sound of the *mizmar* (double reed flute) and the *tabla baladi* (large drum with a wooden frame), the horse executes a series of movements, of which the most important is the so-called *murabb'a* ("square"), a collected on-the-spot trot which bears resemblance to the European piaffe. My aim in this paper is to highlight the *murabb'a* as a ritual that puts discourses on religion, race, and masculinity into (an often violent) bodily practice. I will do so by focusing on the different objects, instruments, and stimuli through which this "dance" move is devised. From the metal ring weights that are placed around the horse's legs to develop its muscle power, the sugar crane used to force its body into the proper collection, the severe bridle that constrains its head in the desired arche position, to the sound systems that blast out the accompanying amplified folk music. As I will argue, these devices and stimuli, by essentially placing its body under sensory siege, mould the dancing Egyptian horse into an embodiment of a particular ethno-national imagination.

*Poétiques du sonore incarné dans la danse flamenca d'aujourd'hui*  
**Corinne Frayssinet Savy** (Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3)

À la croisée des sound studies et de l'anthropologie de la danse, je conçois une écologie du corps sonore née de l'étude de la culture choréo-musicale du flamenco, et ouverte aux interactions culturelles, artistiques et esthétiques entre mémoires et corporités du sonore. Cette écologie du corps sonore est envisagée à partir des processus performanciers – in situ ou enregistrés, musicaux et dansés –, poétiques et esthésiques dans l'ouvrage original inédit *Le corps sonore*. Contribution à une musicologie générale de la danse flamenca selon Israel Galván, Andrés Marín et Rocío Molina de mon dossier HDR intitulé *Mémoires et corporités du sonore*. Contribution à une musicologie générale des techniques du corps (2022). Cette écologie sonore permet d'appréhender de façons polysensorielle et multidimensionnelle le son, l'acoustique et le visuel depuis le geste jusqu'au corps sonore performanciel dans sa dimension environnementale. Elle vise un récit de la fabrication du sonore au regard des esthétiques expérimentées à travers les technologies de production et de conservation du son. Elle en vient à interroger la mémoire individuelle et collective dans la création contemporaine en danse flamenca au regard de l'histoire de l'enregistrement. Associé aux acteurs de la performance dansée flamenca – les musiciens et les danseurs, voire les spectateurs-musiciens –, l'ingénieur du son apporte de nouvelles compétences et des expertises d'usage. Dès lors, une théorie de l'extension du corps vers le sonore, lui-même extension du musical s'impose en dialogue avec les propositions chorégraphiques de danseurs chorégraphes majeurs du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle et leurs pensées de la danse flamenca.

*The Performance of Aşuk ile Maşuk [Lover and Beloved] – a burlesque dance with belly, pelvic and abdominal muscles' movements*  
**Dorit M. Klebe** (Berlin University of the Arts, chair of the ICTMD National Committee for Germany)

"Dramatic village performances [in Anatolia] having their roots in the ancient societies, are based on the practices of mankind, who had been weak against the forces of nature and helpless in solving nature's secrets, with the aim of rendering themselves strong against nature" (M.Özhan 1999). These acts are f.i. celebrations of the hunters to get authority over the animals, like camels, stags, bears, horses, cattles. In the agricultural area, these are ceremonies and magical practices f.i. sowing (*sabanla işlemek*) or rain ceremonies. As part of my field research in Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean on festivities involving the whole village, the couple Aşuk ile Maşuk played by men

was very popular. The dancers had covered heads and arms, their naked bellies got painted with the contours of a large face and the mutual touches of the bellies allow for multi-layered interpretations. Aşuk, the passionate lover (from Arabic = 'ishq) and Maşuk, the beloved (outdated vulgar language) perform not only in Anatolian villages but also in county towns, integrated in traditional masked mime plays on stage (M.And 1976). During my studies in the sense of "urban ethnomusicology" in Berlin, I also discovered this pairing of dancers at a festival of Turkish music culture in 1999, organized by the professional dancer Sabri Baybaş, who gratefully could provide me with valuable informations. In my paper I will demonstrate the dramaturgy of the dance of Aşuk ile Maşuk and investigate its musical settings in various contexts.

*Arab and Turkish dances in early 19th century Sudan from the travelogue of Gian Battista Brocchi*  
**Elena Murarotto** (Università degli studi di Padova)

During the 19th century, Venetian travellers to Sudan documented in their diaries the musical and choreographic traditions of the peoples they encountered. These types of evidence, though often accompanied by a lack of understanding of the experienced cultural manifestations and occasional judgments, constitute a valuable source to document the musical history and the functions attributed to dance within oral traditions before the invention of recording instruments. One of the travellers particularly attuned to these aspects was the geologist Gian Battista Brocchi (1772-1827). His expedition, carried out from 1821 to 1827, is documented in the autograph manuscript titled "Giornale delle osservazioni fatte ne' viaggi in Egitto, nella Siria, nella Nubia", preserved in the Biblioteca Civica di Bassano del Grappa (TV). In his diary, Brocchi primarily focuses on the results of the mineralogical expedition entrusted to him by the Viceroy of Egypt. However, he also pays attention on describing the sounds produced by animals and objects, Arab and Turkish musical instruments, and the role of dance in both large festive occasions and in everyday life. In particular, the author meticulously observes the gesticulations and energy of the dancers' movements, assigning significant importance to the use of the body in artistic representation and various performances. Brocchi's observations capture the sound and choreographic dimensions of Sudan in the early 19th century, reflecting the Western perspective on encounters with the other and the cultural intersections of the time.

*Sevdalinka as an »infection«: Bodies, affect and men in the Balkans*  
**Alenka Bartulović** (University of Ljubljana)

*Sevdalinka* is a traditional music genre that gradually developed in parts of the Balkans during the Ottoman era. It is often characterised by the Turkish-derived vocabulary that usually praises the melancholy of love, loss and sorrow. *Sevdah*, or yearning for love, after which the genre is named, has several meanings, including love, passion, melancholy, intense longing and black bile. While these feelings dominate, the songs are also associated with other emotional states, namely *ćeif* and *merak*, which represent good mood, enjoyment and pleasure. As "a form of aesthetic expectation with porous boundaries allowing complex audience identifications" (Berlant 2008, 4), *sevdalinka* has been "stretched" and constantly redefined since its emergence. As a genre of affective intensities, it is often gendered. This paper will focus on the intersection of bodily experiences and affective political potentiality of the genre in the early 20th century. It aims to demonstrate how learning to be influenced by music through social interaction has often been interpreted within a Balkanist framework. Thus, it will examine how *sevdalinka* was used as a tool for othering the Balkans, enabling the reproduction of balkanistic notions of 'unreasonable men.' Contrary to prevailing ideas, this paper will also argue that *sevdalinka* as a transformative genre embodies the tensions associated with interpretations and negotiations of 'Balkan masculinity'.

*Puppetries of Verismo: Destabilizing Masculine Autonomy in Post-Unification Italian Opera*  
**Jane Sylvester** (University of Missouri-Kansas City)

Beginning in 1886, hundreds of men were hypnotized in theaters throughout northern Italy. While spectators applauded acts of farce and violence, psychologists studied the gestures of these

hypnotized performers to hypothesize whether their actions emerged from the human unconscious, or whether they were the result of the hypnotist's force. Psychologist Enrico Morselli compared these men to "a dramatic artist who intends to represent different parts in a comedy or tragedy" (Morselli, 1886). Using Morselli's remarks as a springboard, I examine how experimental practices in verismo-era theater and opera offered new ways of articulating masculine psychology and self-sovereignty in late ottocento Italy. Through selected scene study featuring male characters, I argue that verismo opera subverted prior Italianate hierarchies of voice, orchestration, and embodiment to destabilize notions of heroic Risorgimento masculinity, resulting in novel antiheroes that were more puppet-like than human. Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (1892), in particular, features Canio, a Calabrian man who loses his capacity for self-determination. His stylized vocals and surrounding meta-theatrics prompt his psychological transformation from a man into a strangely ventriloquized marionette. At stake was a prevalent concern of the era: whether Italian men—from North to South—still possessed the capacity for autonomous expression within a newly unified state. Ultimately, this paper shows that the novel expressive modes of verismo insinuated darker futures and looming nationalistic agendas: men of post-Unification Italy, particularly of the South, may altogether lack a sense of interiority, destined to be externally controlled like Carlo Collodi's famed Pinocchio.

*Fireworks and heritage: the sound of the castrato in the 1870s*

**Terence Sinclair** (University of Cambridge)

Eighteenth-century musicians prized castrato voices: male sopranos whose voices were permanently preserved in a state of pre-puberty. By the 1830s composers considered this voice type outdated and unattractive; in Italy "eviration" was finally made illegal across Italy in 1861 as part of the changes to the penal code that followed unification although existing castrati might still be heard in church. However, during the mid-1800s vocal requirements for Italian opera singers had changed considerably. Whereas Rossinian models required agility and brilliance, increasingly sheer vocal power was now required. Orchestras were larger with larger brass sections and new opera houses, such as the Teatro Massimo in Palermo, tended to be larger as Italy recovered from the late-1860s recession. This paper discusses the impact of a group of composers and musicologists who chose to signal their enthusiasm for the "antico" ideal, by flagging their personal connection to Girolamo Crescenti (1762-1846), a male soprano whose career had flourished in the 1790s. They sought to celebrate the Neapolitan baroque. As a result, they emphasised a now-unfashionable vocal technique, based on a particular larynx isolation and rejected the muscular chest voice, made famous by Gilbert Duprez, which is ubiquitous today. However, the most striking feature of the association with Crescenti was a romantic nostalgia for a sound these composers had not heard in theatres for decades: the heroic voice of the castrato.

*Archéologie de la 'aiṭa: Réinventer un corps au mot 'aiṭa*

**Ghassan El Hakim** (independent researcher)

La 'aiṭa est décrite comme étant le chant des *ṣīḥāt* (Génini 1988), poétesses, chanteuses, danseuses et parfois guerrière très actives à l'époque caïdale, fin XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Étymologiquement, le mot *ṣīḥa* vient du *dāriḡa* (dialecte parlé marocain) et veut dire l'appel ('ayeṭ, t'yaṭ, 'ayyaṭ). Dans l'usage quotidien du marocain dès la fin de l'empire (1895-1912), 'aiṭa désigne de manière plus générale la « chanson » ('aiṭa de Bouhmmara, 'aiṭa de Moulay Brahim, 'aiṭa *tkabat el-heil*...). À travers une chronologie ré-inventée basée sur des sources orales, des témoignages et des archives sonores (archives de la parole), nous retracerons la vie de ce mot et son évolution jusqu'au *ṣa'bt* (musique populaire), et surtout marquerons la différence entre ces deux genres musicaux souvent confondus par le grand public et parfois même dans les médias. Nous nous appuyerons sur le travail sous-estimé effectué par les *ṣīḥāt* elles-mêmes qui ont réussi, indirectement, à sauvegarder ce patrimoine en le transmettant de *ṣīḥa* en *ṣīḥa*, en le dissimulant parfois afin d'échapper à la censure des autorités coloniales (1912-1956), puis à celle imposé par la modernisation du pays après l'indépendance et qui voulait rompre avec toute manifestation culturelle le liant à la chute de l'empire (1956 - ...).

*La genderfluidité dans la danse et le chant ša'bī*

**Amine Nawny & Cheikha Warda** (independent artists)

Au Maroc, la danse *ša'bī* est une forme d'expression populaire qui a évolué au fil des siècles. Elle se caractérise par des rythmes entraînants, des mouvements joyeux et une célébration de la culture marocaine populaire. Cette pratique remonte à une tradition féminine ancestrale, transmise de génération en génération. Elle trouve ses racines dans les rites et les coutumes souvent réalisés dans les cérémonies les plus importantes (Doutté, 1909) : la fin de la récolte, l'*'Aīd el-Kebīr* (fête du sacrifice) ou encore les mariages. Le carnaval des Jbalas (Hachim 2016), dans la région du Rif occidental, est un exemple ultime de la culture de transformation, où les hommes se déguisent en plusieurs personnages grotesques qui appellent au spectacle, pendant plusieurs jours qui suivent la fête de l'*'Aīd el-Kebīr*. Ces spectacles sont souvent accompagnés de tambours (*tbāl*) et des musiques de hautbois (*ǧaiṭa*). Cette pratique de la transformation a été pratiquée également dans le milieu urbain, notamment à Casablanca, par des hommes qui se transformaient en femme. Parmi les plus célèbres de ces hommes, Bouchaib Bidaoui, né à Casablanca en 1928, est adopté par des femmes *šīhāt* de la médina de Casablanca et devient l'adepte de cet art, à un tel point qu'il utilise la transformation dans la résistance anti-coloniale. Bouchaib Bidaoui devient, dans les années 50, la vedette des radios et des théâtres de Casablanca. Il devient membre principal de la troupe du théâtre Alkwakib, où il a chanté et dansé le *ša'bī* jusqu'en 1965. Il transmettra à son tour cet art à Abdellah Bidaoui, qui continuera de pratiquer la danse et le chant jusqu'en 2011. Cette présentation retrace leur parcours.

*Ġannayāt and ša'bī in the diaspora: Static Bodies Generating Trance*

**Laïla Amezian & Héléne Secheyaye** (FRS-FNRS, Laboratoire de Musicologie, ULB / Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles)

Several public figures transmitting the choreographic heritage of the *šīhāt* are Moroccan dancers living abroad: Esraa Warda and Soumaya MaRose in the USA, Nawarra in the UK... Choosing to adopt a meta-position, these women artists practice and teach popular dance outside traditional structures. On the other hand, in the traditional community contexts observed in the Moroccan diaspora of Brussels (weddings, engagements), very few female singers dance on stage; neither do female dancers appear on public stages. The staticity of female singers' bodies in Brussels reflects the paradox raised by Ciucci (2010): if the figure of the *šīha* has recently been revalued, it is at the cost of invisibilizing aspects having to do with taboos, of which the body is a part. Thus, the body remains negatively connoted, a legacy of colonial thinking that more radical Islamist ideologies seized upon to perpetuate dominations after Moroccan independence. However, without making use of their bodies, female musicians take on the role of mediums of others' physical outlet. Indeed, the *ġannayāt* ("singers"), who do not dance, have among other functions to elicit dance, pushing to an explosion of joy (*našāṭ*, Kapchan 2003) that is sometimes pushed to the point of physical trance by the participants. Finally, while female musicians from the Brussels diaspora dance little, their bodies remain an object of sometimes subtle resistance to societal norms, mainly through modes of dress: for example, some female musicians wearing headscarves in concert thereby affirm that combining active Muslim faith and musical practice is not a paradox for them.

*The female body as a tool of vindication: the case of the dimònies of Manacor*

**Bàrbara Duran Bordoy** (University of the Balearic Islands, Pau Villalonga Musicology Institution)

Saint Anthony's Day (17th January) is one of the most loved festivities by the Mallorcan young generation, but also the eldest ones. On the one hand, it gathers music, dance and mediterranean gastronomy. On the other hand, it displays some powerful elements of the patriarchal society: the Devil, accompanied by the Demons (notice the language used here), dance for hours visiting different places of each town. Some scholars have studied this festivity from different approaches: Vives (2009) and Vicens (2010) describe its deep roots in the rural Mallorca and the social and visual

elements displayed; Duran (2017) reinterprets the festival as an initiation ritual and traces a parallelism within raves. Genovart (2014) studies the phallic and powerful male symbols displayed during the celebration. The right to dance as the Devil has been inherited by some families in each town. A feminist association, Assemblea Antipatriarcal of Manacor, claimed for the women's right to dance as a Devil. They proposed an alternative performance changing the "official" space, the gender (the Devil's role is danced by a woman) but keeping the emotion linked with identity and ethnicity. (Magowan & Wrazen 2013, Liska 2017, Snyder 2018). The female body is used by the Assemblea Patriarcal as a powerful tool of vindication. New demon costumes for the women dancers and a photography exhibition of female bodies during the menstruation were the new gender icons introduced. The Patronat (the official organizer) accepted the first woman dancing as a demon in 2023.

*The 'angel's voice'. When a female voice invites itself into the sacred polyphony of the male brotherhood of Speloncato (Corsica)*

**Olivier Tourny** (IDEAS, CNRS, Aix-Marseille Université)

Corsican sacred polyphony is based on an ensemble of three male singers, who respectively provide the middle voice (*secunda*), the bass voice (*bassu*) and the upper voice (*terza*). The *secunda* initiates and leads the song, while the polyphony then settles in with the entry of the bass, followed by the *terza*. The voices are strong, often forced. Our presentation is based on two missions carried out in 2023 on the musical tradition of the village of Speloncato (Balagne, Haute-Corse), renowned for the richness of its polyphonic sacred repertoire, the quality of its cantors and the dynamism of its brotherhood. The recording of the entire corpus reveals that a fourth voice emerges here and there, at certain moments and under certain conditions, to enrich the polyphony in the treble. Three men's voices, and a fourth, the "voice of the angel" spoken of in Corsica, without ever really knowing how to identify it, explain it, let alone analyze it. Our work in progress will shed first light on this phenomenon.

*Embodying the Sacred Feminine: Songs for the Ghriba of Djerba*

**Ruth Davis** (University of Cambridge)

The Ghriba is an ancient synagogue on the Tunisian island of Djerba said to be founded by priests fleeing the destruction of the First Jerusalem Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. The priests carried with them relics of the Temple which they incorporated into the foundations of the synagogue. Each year in spring, pilgrims of Tunisian heritage gather at the Ghriba to celebrate the anniversary of the death of the second-century Kabbalist Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai who is said to have revealed the Zohar — the innermost portion of the Kabbalah — on his dying day. A central concept of the Zohar is that of the Shekhina — understood as the feminine presence of God in the world. Immediately below the Torah ark is a shrine to a mysterious female saint, also known as Ghriba, who came to live by the Jews of Djerba. She died consumed by flames but her body remained miraculously intact. The pilgrimage is remarkable for the prominent role played by women, normally excluded from synagogue worship on Djerba, and for a ritual performed exclusively by women which involves placing eggs and candles at the shrine of the Ghriba. The highlight of the celebrations is a communal ritual in which a five-tier candelabrum is dressed in multi-coloured shawls to resemble a bride and carried in a procession to the nearby Jewish village. The entire process is accompanied by the singing of piyyutim — sacred poetry, nominally in Hebrew, but sometimes also in Arabic, set to tunes of popular songs in the vernacular. My presentation will demonstrate how Kabbalist concepts of the sacred feminine, embodied in the mythology of the Ghriba and the rituals of the pilgrimage, are developed and elaborated upon in the piyyutim that accompany the dressing and processing of the candelabrum.

*Effect of Gender Role on The Dhikr Experience: Body Movement Differences*  
**Firdevs Mizan** (Independent researcher)

Devran dhikr is performed every Thursday at the Turkish Sufi Music and Folklore Foundation, commonly known as the Nureddin Jerrahi Lodge, located in the Karagümrük district of the Fatih district of Istanbul. Men actively participate in the Devran dhikr ritual in the lodge's square as musicians and dervishes within the Devran, while women observe from above and take part in various ways. While the ceremony is the same for men and women, in reality, the experiences of the two groups are vastly different. These distinctions can be summarized as follows based on what I've learned from some of my participant observations: Men participate actively in dhikr, both vocally and physically. And because the rings of dhikr are ordered from inside to outside, the dervishes' incarnations are classified from most experienced to least experienced. Women, on the other hand, do not have a hierarchical sitting arrangement or mobility. As a result, they are more liberated in terms of participating in dhikr and following bodily movements. This research will investigate the gender role and body relationship of ritual movement in light of the data from structured interviews conducted during fieldwork. The gender context of the experience in the same place and ritual was compared, and the role of physical participation in this experience was also investigated.

*On Livelihood: All-women DJ Courses Between the Material and the Spiritual*  
**Rachel Pinhasi, Oded Erez** (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Over the last decade, the increasing penetration of DJs into observant Jewish-Israeli weddings and parties has given rise to a rapidly growing cadre of women DJs. This development has materialized largely through the entrepreneurship of pioneering DJs such as Miri Petel (b. 1990) and Raheli Ankri (AKA DJ DAJA, b. 1986). By leading all-women DJ courses, all-women dance parties, and by playing/working at *simchas*, their activity generated an expanding circle of over 200 practitioners, organized as a self-aware community of (variously) religious women, seeking self-fulfillment and financial independence. Importantly, DJs in this school conceive their pursuit in robustly dual professional and spiritual-emotional terms, wherein femininity is often an explicit (re)defining element of the art and the profession of DJing. Placing the DJ within a continuum of wedding professionals engaged in “affective labor” (Hardt 1999; Mason and Nimjee 2019), our paper explores discursive and performative aspects of Miri Petel’s DJing philosophy encapsulated by the phrase “*lehitparnes be-simcha*” (meaning both “to make a living with joy” and “to make a living at a party/festive occasion”). In our translation, this concept affords a resignification of term “livelihood”, as a productive intersection between (1) the “live” musical-performative experience of a dancefloor; (2) gendered aspects of a pervasive neoliberal logic conflating precarious creative labor with self-expression, and (3) emerging and expanding forms of Jewish-Israeli spirituality and religiosity. Based on an ethnographic study with Petel and her students, we interrogate the intertwined manifestation of ideological and commercial reasoning in professional women DJing, both as a form of work, and as a form of embodied performance in (choreo-musical) dialogue with its diverse audience.

*The transformation of the body and gender in cases of Kosovan women musicians*  
**Alma Bejtullahu** (University of Würzburg)

Social and political exigencies can provide a context in music for transformation of the body that can be either a cultural / social entity or body as nature. Using the modern perception of the socially constructed gender *burrnesha* or sworn virgins in Albanian tradition, I will the cases when Kosovan women musicians explore the body within this context. In these cases, the body is conceptualized either physically, when musicians have either transformed the(ir) body, or through discursive cultural practices. Usually, these transformations and representation through music convey meanings (even on a symbolical level) and address important issues in the society. I will analyze how the transformation of the body is achieved within the cultural practice by means of music. Further, I will focus on three women musicians of various musical background, in different historical situations that have variously conceptualized the body. I will examine how they undergo the process of

transformation through music. Also, I will analyze how musicians rationalize these biological / cultural transgressions in their narratives and contextualize them in the pivotal moments (such as conflict, social insecurity and women's education) of the contemporary society.

*Role of Non-Verbal Communication in Regulating and Organizing Ritual Performances: A Case Study of Gnawa Ritual Ceremonies*

**Mohammed Hamdouni** (University of Bologna)

This paper offers an in-depth exploration of the non-verbal body language exhibited by performers involved in Gnawa ritual ceremonies. With a focus on the meta-linguistic level, we investigate how these non-verbal cues serve to regulate and organize the stages of the ritual. Drawing upon ethnographic observations and interviews conducted within Gnawa communities, this research establishes a comprehensive framework to analyze the various non-verbal cues employed by performers throughout the ritual. Our study uncovers a variety of body movements, gestures, facial expressions, and spatial configurations that contribute to a nuanced communication system embedded within the ceremony. We analyze the function of this non-verbal body language in the ritual's implementation. By observing and decoding these meta-linguistic cues, we shed light on their role in regulating the flow of the ceremony, coordinating the performers' actions, and ensuring the synchronization of musical and spiritual elements. Additionally, we examine how body language facilitates communication with the spectators, creating a participatory atmosphere within the ritual space. We address the question of how these movements and gestures encode cultural values, depict spiritual intentions, and establish hierarchical relationships among performers.

*Analysis of a ḥadra in Gorjani: music, spiritual figures and dance*

**Sara Antonini** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

Located in the city of Tunis, the *zāwiya* of Gorjani is a mausoleum dedicated to the cult of the Tunisian saint Sayyda Mannūbiyya. Every Monday, starting in the early afternoon, this location hosts a *ḥadra* in honour of the saint. Its performance, still scarcely studied despite the widespread devotional consent, is characterised by almost exclusively female participation and is presided over by the presence of a musical group usually consisting of a small number of female singers and percussionists. Through the performance of the praises of the saints, the female musicians nominate and celebrate various spiritual figures, accompanying their descent into ritual space to heal and alleviate states of malaise through dance and therapeutic trance. In this contribution, resulting from an ethnographic research that started in 2022, I consider the ceremonial unfolding of a *ḥadra* celebrated on 4 December 2023 at the *zāwiya* of Gorjani to discuss some choreutic-musical aspects. Starting from a temporal analysis of the ceremony, which I filmed in its entirety, I intend to focus on sound and musical elements, including the relationships between the musicians and the musical strategies enacted to facilitate and guide the choreographic action. In doing so, it will be possible to highlight the dynamics of the devotees' participation through dance and therapeutic trance and underline the reciprocal interactions between music, dance and spiritual figures that characterise the ceremonial experiences at the *zāwiya* of Gorjani.

*Gnawa musicalities and variations in dancing bodies*

**Meriem Alaoui Btarny** (University Cote d'Azur – LIRCES)

A community practicing a therapeutic cult of possession known as *lila*, the Gnawa have the ability to ally themselves with genies, to dialogue with the invisible, during ritual nights combining dance and rapture, play and drama. Possession is experienced in terms of authentic personality substitutions. It's not men who travel into the world of the invisible, it's the invisible that penetrates the world of men, and this process of splitting is translated into gestures. And so, for a few hours, the supernatural entity rushes in, possesses, dances, delivers and heals. The spectacle of the *lila* offers a wide variety of trance-like states, with bodies undulating, writhing in pain, some seized by convulsions. And yet, to understand social space, we need to "know the world through the body" (Bourdieu, 1997). When

dancing, the possessed leap, soar, whirl, they are in another space. Through self-abandonment, the dancing being becomes a swirl of codes, a language. The "ethnodrama" of the lila allows for variations in possession dances. The dance is far from static, and the same possessed person can radiate ecstasy and uncontrollable fury at the same time. Current performances between Gnawa and international musicians feature the encounter of two ensembles, and some spectators regularly enter into a "festive trance" (Kapchan, 2007). So how do dancing bodies articulate and perform musical elsewhere in new spaces?

*The body, memory and care through music*

**Simona Frasca** (Università di Napoli Federico II)

Music creates contexts and from these it draws the multiplicity of its manifestations. This condition determines music as a language of contemporary living. One example comes from the medical field that is the subject of this proposal. The emergency medicine department of the Orthopedic Trauma Center of Naples (C.T.O.) has been operating an innovative - and still not officially recognized - pain care protocol, the name of which is Mixed by Erry - a brand linked to the world of music piracy whose I have been investigated in over the years. The protocol prescribes the exclusive use of music for its analgesic potential. The scope of care thus conceived creates a space/context in which patients and health care personnel establish solid coordinates of emotional communication to the point that the patient undergoing highly invasive maneuvers does not feel pain and the anesthetic power shifts from chemistry to music. The patient feels the touch of the hands and the doctor's voice. He jokes, laughs and remembers according to that mechanism of episodic-emotional memory that music is able to resurface. According Irène Deliège's reflections on music perception and Kay Kaufman Shelemay's (*contrafactum* as an activator of nostalgia), I will try to describe the body as a physical repository of personal memories that music is able to activate by guiding the body to the best benefit for itself; this, according to the ancient and still fascinating theories of Ernst Heinrich Weber, because the individual is not sensitive to absolute differences but only to relative ones.

*The "silent flesh" and the "singing heart": Aspects of corporeal communion with the sacred in modern-Greek liturgy*

**John Plemmenos** (Academy of Athens)

This paper seeks to discuss the place (physical and conceptual) of human body in modern Greek-Orthodox liturgical practice vis-à-vis the official ecclesiastical laws as well as the relevant iconography. This is an inconvenient issue that has not been taken seriously so far by musicologists and theologians alike and, therefore, awaits an explanation. In broad lines, in Greek-Orthodox rite, cantors, priests, and the congregation are expected (by the canons and the spiritual counselors) to remain silent and to stand still during services. This is theoretically the opposite of what happens in other religious groups (such as the whirling dervishes) where to attain the divine, one should remain active (though in a rather prescribed way) throughout the ceremony. In practice, however, any religious service in modern Greece is a quite vivid and often noisy event, at times mimicking a human "beehive"! People come and go for some unexpected reason, cantors anxiously search for their missing scores, and little children run through the nave chased by their distressed mothers; even clergymen are seen talking to each other at intervals in the sanctuary. To this one may add the rich pictorial images (frescoes) on the church walls showing various sacred personages (such as King David) moving around, playing musical instruments, even dancing! To this author, this bodily behavior can be interpreted as a) a natural reaction to the strict (and centuries-old) ecclesiastical laws, b) a filling up of people's limited participation (compared to what happens in Catholic and Protestant denominations), and c) a remnant of their Ottoman past when several Greeks are reported to have attended dervish ceremonies (both as guests and musicians).



*Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord [...] praise him with the timbrel and dance*  
**Girolamo Garofalo** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

In the Byzantine rite as in all other traditions of the Christian East, both pre-Chalcedonian and Chalcedonian, the bodily movements of both the celebrants and the faithful are often particularly full of profound symbolic connotations. The prostrations and bows, the signs of the cross repeated countless times, the various gestures of reverence, the processions (both “ordinary” and solemn) with which the deacons, the celebrants, the clergy (sometimes the faithful too) move within the sanctuary or outside the church, constitute an integral and indispensable part of the ritual actions together with many other elements (readings and cantillations, chants, icons, incenses, perfumes, natural and candles lights). In some traditions of the Christian East and Orient, certain ceremonies even involve real dance movements, more or less stylized, by the celebrants and the faithful. Lord, our God, the “crowns of glory and honor” placed on their heads symbolize the honored martyrs who shed their blood and gave their lives for Christ and their fellow men. Like the crown of martyrdom, the crown is the reward of a well-lived marriage: a crown of sacrifice and donation. It's a glimpse of a glorious marital end! The Groom and Bride crown (marry) each other with these words: "Lord our God, crown them with glory and honor." In the Byzantine rite, in particular, a significant example is that of the so-called *Dance of Isaiah* which takes place during the *Ritual of the Coronation of the spouses*: first the priest places two crowns on the altar, then places them on the heads of the The Groom and of the Bride; subsequently each witness crosses the crowns three times from one head of the couple to the other; finally, after the two spouses have kissed the Gospel and the Holy Cross, they go around the altar three times together with the celebrant, while the choir sings “Lord, our God, crown them with glory and honor”.

*Govend in transition: an ethnographic exploration of govend dances' s commemorative and performative power in two different contexts or practice*  
**Sara Islán Fernández** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

Communitarian dances in southeastern Turkey, known as *govend* in Kurdish and *halay* in Turkish are performed within rural and tribal contexts, embodying and transmitting, in the sense of a repertoire (Taylor 2003), ideals of social interaction and behavior derived from tribal patriarchal ideology, enforcing specific gender roles (Islán Fernández 2022). However, in alternative communal settings, such as those organized by the "govend London" community, the same dances reveal the ability to perform alternative forms of masculinity and femininity. In this presentation, I aim to explore the idea that the performative and commemorative power, along with embodied memory, reside not only in the choreography but primarily in what I term the "meta-choreography" — a set of rules regulating how each community member engages in dances based on their social position. Contrarily to what Giurchescu suggested (1977), this set of rules is not inherently tied to the choreographic repertoire. Govend London, is an example that helps illustrate that as dances migrate to new practice contexts, the same choreographic material may adopt different meta-choreographic rules, facilitating the construction and embodiment of social interactions and activating new performative qualities through the performance of the very same dance repertoires. By ethnographically comparing these two communal practices of *govend* dances in London and southeastern Turkey, I intend to illustrate how distinct practice contexts contribute to the generation, performance, and transmission of two different types of masculinity and femineity through the development of entirely different sets of meta-choreographic rules applied to the same choreographic material.

*Between Cosmic Samâ'; and Communal Govand: The Representation of the "Sacred" in the Gestural Codes Used in the Ritual Dances of the Yezidi Community in Northern Iraq*  
**Liqaq Marooki** (Sorbonne University-France)

The dances performed during religious ceremonies, which are inevitably accompanied by the *qawwâl*, the Yezidi musicians-officiants, are not only a visual and aesthetic representation of the Yezidi community, but also provide information about how the Yazidis understand the “sacred”, and

distinguish it from the “profane”, through the gestural codes of the dancers’ body movements. The *samâ’* is a dance reserved for religious dignitaries. According to some interpretations, the number and circular movement of the dancers surrounding the fire, simulates the number and movement of the planets of the cosmos; while their gestures symbolize the angels surrounding Adam’s body during the creation of the world, according to Yazidi tradition. In this paper, we wonder about the symbolism of the position of the *qawwâl* who stand apart from the circle of dancers, whose rhythm of their movements does not follow that of the accompanying music: could we talking about an “invisible” parallel world embodied by religious dignitaries in their dances, compared to the world of the *qawwâl*? But unlike *Samâ’*, which is very reserved, *govand* is a more communal dance, open to all Yazidi and in which the music of the *qawwâl* is the center and driving force of the dance. However, despite the similarities between *govand* and the secular dance *dîlan*, in terms of the form of the dance, the body movements of the *govand* dancers and the music that accompanies them are the key elements that distinguish the two dances.

*The ritual tarantella. Devotional dance practices in Calabria and Sicily*  
**Simona D’Agostino** (University of Rome Tor Vergata)

The ethnomusicological and ethnochoreological landscape of Southern Italy presents extremely vital contexts in which traditional practices are perpetuated by each member of the community. The body-music-ritual relationship is fully expressed in some of these practices and takes on different connotations according to the different contexts: on the one hand, the relationship between a body dancing in relation to another body and to the community; on the other, that of the body dancing alone or in a group with a votive item. Among the documents I collected, I thought it appropriate to present three related to Marian pilgrimages and one to Holy Week celebrations. The *tarantella* that accompanies the pilgrimage for the feast of Madonna of Buda in San Mango d’Aquino (CZ) precedes the advancing of the feretory in front of which some of the faithful dance for short walking distances. The pilgrimage for the feast of Madonna of the Mountain at Polsi (RC), on the other hand, is characterized by the incessant presence of the *tarantella*, played and danced by the faithful who crowd the Sanctuary. In some ceremonial contexts, a close relationship of complicity between musicians and dancers can be traced. The ceremonial dance of the *grefne* for the feast of Madonna of Graces in Teana (PZ) and that of the *Rigattiate* in the Agrigento area, finally, would not have the same strength and vitality without the presence of music. The rhythm and speed of the music ‘sustains’ the dance of the votive items as they make their way through the streets of the village, relieving the fatigue of those who hold them up. Even today, body exercising in ritual actions contributes to the sacralisation of the festive space and at the same time charges the bodily dimension of the individual with power.

*Imitating and creating: mimetic learning as a tool for cross generational social and performative mediation. The case of Le Mystere de voix calabrese in the Italian province of Catanzaro*  
**Francesco Magarò** (Conservatorio "L. Perosi" - Campobasso)

Music is a multidimensional activity able to link action and social order dimensions through practices interlaced with cultural, normative, motivational aspects. The transmission of traditional musical knowledge and repertoire is deemed inseparable by the physical contact and presence of the teacher, who by performing in front of the pupil tries to convey technical-expressive skills by osmosis between bodies (a “playing by heart” linked to bodily movement) according to an ontogenetic learning that will be personally metabolised by the pupil thus producing a distinct response compared to the model: settled from a sense-motor point of view and culturally updated in relation to needs. Moreover, the performers sharing a stage mutually conform their proxemic presence. This occurs in the shared social context outlining specific inculturation, relationship and acknowledgment devices whereby the *common sense* (memory and social construction) circulates diachronically and synchronically between generations thanks to music’s affordance function. *Le mystere de voix calabres* is an ensemble of 4 young Calabrian musicians (under 35 y.o., some also attending academic studies) repropounding Polyphonic forms from the Calabrian repertoire, less investigated

from an artistic and scientific point of view. Deepening and comparing the "historical" (each of them with their teachers) and "dialectical" (establishing when they sing together) learning processes according to the stated premises is the focus of this study, in order to decline a peculiar bi-musicality feature, decrypt the musical discourse *topoi* throughout the context towards investigating the relevant meanings, which make a group's culture both stable and dynamic.

*Music embodiment: an interdisciplinary research experience*

**Eliana Danzi** (Università degli studi di Palermo), **Ignazio Macchiarella** (Università di Cagliari)

Music is not something "around us": we know it well; music is in our bodies. In performance we are sound bodies, we are what we are singing/playing. The body plays an essential role in the musical experience, whatever it may be, whether it is a performance within a cultural context marked by identity, or a group of music teachers engaged in improvisation or body music performance. This paper is the result of an interdisciplinary seminar on the topic of musical embodiment from the perspective of an ethnomusicologist interested in using dialogical methodologies to study the consciousness in the use of the body of traditional multipart singers from Sardinia, and a music pedagogue interested in the role of gesture as an expression of the self and the self-leading to the other in the urban context of Palermo. The relative distance of the research perspectives served as a stimulus to discuss the multiplicity and complexity of bodily processes related to learning, memory, performance, musical invention, and discussion about music, while keeping in mind that embodied experiences are always fundamentally about a cultural scenario rather than an abstract idea of corporeality. Our aim is to present and discuss the key elements that have emerged from our experience with a view to future expansion.

*Making the Tunisian 'ūd 'arbī, Crafting Wood by Hands*

**Salvatore Morra** (Università degli studi della Tuscia)

In line with the development of studies in the body-centered discipline of somaesthetics (Shusterman, 1999), we are currently witnessing a growth in research into music in terms of experiences of embodiment (McCartey 2004, Vitale 2010, Tarvainen 2018). Further provocative developments in the social sciences argue for the re-cognition of human body interactions with raw matter, including work of craftsmanship (Sennett 2009). Taking up the challenge of such voices, this paper will consider the relationship between body, raw material and sound, focusing on the traditional Tunisian musical instrument, 'ūd 'arbī, with which people perform contemporary mālūf, one of urban Tunisia's foremost musical genres. I explore how various aspects of body sensory perception involve the role of the craftsman and their work in evoking the instrument's musical attitude connected with Arab/Tunisian sources. My observations of instrument construction by the luthier Hedī Bēlaṣfar at the workshop of the Centre of Arab and Mediterranean Music (CMAM) in Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia, in June 2015, led me to argue that there was a relationship between the maker's hand movements and how the instrument sounded Tunisian. The interwoven sources prompt consideration of the way that carpentry experience, involving artisan-like traits, such as skill in working with the hands, real practice and thinking, challenge and shape notions of sound and acoustic territories (Labelle, 2010), while exploring the relationship between body and raw material, crafting and belonging.

*Embodying the sounds of celebration: Reflections on Palestinian Arab wedding musicians in the Galilee region*

**Abigail Wood** (University of Haifa)

Appearing before hundreds of guests every night during the summer wedding season, Palestinian Arab wedding musicians in northern Israel perform music associated with stars considered central to Arab music aesthetics, command substantial incomes, and draw significant crowds at local events. Yet in interviews, these musicians often expressed ambivalence about their role and musicianship, often citing the physical (embodied and acoustic) demands of a job which requires them to transcend the conventional boundaries of musical performance in order to fulfil the expectations of the crowd

and “light the party on fire”. Drawing upon interviews conducted during 2016-2021 with forty past and present musicians and on work by Booth, Nooshin and others, in this paper I will consider how the role of the wedding musician is discursively constructed in contrast with other more prestigious models of musicianship, how it is refracted in the particular embodied skills needed for wedding performance and qualities of musicianship invoked in the moment of performance, and how individual musicians accept or seek to transcend these demands within their individual career trajectories, while negotiating the socio-spatial limitations imposed by their status as Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel.

*Inclusion, Brotherhood, and Intimacy in Dance and Music*

**Placida Staro** (Independent researcher)

In a dance culture, which formal, communicative, structural elements define what is in / out? What must be shared in dance/music to be “part of” the community? What are the different degrees of inclusion in a music band or a dance crew? What is the way to achieve and perceive the status of a member of the social body through dance/music? Finally, what knowledge and what “feeling” stays in everyday life when the music/dance event ends? How does dancing-making music in your community – or how belonging to a dance community – change everyday life? The documentary research has been carried out since 1978 and is still ongoing; the analyses use analogue and digital tools. In this report, I will examine data from the experiences of dancing musicians. Examples will come from both video and live documentation. First, by analysing the relationships between sound and movement in a specific culture, we’ll see some clues about the relationship between musical formants and formal elements of movement. The reactions to the pandemic crisis will be a case study considering how dance/music was used to recover and evaluate the individual and the community. The paper will focus then on the problem of sharing outside dance/ music the embodied knowledge created and verified through dancing and music.

*Mediatic Inscriptions of Sonic Technologies: Physical Scriptory Reduction and Sonic Expansion as Body Phenomenology in Ottoman Jewish Sound*

**Vanessa Paloma Elbaz** (University of Cambridge)

This paper explores the semiotics of power found within sonic inscriptions in Jewish sacred and secular songbooks from the Eastern Mediterranean and their spatial reduction into the grooves of shellac in the early twentieth century. The constriction of physical inscription of sound accompanied an expansion of sounding often used by producers and singers of the Jewish minority as a corporeal space of resistance. This constriction and subsequent expansion are related to mystical teachings developed in Ottoman Palestine by Rabbi Isaac Luria in sixteenth century Safed. *Tsimtsum* – the primordial constriction before the beginning of creation, is said to repeat throughout daily life as the overarching template for all creative processes, Divine or human. It served as symbolic matrix for the nullification of the ego of the devotee as well as for the artist. Sonic nullification was often paired with cantillation and repetitions of Divine names, which were inscribed into manuscript ‘score-like’ prayerbooks for audible recitation written by Rabbi Shalom Sharabi (1720-1777). Sharabi’s followers, from the Kabbalistic Yeshiva *Beth-El*, published them in Jerusalem in the early twentieth century, after two centuries of secret circulation. Liturgical songs, recorded into grooves of shellac, traveled across religious boundaries, expanding the sonic presence of Jewish voices and the perceptions of their bodies in late Ottoman spaces. Shellac, prayerbooks and songbooks thus negotiated sonic power for vocality in combinations of constriction and expansion juggling expressions of freedom and tradition through bodies and technologies.

*Bodies in stasis. Bodies in flight. New musical inflections of the body. The Harraga songs of trans-Mediterranean small-boat migration from c. 2010*

**Ed Emery** (SOAS, University of London)

A major upcropping of Mediterranean music in the past decade has been the genre of Harraga (literally “burning” – of one’s past identity), a conjoined phenomenon of trans-national songs, musical forms and videography, predicated on the antithesis between *stasis* of bodies and *flight* of bodies. The frozen realities of unemployment, boredom, drug-taking, corruption and “no future” on the one hand, and the possibilities of “flight” across the sea. Bare life, *pace* Agamben. I start from research in Mahdia and Sfax in Tunisia, both launch-points for the illegalised cross-Mediterranean journeys of migrants and refugees. Both have a strong tradition of civic dance associated with Sufi observances. Hundreds of participants, frame drums, shawms, hand-clappings, overriding vocals an intense body-by-body rhythmic enactments. In the trans-Mediterranean migration post-2010, the small boats carry those bodies away from their societal rooting into a context of policed, individualised and isolated anomie, wherein the old musical-societal-corporeal bonds are broken and may never be recovered. As they travel, they (mostly young men) film themselves, in selfie hand-held video clips, either singing as they go, or with tracks of song superimposed. They tell of the stasis of life under corrupt government regimes, but also of the certainty of deaths at sea for some of those bodies-in-flight. Strikingly, in the transition to Europe the communal musical modes of their home communities give way to the modes of rap and hip-hop, as best expressing the anger and the protest, and the “in-myself” personhood of the narrator. The dance gestures and body stances of Sufi embodied rhythms thus give way to those of rap and hip-hop.

*Embodying the water: performing Salīla’s zār ritual*

**Kawkab Tawfik** (Institut français d’archéologie orientale/CEDEj)

*Zār* is a cult and ritual of passage and possession of north-eastern African origin used as a choreatic-musical therapy (Giannattasio 1983) which continues to be practised in Egypt, albeit to a limited extent (El Hadidi 2016, Battain 1997, Natvig 1988). The ritual functions as a mirror of its practitioners’ realities, projecting their fears and anxieties of contingent life and existential dilemmas into specific immaterial figures, called *asyād* (s. *sīd*, tr. master), which can manifest through ailments of a physical nature or psychological disorders (Lewis 1966, Nelson 1971, Lambek 2005, Kenyon 2015). Rituals are meant to satisfy the possessing *asyād* who have physical and psychological control over the humans. To attract and appease the culpable spirit, the devotee must adopt its physical and psychological characteristics, by wearing a specific costume and replicating their known mannerisms during a trance dance. The ultimate goal of the ritual is to enter a trance state in which the possessing spirit is appeased, by allowing it to indulge in the pleasures of human life: music, dance, food, and even smoke and alcohol consumption. *Salīla* is the most important *sīd* among the *Asyād al-baḥr*, the masters of the sea/water, a synecdoche referring to the Nile. It is difficult to trace *Salīla*’s origins, as she is indeed among the oldest creatures in the *asyād al-zār* pantheon and correspondences with siren creatures can be found in other Egyptian popular beliefs. Today, *Salīla* seems to represent a very deep and complex psychological state, embodying the projection of women’s frustrations in daily life. This presentation is based on multidisciplinary and participatory research carried out in Cairo and the Delta (2021-2023) and makes use of audiovisual documentation, interviews and historical investigation.

*Technical rhythms and expressive values: the body as an ergological “instrument”*

**Sergio Bonanzinga** (Università degli studi di Palermo)

The notion of ‘technical rhythm’ has been formulated by the French paleontologist, archaeologist, and anthropologist André Leroi-Gourhan (1911-1986) in a series of works that consider technology in relation to the development of language and the aesthetic dimension during the evolution of the genus Homo. The confluence of expressive values, declined according to a specific ‘local’ aesthetic, within ergological practices aimed at achieving a concrete result, such as transforming raw material

or coordinating specific group actions, is sometimes surprising. In this contribution I will offer three examples from my investigations in Sicily – the transport of grape baskets during the grape harvest, the beating of chalk, and the working of iron on the anvil – in order to highlight the deep intersection between ergology, music, and dance.

*Investigating musical gesture through new technologies in the launeddas (Sardinia)*

**Marco Lutz** (Università di Cagliari)

In instrumental music, the body serves as the medium through which an object produces sound. The interaction between the musician's body and the instrument is both a functional and cultural phenomenon that has been increasingly explored in recent years, thanks to advancements in new technologies (Godøy e Leman 2009, Clayton, Dueck & Leante's 2013). In 2007, engineer Francesco Capuzzi invented the *electroneddas*, an electronic version of the triple reed clarinet made of cane, which is widely used in southern Sardinia (*launeddas*). A few years later, I, along with a team of engineers, modified the device for research purposes, enabling the tracking of finger movements and their correlation with the produced sound. The initial findings of this research, conducted with a *launeddas* player, were published in the proceedings of the XXI Colloquium on Musical Informatics (Lutz 2016). In 2024, within the framework of a project on digital humanities and performing arts at the University of Cagliari (Alive - Digital Tools for Research and Teaching in Audiovisual Media and Performative Arts, Principal Investigator: Prof. Roberta Ferraresi), a new and more efficient device was developed, expanding the research to involve multiple musicians. In my paper, I will present the project's objectives, the methodologies employed, the research outcomes, and the potential that this new device offers for studying musical gestures on wind instruments in diverse cultural contexts.

*The centrality of the body in the rites of the Ghanaian Christian community in Palermo (Sicily)*

**Emanuele Tumminiello** (Sapienza, Università di Roma)

The Ghanaian community is the largest sub-Saharan migrant communities living in the Sicilian County Seat. The latest Istat data (National Institute of Statistics) shows that about 3,000 citizens of Ghanaian origin reside in the city of Palermo. Since the process of formation of the Ghanaian community in the Sicilian County Seat began in the first half of the 1980s, it appears today fully integrated into the urban fabric of Palermo, so much to have available their places of worship and spaces reserved for community events: among these, funeral rites and weddings are of central importance in the context of Ghanaian celebratory occasions. During the presentation, with the aid of photographs and video footage I have made, I will illustrate the centrality of the body in the communication process that distinguishes Ghanaian rituals. A symbolic communication that is not just limited to words, but which – to convey messages – takes advantage of: «manual gesticulations, facial expressions, bodily postures, rapid, heavy, or light breathing, tears, at the individual level; stylized gestures, dance patterns, prescribed silences [...]» (Victor W. Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, Performing Arts Journal Publications, New York 1982: 9). In particular, I will focus on the relationship between body and music, a body that acts on the stage led by music, and on some examples of ritual symbols that take further meanings in a diasporic context.

*From Chanting to Silence Music and Experience in the Body in the Christian Communities of the East in Today's Sicily*

**Maria Rizzuto** (Università degli studi di Palermo)

The double human and divine nature of Christ is the founding element of Christianity. This has historically taken on different ritual practices in Roman-Catholic West and in the East, in both Chalcedonian and Pre-Chalcedonian contexts. According to the Christian symbolic and spiritual universe, God has chosen to circumscribe Himself in a human body and, at the same time, He has kept His divine nature unchanged. This fact gives the believers' body a primary role of spiritual experiences. In the Eastern Christianity, be they Byzantine (Greek, Slavic, Romanian), Alexandrian (Coptic and Tewahedo) and Malabar of the Indian tradition of Saint Thomas, the rites entirely chanted

constitute a synaesthetic experience in which the body is involved in its complexity. The rite par excellence is the Divine Liturgy, in which, believers singing together with the angels, “eat the body and drink the blood of Christ”. It is possible to identify both transcultural ritual elements of the various Christian traditions and cultural specificities. The latter are manifested not only in the use of languages and melodies, but also in the way the body is involved in the rite. These elements also contribute to transmitting the cultural identity of Christian minorities in the diaspora. My paper aims at showing the threefold relationship between chanting, in its dual musical and textual component, ritual actions and the body in the different Eastern Christian traditions nowadays present in Sicily, through film documents collected during my field research.

*The body of the voice in the liturgical chant practice of Lixouri (Kefalonia)*  
**Giuseppe Sanfratello** (University of Catania)

The paper is focused on the study of the vocal style of the cantors on the island of Kefalonia, one of the seven islands of the Heptanese, an archipelago in the centre of the Mediterranean featuring its own tradition of multipart music, both in the sacred and secular contexts. Through the analysis of interviews conducted on fieldwork, two cantors from Lixouri – a town neighbouring Argostoli, the island’s capital – are presented here: Spyros Ertzos (1937-), an elderly cantor at the church of Pantokratoros and St Demetrios – the town’s cathedral –, and Nikolaos Valsamos (1980-), cantor at the monastery of Aghia Paraskevi Lepedhon, just outside the same town. They represent two distinct generations of church singers; the former displays a markedly bel canto vocal style and a very powerful, almost operatic ‘body’ of the voice, while Valsamos, although maintaining a style that is also unusual for the practice of Byzantine liturgical chant, draws more attention to voice control and a less ‘theatrical’ opening of the vowels than the former case. In these two case studies, their gestures, posture, and body movements were also observed, along with their study practices and preparatory actions for the performance of their job during religious services. From the gathered field data, I therefore suggest a discussion on the self-representation of these cantors, who through the ‘body’ of their voice, their specific gestures, and the interaction with other cantors of their choirs, leads one to consider how crucial the role of embodiment is in their music performance.

*Religious Ritual Reenacted*  
**Naomi Cohn Zentner** (Bar Ilan University)

In Israel during the past decade, there has been an upsurge of concerts performing reconstructions of entire liturgical and paraliturgical practices, bringing the Yemenite *Diwan*, High Holiday and *Slikhot* prayers and the Moroccan, Babylonian or Sepharad- Yerushalmi *Bakashot* to the commercial concert stage. The proliferation of these concerts and their popular attendance calls us to reconsider the complex positionality of musical reenactments of religious rituals and reevaluate the innate ability of their music to embody tradition while blurring the borderlines between concert and liturgical events. In the proposed paper, I will map the current musical reenactments taking place in Jerusalem and posit how reenactments give audiences a new and authentic way to remain connected. By evaluating shifts in the sonic economy of liturgical sound in non-religious public settings in the Israeli sphere, I suggest that reenactments can be seen as facilitators of religious experiences and as a tradition themselves, in the axis between synagogue and stage but also between past and present, and even between a male oriented tradition and the possibility of carving out a new female site of sacred work.