

Reaching Out, Turning Home: The Musical Projects of Filippo Gambetta, Genoan *Organetto* Player

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Abstract: This paper examines the various projects of Filippo Gambetta (b. 1981), a diatonic accordion (organetto) player from Genoa in Northwestern Italy whose collaborative network includes Canadian, Finnish, Belgian, Irish and Breton musicians. I propose that transnational engagements established through touring often serve to reinforce identifications with home, as individuals reflexively re-imagine it in relation to the universalistic folk festival milieu. In this process, the local is reconfigured as glocal. This paper is based upon multi-site fieldwork in which I performed with Gambetta on tour and visited him at his home in Genoa.

Résumé : Cet article examine les différents projets de Filippo Gambetta (né en 1981), joueur d'accordéon diatonique (organetto) de Gênes, ville du nord-ouest de l'Italie, travaillant avec un réseau de collaborateurs parmi lesquels se trouvent des musiciens canadiens, finlandais, belges, irlandais et bretons. J'é mets l'hypothèse que les engagements transnationaux contractés par le biais des tournées servent à renforcer l'identification des individus avec leur propre lieu d'origine, car ils le ré-imaginent de manière réflexive en relation avec le milieu universalisant des festivals de musique folklorique. Durant ce processus, le local se reconfigure en glocal. Cet article se base sur un travail de terrain multi-site, au cours duquel j'ai joué avec Gambetta en tournée en plus de lui rendre visite chez lui à Gênes.

One afternoon in April 2010, in the northwestern Italian port city of Genoa, I sat down for lunch at a Trattoria with the Italian *organetto* (button accordion) player Filippo Gambetta (b. 1981) and his father Beppe. I was eagerly anticipating my first taste of pesto Genovese in the town that spawned its name. As I waited, Beppe told me that Genoa was well known for three famous personages: the navigator Christopher Columbus, the violin maestro Niccolò Paganini, and Italy's most famous popular protest singer of the late 20th century, Fabrizio De Andre. It later occurred to me that these three figures mapped conveniently onto the image that I had of

Filippo; a politically engaged, globetrotting and virtuosic instrumentalist.

My image of Filippo as a footloose cosmopolitan had been reinforced the previous year at a small Danish folk festival, to which I had travelled specifically to interview him. Filippo told me then that he spent a large amount of time outside of Italy, collaborating with musicians in northern European countries and in Canada. I had also long been aware of his close relationship with the late Canadian fiddler Oliver Schroer (1956-2008), a musician with whom he shared a taste for composing idiosyncratic new music based in folk dance music idioms.¹ As I listened to Filippo's trio play in the small hall—the only Italian band on a roster that included Senegalese, Roma, Norwegian and Danish performers—I noted his tunes sounded variously like Irish, Balkan or Finnish dance musics, arranged in filmic settings, richly coloured by diminished chords and tone clusters. Despite its rhetorical connection with “Italian folk music” in his promotional material, his music is difficult to place in a locale. He seems to be a musical navigator, cut loose from his origins, creating what he himself sometimes refers to as “folk music from nowhere” (interview, March 30, 2010).

While Filippo appeared then as a cosmopolitan par excellence, this image was challenged as I got to know him over the course of the next two years. It became apparent that the role of international touring musician was causing him to desire a closer connection to home. Subsequently, he has engaged more frequently with styles of traditional and folk music associated with Liguria—his home region—since 2010. While he has continued ongoing collaborative relationships, his vision for his own future seems to shift between an international and a local purview.

In this paper, I examine how this alternation between reaching out and turning home transforms how Filippo positions himself in relation to Genoa and his home region of Liguria. By “reaching out” I refer to his touring and collaborative projects that extend beyond Italy, and by “turning home” I mean those projects that draw on his local and national heritages. I contend that in alternating between these two types of projects Filippo aligns himself with a range of transnational, national and regional collectivities and imaginaries. I do not position Filippo therefore as a typical representative of a local musical practice or community, but as a musician whose creative, social and professional lives are shaped by his shifting interactions between diverse translocal socio-musical networks.

I tease out three types of transnational imaginaries and collectivities with which he is involved: one based around the practice of collaboration, another around the category “Celtic” and a third that hinges on notions of diaspora. I demonstrate the ways in which his involvement with these takes on

localized meaning in his home region of Liguria. Specifically, I argue that tying in with narratives of Ligurian diaspora and with northern Italian claims to Celtic heritage within the transcultural context of folk music touring circuits allows Filippo to represent Liguria on the world stage as a place emblematic of cultural interaction and exchange. As I will discuss, this representation of Liguria has political resonance in the context of contemporary Italy.

The heterogeneous and dispersed quality of Filippo's socio-musical networks raises questions about the changing meaning of "folk" and "traditional" music as representative of communities grounded in place (Bohlman 1988: 53). Writing a little over a decade ago of transnational folk, roots and world music festivals (such as the one I saw Filippo perform at in Denmark) Max Peter Baumann stated, "a changing paradigm has been emerging for quite a while: the replacement of the 'romantic-collective' concept of regional or national musics with the individualization of experiences in the multicultural context" (Baumann 2001: 20). Baumann identifies a "transnational" mental construct that indicates a pick-and-choose, mix-and-match approach to music, in which individual agency trumps nationalistic and regionalistic narratives surrounding traditional music: "It is the musicians who today individually select, newly configure, historicize, sample, innovate, and synthesize from the diverse possibilities and work out their own musical narrative constructs" (14).

I see Baumann's statement as both insightful and problematic. "Individualization," a term associated with sociologists of globalization Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck and Zygmunt Bauman, refers to the increased role that choice plays in the contemporary period. These sociologists see individualization as fostered by institutions (for an overview of this paradigm of sociological thought, see Heaphy 2007). In a sense, established folk festivals and similar events may be seen as quasi-institutions that play a role in shaping sensibilities in which freedom of choice in affiliation is highly valued, and even promoted, as an ideology. Such a sensibility certainly describes Filippo. As Steven Feld has indicated in reference to world music, it is part of the reality of the folk festival field that "musical identities and styles are more visibly transient, more audibly in states of constant fission and fusion than ever before" (2000: 145).

Yet are "romantic-collective" associations with regions and nations really being "replaced" by these types of individualized, flexible approaches? There is an implication in this idea that the political power of folk music to mobilize collective belonging in meaningful ways is now diluted. I argue, however, that musicians who display the sensibility to which Baumann alludes are often invested in notions of "the local" that have long been implicit in the Herderian,

collectivist notions of “the folk” that have informed urban folk revivals since the 1960s. As Jocelyne Guilbault has observed of world music performers, these western European musicians are involved in “redefining the local” and the interrelated concept of “home” (1993: 33). I examine such redefinitions in light of Filippo’s self-conception as an urban cosmopolitan whose sensibilities have been shaped by his experiences as a touring musician on these highly complex circuits.

Flexible Affiliations and Mapping Networks

Filippo’s creative and career choices are deeply informed by his encounters on transnational folk festival circuits. As one of numerous touring, self-identified folk or traditional musicians from various countries, he participates in a multilayered field of cultural production (Bourdieu 1993), the complex “network of networks” (Hannerz 1992) that is the transatlantic folk music economy. At pluralistic festivals, music camps and other venues, musicians from a range of countries, affiliated with broad labels such as “Celtic,” “Nordic” or “Mediterranean,” interact within and across these categories. Various collaborative connections emerge from such encounters, creating socio-musical networks that cross boundaries of genre, region and nation. These interactions create a fluid, heterogeneous and transnational social space that has received little attention in folk revival scholarship outside of nationally or regionally focused studies.

Studies of contemporary European folk musics and musicians usually consider musical boundary-crossing in relation to locally grounded music scenes (see Boiko 2001; Ramnarine 2003; Bithell 2007). However, involvements in transnational collectivities are increasingly part of musicians’ everyday lives, due to intensifications in technology and mobility that allow frequent and sustained interaction among globally dispersed performers. In such transnational space people have a sense of belonging to cultural formations that are “integrated” and “stretched”...“across space-time” (Harvey 1989; Giddens 1990; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Inda and Rosaldo 2002). The transnational space these musicians interact with is “complex, multidimensional, and multiply inhabited” (Jackson, Crang and Dwyer 2004: 3).

Filippo has a broad choice of socio-musical affiliations in this cosmopolitan space, and his choices are driven by an interplay of social, creative and economic imperatives. I can speak from my own experience as a touring musician since the early 1990s on this complex circuit that, as musicians try to make a living in folk music, they must cater to varied audience and presenter

expectations. As a result, some musicians develop a tactic of flexibility; they wear different musical hats and engage in a range of musical projects. While such flexibility arises in part to get more work, to say that it is based on the economic imperative is overly simplistic. I contend that flexibility has deeper cultural implications and in this article I aim to highlight the significance of the current tendency for many musicians to maintain associations with multiple genres and styles of music, a phenomenon that is common in many genres.

In order to understand the significance of Filippo's various projects, I map them out in my text and examine choices he has made in terms of career tactics and self-representation. In examining these choices, my research design has been multi-sited (Marcus 1995). My data is drawn from a series of interviews with Filippo during field trips to Genoa, Italy, in 2010 and 2011, as well as participant observation research conducted while performing with him on tour in Italy and France in August 2010 as a fellow member of the Nuala Kennedy Band, of which Filippo was also a member. I also attended several of his concerts in various locations in Europe and examined printed and online promotional materials.

Interaction and Transnational Folk Festivals

Before examining Filippo's career, I will describe further the space (the transnational folk festival field) and the sensibility (the new folk music sensibility) that I see as being parallel to one another.

The settings in which many initial connections between musicians are made are transnational music festivals, the most prized gigs in the transnational folk music economy. At these festivals, performers can maximize their exposure, increase product sales, expand their personal networks and gain prestige. Like the musicians, the festivals are categorized in a variety of ways; however, together they constitute a loosely connected "international circuit of influence" (Straw 1991: 373). Defining these festivals according to musical content is problematic, as their programming crosses into a broad range of genres and styles.² What they do share is a lingering, discursive connection with ideas of "folk music" and related concepts of "roots" and "traditional" music, due to their origins in mid- to late-20th-century regional Euro-American music revivals and North America's so-called "great boom" in the 1960s (Rosenberg 1993: 2).

Filippo has performed at festivals on both sides of the Atlantic; a sampling of these include some major western Canadian folk festivals (Vancouver and Winnipeg), the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival in Finland, Glasgow's Celtic

Connections Festival and the Festival Interceltique de Lorient in Brittany, France (as part of the Nuala Kennedy Band).

There are undoubtedly distinctive individual festival “cultures” or, as Michael MacDonald has examined in a recent dissertation, regional festival territories which show distinctive traits and processes (MacDonald 2010). However, since the early 1990s, there has been a widespread trend for many transnational folk festivals to promote themselves in a certain way, as specialized sites of transcultural exchange. At festivals that share this tendency, audiences are offered the promise of witnessing unusual musical combinations, whether in commissioned collaborations or spontaneous after-hours jam sessions.

This trend is a transatlantic phenomenon. On its website, the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival invites audiences to witness “unrepeatable and exclusive crossover projects” (2012). A similar sense of the breaking down of genre barriers and the possibility for encountering the new is evident on the website for the Calgary Folk Music Festival, which states that its

programming format, lovingly referred to as a series of “arranged marriages,” creates rare, wonderful opportunities for artists to meet and collaborate. These collaborative sessions group disparate artists loosely by themes, encouraging them to collaborate on each other’s material, creating coveted once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for audiences and artists alike. (2013)

The mission statement of Glasgow’s Celtic Connections festival illustrates that the aim of the event is to foster interaction across boundaries, through sponsored collaborations if possible. Further, it indicates a mission to foster the collaborative ideal in other locales:

Connections are at our core and the fundamental aim of the festival is to make links through traditional music and culture.... The festival not only concentrates on traditional music but focuses strongly on connections and by doing so embraces different cultures from around the world, allowing new collaborations and commissions to be premiered. Ideally, these collaborations and commissions are then performed at different festivals to ensure the legacy of new works to be sustained. (Claire Snedden, personal communication, March 2011)

In some cases, such fusions are encouraged through festival sponsorship. The Vancouver Folk Music Festival’s “Collaboratory” and Celtic Connections’

“New Voices” projects are two examples of festivals’ sponsoring collaborative projects that celebrate new sonic and cultural combinations. Two of Filippo’s collaborators on whom I have focused in my dissertation research, the Irish flute player Nuala Kennedy and the late Canadian fiddler Oliver Schroer, have been closely connected with both of these events.³

With the seeming blurring of boundaries between categories, contemporary festivals seem to challenge anthropological conceptions as events designed for “all members of a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and sharing a worldview” (Falassi 1987: 2), or that express “group identity through memorialization, the performance of highly valued skills and talents, or the articulation of the group’s heritage” (Stoeltje 1992: 261). However, while such cross-cutting projects may seem to promote a vision of folk music that encourages individual interpretation over shared meanings, performers are still hired and represented largely according to their home regions and nations; folk musics’ role in fusing the idea of heritage together with locality persists. This is apparent in the fact that musicians such as Filippo continue to “mine the local” (Straw 1991: 385) for musical materials to bring to the stage, as folk musicians have through the history of commodified revivals. Filippo’s group, Liguriani, whom I discuss in more detail below, represents this process.

This trend toward transculturalism has therefore not replaced multiculturalism, which has been the dominant paradigm dating back to the 1950s in Europe and further in Canada.⁴ The two modes co-exist on touring circuits and even within the same festival. This co-existence engenders tensions that are evident in the choices musicians must make and the expectations they face as they pursue their careers. On the one hand, musicians are seen as representing a place; on the other, they are valued for their reputations as boundary-pushers. This status is further complicated by the differing interpretations, between festivals, of notions of what constitutes the “traditional,” the “progressive” and other value-laden concepts.

The New Folk Music Sensibility

In my analysis, Filippo does not represent a genre or style of music, but a sensibility. I call this a “new folk music sensibility.” In the field of folk revival research, “sensibility” evokes the varieties of attitudes identified in Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett’s study of Klezmer revivals (1998). As sociologist David Chaney writes in his study of lifestyles, a sensibility is “an attitude or perspective which enables disparate activities or choices to be seen as

consonant or consistent. A sensibility is therefore a constellation of tastes that ‘hang together’: they form a pattern that is recognizable to those who share it and probably to outsiders” (2000: 85). Of the ambiguous quality of sensibilities, Chaney writes, “Of course sensibilities are vague, amorphous orientations that do not lend themselves to precise definition but crucially they do enable actors to know how to keep going” (86).

The term “new folk music sensibility” describes a phenomenon that is transnational in scope and is promoted by certain institutions and organizations. The difficulty with which musicians such as Filippo classify themselves speaks to a particular amorphousness in this sensibility. In academic literature and among musicians, it is associated with music referred to variously as “progressive folk music,” “post-traditional folk music,” “ethnofolk” or a host of other compounds that may include “folk,” “traditional” or “roots.” While certain clusters of musicians sharing this new folk music sensibility may show similar attitudes toward composition, improvisation and other musical processes, there is no dominant stylistic marker that identifies the sound of “new folk music” at a transnational level. Rather, common musical, social and economic processes are more apparent, along with a discursive emphasis on the new, and on “pushing the boundaries.” In general, these musicians consistently draw on various Euro-American folk dance musics as reference points in creating music that often transcends forms and styles commonly thought of as “traditional” by practitioners. As their sensibility favours reaching out in transnational collaboration, they have formed many ongoing collaborative relationships with players from other countries and regions following initial encounters on tour at festivals, music camps or workshops. As a result, many musicians who share this sensibility, such as Filippo, have developed transnational networks connecting to diverse music scenes and genres.

Filippo’s Musical Upbringing and The Filippo Gambetta Trio

Filippo was reared in an environment of touring musicians with new folk music sensibilities. He is the son of acoustic flatpicking guitarist Beppe Gambetta, who specializes in American and Celtic fingerstyle guitar. Beppe still tours regularly, maintains residences in Italy and the U.S., and has been quite successful in professional folk music terms. As a teenager, Filippo learned the organetto from his father’s friend Riccardo Tesi, who has maintained a high profile on world music and folk festival circuits since the 1980s with the bands *Ritmia* and *Banda Italiana* and numerous collaborative projects. These include *Triotonico*, an organetto trio that includes Filippo.

The organetto is widespread in Italy; however, it is not strongly associated with Liguria. Rather, Filippo states the biggest influences on how he plays the instrument were internationally touring musicians: Tesi, English melodeon player Andy Cutting and French melodeon player Norbert Pignol are among the players he cites the most. There is rhetorical import in naming these musicians as models; each of them has a deep connection to their locality, yet each is also widely recognized for transcending it, having become established in an international pantheon of virtuosic and idiosyncratic melodeon players.

Filippo initially reached out to appear on international stages in order to perform his own compositions with his group the Filippo Gambetta Trio, which he formed in the late 1990s. They soon began to tour internationally and garnered some prestige at major Canadian folk festivals, which led to three Canadian tours. At home in Italy the trio was less successful. According to Filippo, at pluralistic western Canadian folk festivals, where there is little knowledge of Italy's distinct regional musics, his music was accepted at face value as "Italian," with little expectation of what that specifically meant, other than that it was an Italian who played it (interview, March 30, 2010). In Italy, by contrast, the group did not fit into programming requirements that demanded regional stylistic specificity in Italian folk music, something I will discuss further below.

Filippo's solo albums illustrate his compositional approach and situate local references alongside cosmopolitan ones. Most of the local references are extra-musical. For example, his second album, *Pria Goaea* (2002), begins with a sample of the voice of the owner of a local restaurant called Da Maria, and the cover pictures Filippo playing on the docks in his hometown. The music on *Pria Goaea* and its followup *Andirivieni* (2009), which means "coming and going," gives little indication of place-based specificity. Formally, few tunes correspond to any regional dance music style. They are best described as contemporary European dance melodies. They lean toward what some may call the "idiosyncratic" and others may call the "global"; in either case, from the sound of them, they are very difficult to locate in a single place.

Collaborations

Filippo's trio helped establish his name in the transnational folk festival circuit. Travelling to festivals and other interactive venues led to the formation of collaborative projects that helped him gain him access to new markets and satisfy his taste for musical exploration. For example, he met two valued collaborators, Oliver Schroer and Nuala Kennedy, while touring with this

band. Other valued collaborators include Jean Michel Veillon (flute, France); Emilia Lajunen (fiddle and nyckelharpa, Finland); and Rémi Decker (bagpipes, Belgium). Tracing how Filippo first made contact with these musicians reveals the importance of spaces like camps, festivals and workshops as sites of interaction. For example, he met Decker at a week-long music workshop in Belgium, at which they were both teaching (interview, March 27, 2010).

Filippo regularly cites his reasons for collaboration as being both pragmatic and based on shared sensibility. For instance, when I asked him what drew him to collaborate with Finnish nyckelharpist Emilia Lajunen, he told me that she shared an “openness” with him, that she was “an artist making her own music with different tools” and that “the way she develops her language works with [his].” On the pragmatic side, he states that she provided an entrance to the Finnish folk scene, with which he had wanted to engage for years.

Notably, several, although not all, of the above-mentioned musicians are associated with regional and national folk music scenes in which prominent, long-running festivals, university programs and cultural organizations support an aesthetic of what Filippo calls “openness.” For example, in Belgium, a scene with which Filippo has a strong connection, the organization Boombal has been instrumental in what is known as the *balfolk* social dance movement. Beginning in the 1990s, *balfolk*, which is characterized by plurality of both European dance forms and accompanying musical styles, has enjoyed popularity in Belgium among young people.⁵ Such examples point to how the new folk music sensibility is perpetuated through organizations and institutions, a subject that has been explored in the Finnish context, due to the prominence of the Sibelius Academy of Music’s folk music program (Ramnarine 2003; Hill 2007).

One aspect of the new folk music sensibility, therefore, is that musicians who share it tend to be affiliated with various musical practices and social scenes. The diversity of affiliations within local or national scenes evokes what Mirjana Laušević, in her study of Balkan folk dance scenes, calls “wanderers in affinity” (2007: 236). With this term she refers to those amateur or professional musicians “who either cannot or do not want to establish their cultural home in any of the scenes, or perceive them as segments of effectively the same ‘folk’ or ‘world music’ phenomenon” with the result that they “‘build a home’ in two or more scenes” (236). I contend that it is also possible for people with multiple affiliations not to be “wanderers”; in some places, maintaining multiple ties is very much a local thing to do, as diversity is a point of identification for locals with “home.”

These varied attachments can be interrelated both and in tension with one another. One’s involvement with transnational or transregional projects affects the meanings associated with their local projects, and vice versa. Most

studies of multiple cultural affiliations tend to draw on diaspora studies, with its concept of diasporic attachments, or the “dual affinity or doubled connection that mobile subjects have to localities, to their involvement in webs of cultural, political and economic ties that encompass multiple national terrains” (Inda and Rosaldo 2002: 19). Homi Bhabha describes the consequence to the subject in such a scenario as

a split in the performative present of cultural identification; a split between the traditional culturalist demand for a model, a tradition, a community, a stable system of reference, and the necessary negation of the certitude in the articulation of new cultural demands, meanings, strategies in the political present. (1994: 35)

In the case of touring musicians, they may develop multiple attachments that allow them to connect with a range of transnational imaginaries and identifications with various degrees of relationship to “tradition.” They also allow for different levels of affiliation within a nation; for example, as Juniper Hill has pointed out in relation to folk music in Finland, there are several “transnational identities among Finnish folk musicians: Pan-Nordic, Finno-Ugric, (Western) European, and ‘global folk’” (Hill 2007: 50). For Filippo, these scenes offer models for how to engage with his own multiple identifications as world citizen, European, Italian, Ligurian and Genoese.

Turning Home to Italy: Pan-Italian Projects

The multiplicity associated with the new folk music sensibility makes particular sense in certain localities. Being able to move between various identifications—particularly regional and national—is especially useful in Italy. As even the casual tourist to the nation can observe, Italians tend to identify with their regions. The nation state of Italy came into being in 1860, and national pride is often in tension with *campanilismo*, or regional pride. In addition, northern Italians and southern Italians perceive themselves as culturally distinct from one another, a point that I heard regularly during my visits. This regional character is evident in the diversity of music and local performance contexts, apparent for instance in Alan Lomax’s recordings made in Italy in 1954 and 1955.

Filippo has recently formed some pan-Italian projects that challenge this regionalism by performing music from various regions of Italy. One such

project is a duo with fiddler Marco Fabbri, who is known as a specialist in Irish traditional music, but who, like Filippo, is turning home to re-engage with Italian music. Filippo claims he intended for this project to counter the hyper-regionalism and exclusionary politics that are evident in the right wing Lega Nord party, who evoke primordial connections to an indigenous Celtic people in their push to separate from the so-called Mediterranean south:

According to the Lega Nord, economic differences between northern and southern Italy are consequences of different cultures. Northern Italy, maintain LN leaders, is geographically close to northern Europe, which supposedly produces a culture built around a core set of values and behaviours. These include a strong work ethic, entrepreneurship, a spirit of sacrifice, a high propensity to saving money, trust, solidarity, and law abiding behaviour. (Hague, Giordano and Sebesta 2005: 163)

According to Hague, Giordano and Sebesta, members of Lega Nord “appropriate Celtic peoples as some of Padania’s [the name Lega Nord applies to a region of northern Italy] earliest inhabitants to legitimize their claims about cultural differences between northern and southern Italy” (164). Filippo sees his collaboration with Fabbri as a means to reclaim a sense of national pride and belonging that he believes has been undermined by the far right, represented by Lega Nord, and by Silvio Berlusconi’s overwhelming personal influence on the national culture in the past few decades (personal communication, April 19, 2011).

Within the context of Italy, it is unusual for individual folk musicians to perform melodies from a range of regions, as Filippo’s duo with Marco Fabbri does. Another project, Triotonico, exhibits this pan-Italian character as well. Triotonico is an organetto trio involving the young Piedmontese musician Simone Bottasso as well as Riccardo Tesi. I saw Triotonico perform twice during a small tour of Holland in April 2011. The trio’s repertoire is pan-Italian in purview, with the organetto as the unifying element.⁶ Within the concert, there were Sardinian tunes, Occitanian tunes from the region of the Aosta Valley bordering France, a southern Italian Moorish dance, a tune from the Quattro Provinci area bordering Genoa and original compositions by Riccardo Tesi. After the concert, Filippo commented that Tesi, who is now in his mid-fifties, was one of the first Italian folk musicians to bring together references to diverse regional Italian styles in his compositions, in the 1980s.⁷ In Italy, reaching out therefore means embracing the music of several regions as much as it means transnational engagement.

It is striking to note that Filippo's Italian-based projects are so strongly connected to pan-regional national unity. His Italian projects, rather than being anti-nationalist, speak to contemporary tensions related to immigration and politics, albeit with strong references to the regional distinctiveness, to history and to a particular sense of place. While they embrace regionalism, they emphasize exchange and interaction, and cosmopolitan "diversity of experience" (Hannerz 1996: 103). This is true of his locally based project, Liguriani, to which I will now turn.

Turning Home to Genoa: Liguriani

Over the past three years there has been a change in Filippo's career trajectory. He has intensified his involvement with his band Liguriani, who play music from his home region. At the time of my first visit to Genoa in 2010, Filippo had been performing infrequently with Liguriani. By my next visit in April 2011 he told me that the band was becoming his main project. Since then, they have released their self-titled first CD. Filippo's recent turn homeward, and the reasons for it, suggests reaching out has its limitations for him, both financially and in terms of community.

Significantly, according to Filippo, travel had led to his decision to form Liguriani. The failure to secure many gigs at home for his trio and the logistics of balancing his various collaborative projects caused him to re-evaluate which of his multiple identifications should dominate. He also wondered if his original compositions and arrangements had meaning to anybody. He got the idea for Liguriani from the Asturian band Felpeyu, whom he had met at a festival. He decided that their Celtic band model could be applied to the music of Liguria (interview, March 30, 2010). Aware of, but not entirely buying into, a current of Celtic identity in northern Italy, he nonetheless saw a way to place Ligurian music within a transnational Celtic frame.

In terms of getting gigs close to home, this tactic has proven successful. Liguriani gets hired for a variety of local venues in which regional Ligurian music is required for the sake of programmatic diversity or for touristic or nationalistic reasons. For example, when I visited Filippo in Genoa in April 2011, I watched Liguriani perform for a packed theatre as part of a comic play, *Mauro Garibaldino (per caso)*. This play is centred on a peasant character, Mauro, who tells humorous stories of his encounters with the great Italian General, Giuseppe Garibaldi. Liguriani appear in peasant clothes, playing local songs related to the mid-19th-century Italian unification movement. The play was sponsored by the city as part of the 150th anniversary of Italy's unification.

It occurs as Mauro is about to leave for America, and it is set on the docks in Genoa, a point from which many Italians left to emigrate in the 19th and 20th centuries. This image of Genoa as a city characterized by simultaneous in-migration and out-migration, at least over the last few centuries, is borne out by statistical analysis. At many points in the 19th century, both processes occurred simultaneously and the influx of in-migration to Genoa was slightly more than the out-migration (Felloni 2002). Genoa was the main port through which Italians from other regions of Italy migrated to America; many eastern Europeans also went through Genoa en route to America as well (Molinari 1993). *Mauro Garibaldino* evokes this connection to diaspora and affirms national and regional belonging.

According to anthropologist Susan Rasmussen, this leaving and returning dynamic is a characteristic that can shape and re-shape touring musicians' sense of home. In her ethnography of touring Malian Tuareg musicians, Rasmussen examines the consequences of their increasing self-consciousness "about their culture and history and how these are represented" (Rasmussen 2005: 793). Referring to these musicians as part of a "temporary diaspora," she argues that touring spurs a reflexive process that transforms how they represent home on the world stage. Her argument resonates with Roland Robertson's view that intensified mobility "has involved the reconstruction, in a sense the production, of 'home,' 'community' and 'locality'" (1995: 30). Temporary diaspora is an evocative concept that helps conceive of the leaving and returning dynamic of touring: however it is not sufficient to encompass all the transnational collectivities with which Filippo is involved, as I will discuss further below.

Genoa: A Place of Interaction and Exchange

Liguriani's promotional material stresses that Ligurian culture is not isolated and static, but has been shaped by travel and return. The band's online biography, with the subtitle "music from Ligurian worlds," illustrates the city's unique position within Italy by stating that the mountains "close Genoa in" from the Italian interior. Simultaneously, it suggests that its intercultural and fluid character is an essential part of the Genoan sense of place. This fluidity is depicted as a facet of Genoa's long history as a Mediterranean port that has been "open to contact," both with places that are "culturally similar" to it and with places more culturally removed.

This description echoes geographer Doreen Massey's notion of a "global sense of place." Massey states that

what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus ... this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local. (1994: 154)

Liguriani draw on various musical styles that are associated with the Genoa region. Their choice of repertoire and the style of their arrangements have implications for how they are categorized on the world stage: they are now associated with “Celtic” music. One example from their CD, a medley of two different types of dance tunes that are played in the Quattro Provinci area on the eastern border of Genoa province, demonstrates how this music has been construed as “Celtic.” In the vernacular Ligurian context, these dance tunes are normally played by a duo of the double reed piffero and keyboard accordion or *fisarmonico*. Liguriani perform the tunes with organetto, guitar, violin, flute and bagpipes, a configuration that is common to many Irish bands. The two regional dance tune types in this set are the *alessandrina* and the *monferrina*. Sitting in a bar after a theatre performance in April 2011, the members of Liguriani talked to me about how the monferrina is a tune that helps justify their association with the Celtic category, as it is in 6/8, the same metre as the Irish jig. The accompaniment here is a guitar tuned to DADGAD, with a droning quality characteristic of modern Irish dance music accompaniment.

In this reinterpretation, the main instrumental signifiers of Quattro Province music are replaced with instruments and arrangements that evoke a globalized Celtic sound. Liguriani have brought this Celticized representation of Liguria to the transnational stage, with a breakthrough performance at the Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow in January 2012. Their identification as a Celtic group allows Liguriani to access a range of performance venues by identifying with the ambiguous transnational category of Celtic music, with all the network connections that affords. There are further implications to this alignment with the “Celtic.” Considering Liguriani’s representation of their region as a place of cultural exchange and interaction, their Celtic identification can be seen as an alternative to the racialized Celtic identity represented by Lega Nord.

It is clear from conversations I had with Liguriani that their reframing of Ligurian music as “Celtic” is not indicative of a profound identification with an imagined Celtic culture. It seems more to indicate both the strong influence

of globalized Celtic music on the players in the band and a professional tactic aimed at carving out a place in the transnational folk music field. However, within the context of Berlusconi-era Italy and beyond there is a political resonance to the music, as it becomes implicated in northern Italian discourses on regionalism and nationalism. Considering Filippo's opposition to what he sees as hyper-regionalism in Italy, one of the advantages to being involved with such a vague category as "Celtic music" is that it can be open to multiple meanings, one of which is that strong identification with a region can co-exist with a cosmopolitan attitude. In taking this stance, they are realigning themselves with other movements that are working to distance folk music from ultraregional or ultranational associations,⁸ an alliance that affirms their sense of belonging to a progressive, transnational folk music collective.

Conclusion

While Genoa lies on the Mediterranean, the imaginaries and collectivities that Filippo's projects correspond to connect largely to northern Europe and across the Atlantic to North America. It is evident that at least three of these formations intersect in the transatlantic, transnational folk festival field. One is a broad ethnic and marketing category: Celtic. Another is a diverse and scattered formation of musicians from across various categories within "folk" and "traditional" music who share a similar aesthetic and career approach that is pluralistic. Filippo's ability to develop so many connections in both types of networks speaks to an intensification in recent decades of what Mark Slobin has termed "affinity interculture," in reference to the types of exchange that the folk festival environment engenders (Slobin 1993: 68). A third transnational formation is diasporic: it consists of those Ligurians who have left.

I have argued that Liguriani's identification with various socio-musical networks allows for a representation of their home region on the world stage as a place of cultural interaction and exchange. Further, Filippo demonstrates an affinity for places in which local folk and traditional music scenes are diversely constituted. In these scenes, in places where there is a high level of interpenetration between the universal and particular, he finds like-minded collaborators. Filippo's application of this reinterpreted sense of place within Italy challenges long-held regionalisms at home. What Baumann cites as the "individualization of experiences" that transnational festivals foster in fact creates new opportunities for reinforcing, yet reconfiguring, notions of homeland.

Questions remain, however, regarding the kind of music produced in such collaborations. In relation to the cross-cutting types of networks, do these

collaborations really produce “folk music from nowhere,” a phrase that implies a lack of connection to a meaningful cultural space? Or, rather, does such new folk music speak to emerging forms of belonging, or new transnational communities, that exist outside the realm of the local, and, if so, how? With the recent trend toward exchange and interaction at many large festivals, these questions speak to a need for more musical ethnography of travelling musicians and their role in the production of meaning on such overlapping, transnational circuits. ❁

Notes

1. Oliver Schroer was a well-known fiddler on Canadian folk and roots music circuits who died of leukemia in 2008. Like Filippo, he was difficult to classify. He was a prolific composer, whose thirteen CDs released between 1993 and 2010, consisting almost entirely of his own compositions, exhibit a distinctive performance and compositional style that draws heavily on traditional musics from Ireland, Finland and eastern Europe. He also referenced a large variety of other styles in his music, ranging from Carnatic music to Bach and blues. Filippo repeatedly made clear to me that he saw Oliver as a mentor, both artistically and in terms of how to pursue a career in the folk music field performing original compositions. I devote a chapter to the life of Oliver in my forthcoming dissertation at the University of Toronto, in which I discuss how he negotiated tensions between relationality and individuality through his various projects.

2. For a case study that clearly demonstrates the diversity of one of Canada’s major folk festivals, see Tsai (2007-2008). Several articles in *The World of Music* 43 (2001) deal with pluralism at European folk festivals and transformations in the public presentation of folk music in recent decades.

3. Nuala Kennedy was commissioned by the Celtic Colours Festival to create a work as part of the New Voices project. Her work, *Astar* (Gaelic for “journey”), has been performed twice at the festival and included Oliver Schroer, Canadian fiddler Daniel Lapp, U.S. singer-songwriter Will Oldham and several Scottish musicians.

4. See Baumann (2001) for a discussion of multicultural music festivals in Europe. For an examination of a significant event in the development of Canadian multiculturalism, see Henderson (2005).

5. The balfolk scene has yet to be the focus of ethnographic study, and I have never attended a balfolk event. My knowledge of it is based on discussions with several musicians who have first-hand experience with it, including Belgian musicians Rémi Decker and Philip Masure, and Canadian Emilyn Stam, who has lived in the Netherlands and played in a balfolk band.

6. The website www.organetto.it maps out well-known diatonic accordion players in Italy. While not a scholarly source, the map gives a good idea of the to-

pography of diatonic accordion playing in Italy. All regions list at least one diatonic accordion player. The majority are in the south of Italy. An exception to this is the northern region of Piedmont in which there are a large number of practitioners. Filippo Gambetta is the only organetto player listed in Liguria, a region with which the keyboard accordion or *fisarmonica* is more closely associated.

7. Tesi told me that he had been invited to a conference of Italian ethnomusicologists to discuss his relationship with traditional music; this is almost certainly due to his important role in Italian music as a synthesizer in a country that is starkly regional.

8. An instance in Europe in which the left has “taken back” folk music from recent far right movements is in England, where the leader of the far right British National Party, Nick Griffin, used folk music to promote the party’s devotion to English national identity. For example, the party used one of singer Steve Knightley’s songs, “Roots,” on their website, initially without his knowledge. Knightley’s objection to this was widely discussed in the British press. The organization Folk Against Fascism was formed in order, as fiddler Eliza Carthy put it in an article in the Guardian newspaper, “to distance folk music from the far right” (2010). The Folk Against Fascism website states that “FAF came about because of an obvious campaign by the BNP to co-opt folk music and culture for their ideal of ‘Englishness.’ They began selling compilation CDs of folk music on their website, against the wishes of the musicians concerned. In the national media, Nick Griffin has cited various highprofile [sic] folk artists as his favourite singers.... Folk Against Fascism was formed because many in the folk community wanted to say that you can be proud of England’s music, traditions and customs without being a bigot or a racist. We also wanted to keep folk free from the taint of right-wing extremism” (Folk Against Fascism 2013).

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