Stregoni is not a band

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Introduction

For a long time, migration studies have delved into specific – and, often numerically limited – dimensions of the migration experience. In Europe, in particular, migrants have been seen as workers or economically active and transnational subjects, members of families divided by migration or reunited families, victims of discrimination or protagonists of forms of political mobilization, service users, deviants. Much more rarely they have been recognized as authors or users of artistic and cultural forms.

The partial transformation of the European migration scene through the arrival of migrants fleeing humanitarian crises, wars, conflicts, environmental disasters and climatic upheavals, of course, also entailed a renewal of cultural production as well as artistic and musical panorama in which migrants are protagonists, changing the artistic and cultural panorama of European society *tout court*. In the most recent years of the last decade this phenomenon has grown more intensely, highlighting the capacity of self-activation, determination of the claim of migrants rights and forms of solidarity expressed by refugees and asylum seekers through music.

If these experiences are now a common heritage in the countries of "older immigration" such as France, Germany, Belgium or the United Kingdom, similar artistic projects are still rare in a country of relatively more recent foreign immigration such as Italy. In fact, in line with Italy's emigration history, the artistic expressions of Italian emigrants – especially the musical and narrative ones – have been delved into, although a flourishing strand of studies and research has developed, especially in the literary field, which has shown how the contribution of migrant writers has revitalised the literary landscape.[1]

As in other European countries with a longer history of immigration, in Italy, music and, in particular, rap and its derivations, would also seem to play a crucial role in the identity negotiation and affirmation paths of the self, among young people of migrant origin. However, scientific research focusing on this phenomenon is still rare.

Even more uncommon are contributions focusing on the artistic productions of refugees and asylum seekers in Italy, even though, in recent years, the peninsula has been the main destination for many migrants fleeing from a variety of social, national and ecological crises. Therefore, for this reason, here, we will focus on the "Stregoni" ["Sorcerers"] network, a project born in Trento and Verona, in North-East of Italy, which aims to involve refugees and asylum seekers through music workshops held inside and outside the reception centres.[2]

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1 In this regard, it is worth mentioning the "migration literature journal", *El Ghibli*, the first in which the editorial staff is made up of writers of transnational migration, which has been published continuously since 2003, and the *Arti Migratorie* section hosted with continuity in the migration studies journal, *Mondi Migranti*, which has been the first social sciences journal in Italy, that has given space to the lively panorama of artists of immigrant origin. See specifically the Basili & Limm database, the database of Italian Migrant Writers and the Italian Literature of World Migration, founded by Armando Gnisci, in 1997, which includes translingual and new generation migrant writers.http://basili-limm.el-ghibli.it/

2 This contribution is the result of the collection and analysis of 17 interviews conducted with native musicians, including the two founders, refugees or asylum seekers and key informants involved in the Stregoni project. The interviews were collected in bars or public places, in Trento and Verona, the two cities of northeastern Italy, where the two founders of the project and several native and migrant musicians who take part in it live.

Figure 1. Logo

1. The band that is not a band

The Stregoni project was born, in 2016, from the idea of two Italian underground musicians who wanted to involve asylum seekers and refugees, housed in reception centres, in music improvisation workshops coordinated by them within their own reception centres. Each workshop, consisting of two or three meetings, is aimed at creating a temporary band and, therefore, working towards a live performance, outside the reception centre. Usually, improvisation starts from the sounds that asylum seekers have on their cell phones (ringtones, music samples, video soundtracks and, sometimes, music tracks they composed in the country of origin), to make sound creation possible using common and easy to find instruments and to underline the fundamental role that mobile phones play in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers. In fact, it is both an indispensable tool along the migratory path – through the desert and the Mediterranean sea or along the Balkan route – and a means through which asylum seekers enliven their lives and connect the country in which they live to their country of origin or to the country, outside Italy, they often wish to reach in Europe.

The project has two objectives: it is a huge band, constantly evolving, that lives and changes its appearance based on the migrant musicians involved, but it is also a traveling music workshop.[3] The idea of the two founding musicians was to create permanent "garrisons", the hubs of the Stregoni Network, also involving artists and migrants from other cities, where they are invited to hold the workshops, in the hope that these hubs will then continue by their own.

However, over time, the project has partly changed shape and is structured around a "core" of "veteran" musicians, that is migrants who, for various reasons, are particularly passionate and involved in the project and have joined the two founders to enliven and promote the project in Italy and Europe.

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3 Up till today, over 5,000 people have been "Stregoni" ["Sorcerers"], coming from various African, Asian and European nations, as well as from Italy. Among these the countries most represented are Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Gambia, Senegal, Syria, Niger, Iraq, Afghanistan, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Benin, Lebanon, China, Pakistan, Albania, Kosovo, Kurdistan and Palestine.

The Stregoni network has given rise to hundreds of concerts in Italy and Europe, including music tours which will soon be narrated by a video documentary and has led to the recording of a record to be realised soon.[4]

2. Styles and reasons to be a "Stregone". The crossroads of multiple representations

The flexible and porous structure of Stregoni project favours the attribution of meanings and the construction of very heterogeneous – and often contradictory – expectations by its various members.

In particular, the analysis of the interviews collected revealed several possible representations and ways of understanding the project by its members depending on whether they were native musicians, social activists, migrant musicians. Furthermore, different representations emerged also within each of these "categories" of respondents.

2.1 An incubator of relational spontaneity

For the native founders and collaborators, Stregoni would represent, first of all, a place to meet with other boys and musicians from different national and "cultural" backgrounds: a space to be together and get to know each other through artistic productions, to share their daily lives, thus weaving spontaneous and mediation-free relationships. For these members, the live performances of Stregoni metonymically represent Italy and Europe breaking down the communication and relational barriers that may arise from the meeting between people with different national, linguistic and "cultural" origins. Therefore, for these interviewees, the project is able to illuminate the challenges that result from this meeting, thus avoiding both to fall into ethnic dynamics – which reproduce a representation of young migrants' music as "ethnic", "exotic" or "folkloric" – and to reduce the subjectivity of migrant musicians to their migratory experience, labelling them merely and irrevocably as "refugees or asylum seekers":

> The challenge is this: being together and making fun of ourselves, too. I saw that making fun of ourselves is the best way of interacting, despite the cultural wall, the different styles... Our work is to continuously create the conditions for this to happen at all levels, between the Italians and the "newcomers" and vice versa. We all need to put some effort into making this work. [...] At the macro level, Stregoni's performance on stage represents the difficulties, challenges, frustrations and then the joys of knowing a different person. The stage is Italy, it is Europe. [...] There is no word "refugees" or "refugees welcome" or "fortress Europe"... Because we didn't want to recreate the situation: circumscription room, migrant, microphone, "tell us your story" and we are all an audience of old people who watch them and they clearly suffer and feel in a corner. Where there is no real exchange and they have to keep repeating their nightmare and nobody cares what they do every day or what videos they watch on Youtube, what kind of stand-up comedy, what kind of music they listen to. Instead, these are all things that have always interested me a lot and I don't care too much about "your culture", but what is going through your mind right now. (Native musician and founder of Stregoni)

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4 Examples of live performances are available at the following links:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qflQG3tTq0A&t=947s
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FSJbPc8nmo
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpyU82Ox6I4&t=18s

Figure 2. Stregoni performing live on stage

Furthermore, native members often perceive and describe being on the same stage and playing together as challenges that allow them to break down, at least partially, some of the material, legal and symbolic barriers that separate them from the migrants. The music workshops and their offered moments of sharing thus provide an opportunity to overcome the spatial and social segregation experienced by asylum seekers living in reception centres, as well as the embarrassment and stigma associated with the labels "asylum seeker" or "reception centre": "The Stregoni project made me feel comfortable with the guys in a very short time, in ten minutes in the workshop, just like that. If there was no music I'd probably still have this veil, this embarrassment" (Native musician and permanent collaborator).

If the music avoids reducing migrant members' identity relating to their status as asylum seekers or refugees and to their migratory biography, the ensuing meeting is not however naive and disconnected from real social relationships. It takes into account the civic, legal and material inequalities that the migrant condition implies. The Stregoni project can thus offer migrant youths some material opportunities such as being able to express themselves as musicians or to escape from the boredom of the reception centre.

> It is a way to "team up" and have fun together and, even if it is bad to say, it is also a way to give opportunities to the guys that, as migrants, they wouldn't otherwise have in the reception centre. For example, coming to my house to record and meet my friends, who are almost their peers, going to the bar with a group of friends, playing in the rehearsal room. (Native musician and permanent collaborator)

To summarise, for native musicians, Stregoni constitutes a space within which it is possible to create, without mediation, spontaneous interactions and relationships between young native musicians and migrant young musicians, going/moving beyond any other possible categorization and labelling. This way of understanding the project also includes the relationship that the network aims to create with the public during its live performances: breaking down the hierarchies of power that cross society, avoiding turning migrant into "exotic" or "miserable" subjects/objects and emphasizing the aspect of sharing , participation and, obviously, fun.

Figure 3. Stregoni performing live on stage

2.2 A tool for social activism

Despite its relatively short life, Stregoni attracted the interest of people who, after being part of the audience during their live performances, have started to support it materially and organisationally. These new members conceived and lived the project in a different way from its founders. As can be seen from the extract that follows, Stregoni can also be configured to act as a tool to promote a bottom-up social inclusion and empowerment of migrants, who often suffer conditions of social vulnerability and legal difficulty. As an interviewee reports, becoming a member of Stregoni may be "a card to play" for obtaining or renewing the residence permit:

> I got in touch with Stregoni in a completely random way, that is, I had seen an article in the local press promoting a Stregoni's concert and I said: "Look what a nice project! Interesting!" I had not yet started my path in the migration field, however, I had already heard about it. So I thought, "I'll go to hear them". And I really liked them. [...] After that I offered to join them: "Look, if you want any help with things, I'm there", and I pointed some things out to them [...] For example, even in the application to the Commission for the recognition of status, the Stregoni project could be a card to play to show that you have a connection with the area, right? To say that one is not exactly there groping in the dark. [...] If one approaches the project in this way, of course, the daily life of people who often come with you to the concert enters into your own life. (Native activist for migrant people rights)

Therefore, the project can take on meanings linked to social activism which, specifically, are also expressed in a militancy for migrant peoples' rights. In this commitment, the daily lives of some migrants can be intertwined with that of the activists themselves.

2.3 A flywheel to gain new knowledge and renegotiate belongings

To the two forms of representations, given by the native members that have already been presented, are added those of the migrant musicians, the first "recipients" of the project, who enriched the network with further meanings and expectations, appropriating the objectives and practices put in place by the founders.

Firstly, for all the migrant musicians interviewed, Stregoni represented a way to recover and put into practice the passion for music, cultivated in the country of origin, and, as one of them says, to get out of the boring routine of the reception centre: "Stregoni is a big thing that allowed me to escape from my boring times". Secondly, one of the aspects of the project that has been most appreciated by the migrant members – in particular, by the most permanent ones, the so-called "veterans" – concerns the opportunity to travel, get to know new places and people, interact with native peers and create bonds with other refugees and asylum seekers. These opportunities would enhance their position in the wider socio-territorial context or would even just allow the creation of original musical collaborations and also give them an opportunity to possibly shed the label of refugee or asylum seeker pursued by the project itself: "Stregoni" allows you to make contact with new people, other migrant people, asylum seekers and this is a beautiful thing. I learnt new many skills, different kinds of music, Stregoni has shown me how to interact properly" (Migrant musician).

> The best thing in Stregoni is this opportunity that Stregoni gave me to get to know the Veneto region: the times I moved from Verona have always been with Stregoni... to go to another city to sing, to listen music. It gives me also the opportunity to talk with Italians. Stregoni showed me how they live, how the Europeans live, which I have never known before, because before I didn't have the chance to meet people. (Migrant musician)

Figure 4. New many skills, different kinds of music

Travelling and performing in concerts across different Italian regions thus constitutes an opportunity to also improve their skills and competences outside the field of music, to find their place in the Italian landscape, to understand some of its particularities and customs, to leave the state of isolation and loneliness lived in reception centres and to increase their social capital. In this sense, Stregoni and its organizational methods are recognized as tools of a bottom-up social integration even by its migrant members who thus share the same aims for the project hypothesized by its native founders.

Other interviewees go further and, consistent with what has already been shown, emphasize, while being involved in a reflective process, the relational and emotional aspects. For some of them, in fact, becoming a "Stregone" ["Sorcerer"] meant finding a family and building meaningful relationships that allowed them to feel at home in the country of arrival:

> It's a family, yes, I took inspiration from it. [...] When I arrived in Italy, the Stregoni band became the first friends I met here and they received me very well within this group and I felt I was in a family and, starting from that, I thought about singing music that talks about the family, in order to make them understand that although you are not in your own country, you may have a family. We love each other. (Migrant musician)

Figure 5. "I felt I was in a family"

From this point of view, it is interesting to note that, although in the words of the native interviewees the distinction "we/they", "natives/migrants" is always explicit – betraying, in part, some of the initial assumptions of the project –, in the words of the migrant musicians the subject is always indistinctly collective: "we" or "Stregoni". Stregoni thus also can become a space of warm family relationships and friendship that allow you to feel welcomed, to create meaningful relational bonds beyond music and finally to feel at home even if "away from home".

2.4 A space of voice and citizenship

For some of its migrant members, the network does not only represent an opportunity to develop musical skills and social relationships, but, in line with what has also been expressed by some native respondents, it also offers the opportunity to make one's voice heard. In fact, some migrant musicians recognise the important space that the project is able to make available to them in order to express their lived experiences of what happens within the unclear system in which they are received. This chance to be heard allow them overcome the dominant narratives – often imbued with racism and stereotypes – around the label of "refugee" and "asylum seeker", nevertheless avoiding the aforementioned representations linked to their legal status that depict them as "miserable" subjects:

> We transmit messages to the people, we try to stop racism. We do this thing, we make people know it. [...] We don't talk about what happens in the sea, we don't talk about borders, we only talk about what is happening in reception centres, this is what we communicate to people and we do that through music [...] Because many Italians think that we, as strangers, are bad people, but it isn't true, we love the same things, we do the same things and we have the same music to play. When people come to see Stregoni live they see and listen to us as different people, because we are on the stage making music. (migrant musician)

Figure 6. Dignity

Music and live performances thus become platforms through which they exercise forms of active citizenship, transmitting universal messages related to the world they imagine for themselves and for the others: a world in which, just as on the stage of Stregoni, people of different nationalities can live together and collaborate. Just as for the native members, the Stregoni stage metonymically represents the challenges to achieve social inclusion that Italy and Europe have to face daily.

2.5 A launching pad for solo artists

Finally, for some migrant musicians, Stregoni represents an opportunity to grow up musically and promote their career as solo artists. The project offers the opportunity to improve their musical and organizational skills, the channels for promoting their music, thus returning to a dimension of the

network linked more to instrumental aspects. Stregoni, that is, can be represented (also) as a launching pad from which to acquire the necessary strength, also expressed in terms of motivation and attitude, to start a journey as independent musicians: "I must say "thanks" to Stregoni, because with Stregoni I started having that strength, to move forward, to stick with what I want to do. [...] Stregoni helped me to do things on my own instead of just remaining in the band, they encouraged me to do things for myself" (migrant musician).

Figure 7. Stregoni performing live on stage

Even this narrative construction would illuminate the capacity for empowerment implicit in the Stregoni experience which, by promoting musical autonomy and a potential professional path for some of its members, would also promote their social inclusion.

3. Stregoni in chiaroscuro: limits and potentialities of a "band that is not a band"

All interviewees associated a number of positive meanings with the project. In fact, the Stregoni network brings with it an important potential for transformation of its members and of society or, at least, for those components that come into contact with it. However the experience is not without negative aspects and areas of ambivalence, as we will try to show below.

3.1 Social ties and unfulfilled expectations

The development of the musical project expresses and stimulates the agency of the migrant members of the band. Their agency can be recognised in their taking part in a project born and initially thought of as being "for them", bringing their own meanings and using them for their own needs. At the same time the project is also able to demonstrate the flexibility of the founders and native members in adopting and making the material created by the migrant members their own. This strong malleability makes it an innovative project and a new testing ground for the development of forms of participation and active citizenship.

An example of the innovative nature of the driving force of the project – inherent in its already defined "flexible and porous" structure – is provided by its Veronese interpretation: in this context, the idea that the "band that is not a band" seems to be less truly reflected, thanks to the frequent meetings between native and migrant members even beyond the live performances and to the practice sessions in the rehearsal room, meeting the expectations and ways of understanding the project of all those involved in and going beyond the original idea of its founders.

Despite of this, some of the expectations of migrant members would sometimes be ignored or disappointed. Specifically, their disillusion resulting from the gap between material and social conditions experienced by native members and those experienced by migrant members. In fact, among them there are some who found a huge disconnection between the playful-musical aspect, concentrated in the space-time of live performances, and the social dimension that the project would like to pursue. As a key-informant suggests, that is, there is a risk that the Stregoni network will be reduced to a mere musical band:

> You cannot avoid from being contaminated by a particular situation a person is experiencing. When the people you share things and sounds with, live in absurd situations, it is unthinkable for me not to get contaminated. [...] How can you put an impenetrable barrier between the part where you are playing and the part where everyone leaves the stage and goes home on his own way? [...] When you know that your musicians are asylum seekers and therefore when you take them home after a concert, in truth, they are going back to an extraordinary reception centre [Cas]... it is strange not to try to do something about it. There has been a detachment with regard to this kind of reasoning ... [...] Above all, when you come back home and you are living in a Cas it is a kind of situation, but if you come home and there is no home, there is no Cas, there is no a roof, that is, we meet each other, we have party together and afterwards "bye bye", I can't do this... (Native activist for the migrant people rights)

Figure 8. Stregoni performing live on stage

Therefore, the social relationships, both the friendly and professional ones, created by the project between natives and migrants, risk being limited to the times and places of musical creation and live performances: once off the stage, everyone inevitably returns to their daily lives and to their unequal conditions of life. In other words, there is a clash with the "hard" social reality, made up of structural, material and legal disparities, built along racial lines as well as social and civic stratifications.

Despite the efforts aimed at overcoming stigmatizing representations of the "asylum seekers", in fact, the materiality of social conditions forces migrants to fall back on this label and to deal with their disadvantaged position exemplified, for example, by the lack of income to buy an instruments and produce their own music, and by the impossibility of moving freely outside national borders or even within Italy spending, for instance, a night outside the reception centre: "Once Stregoni had a concert in Rome, but I couldn't go because I didn't have my document and I am still in the reception system, but the reception system doesn't allow me to sleep outside. [...] I'm trying to work and get some money to record music in a studio, but it costs money and I cannot do anything" (migrant musician).

For some other members, the greatest difficulties consist in combining the passion for music with the lack of work and availability of housing that would allow them to settle in the territory once they have left the reception centres. Even migrant musicians seem, therefore, to confirm the disconnection between the social and recreational purposes of the project, already identified as a problem by the key-informant. They are prompted to acknowledge bitterly the disillusion of their expectations, first and foremost, that of having found in Stregoni a new family. In fact, according to one of the interviewees the native members would have no interest in supporting them in the face of any emergency in their daily lives, such as the need of a place to sleep:

> When we are together we are the band, when we separate we are not the band. [...] But I think that if we feel we are a band, we are supposed to help each other. [...] It's very difficult to have, in the same band, members sleeping in a house and other members sleeping on the street and when there is a concert, you are always together and sleep in the same place, but when you come back home, he is once again on the street. So, we don't help each other 100%. It is a band in name only, but we are not like 100% family. (migrant musician)

Figure 9. Stregoni performing live on stage

These criticisms could originate in the underestimation, by the founders, of the relational difficulties implicit in a project in which those participating are positioned very differently within the social hierarchies and from the contemporary overestimation of the benefits that a musical experience could provide to overcome structural obstacles, deeply rooted in the social system.

3.2 Aspirational horizons and professional divergences

Even the expectation of having found a launching pad to promote their music in Stregoni turns out to be ignored and goes unheard by the native members. Migrant musicians denounce Stregoni's lack of support both in promoting their musical productions and careers as solo musicians and given the economic resources and instruments available, in providing them with the materials and technical support to record their demos. However, it should be stressed that the original aims of the project were of a social and collective nature and not individual and subjective even if, as has been shown in

the previous paragraph, they may conflict with the expectations and representations of some migrant interviewees. Despite of this, these feelings translate into a plea to the native founders for their music to be taken more seriously, requesting that the music they have written themselves be produced and recorded and their solo projects supported and not being just instrumentally taken advantage of:

> Stregoni: let me say... they are not serious, they need to be more serious. [...] I leave the work aside because of my career as artist, my music career, so you can't tell me you can't give me the time to work on my song, but then you call me "your artist" and take me to Stregoni's shows. So what am I working with you for? (migrant musician)

For these reasons, some of the migrant members interviewed acknowledge that, having been members for a long time, they no longer benefit from the project and have made the decision to reduce their participation. The metaphor used by an interviewee is helpful in understanding his loss of interest: "We are a frame, because the "leaders", they are the ones who organise the programme and all other stuff, but for us to get in touch with the main project is different, we always used to go and play music. In every concert of "Stregoni" you will find different people there, but you will always find the organizers" (migrant musician). Some migrant members, therefore, feel themselves to be part of the "frame" and not the main characters of the painting. These issues, which they criticise, are not only encountered by the migrant members of the network, but also by some natives who enliven it. According to them, the project is excessively centred on the self-fulfilment of individuals, based on the musical quality of the songs, at the expense of its social, relational and collective purposes – betrayed both by some native and migrant musicians:

> Because people's egos occasionally go beyond the purpose of the project. In fact, I also, at some point, got really pissed off this summer. Because I no longer saw the meaning of the project, that is the migrant guys, understanding their desire, their need. Also because, afterwards, if they believe in it a lot, you must also give them the opportunity to understand that during the concerts must be on their own, to be protagonists without us, etc. [...] The aim of Stregoni is not to perform the pieces that ensure the takings, not to do the super professional thing. There was too much focus on the final result, rather than on the path to get there, on being together and playing. (acquired native musician and permanent collaborator)

3.3 Musical backgrounds that do not meet?

These criticisms, the misunderstandings and the different ways of understanding the network described in the previous paragraphs, could arise from the socialization of different musical worlds and their aspirational horizons. If the founders of native origin have for years moved in the field of underground music, taking advantage of informal relationships and in self-managed contexts, away from official channels, sponsorships and huge financial reimbursements, for many migrants, belonging to a band and making music should automatically translate into the commercial glossy images of the mainstream artists and into the high income that goes with that:

> Different expectations, as I said before. So, yes, it happened that, maybe there have been discussions... I personally have never had problems, but in Trento a couple of people were discontented about this thing. However, they [refugee musicians and asylum seekers] have a very hazy idea of reality. Once they gave us a giant cheque with "One thousand euro" written on it. A fake cheque. One guy arrived: "Now, tonight you have to give us the money". I tried

> to explain to him "But it is a fake check that maybe, in a few months, they will transfer the money into a bank account, which we use to pay the expenses... and now we have nothing, we have less than when we arrived." But they saw a big check with "One thousand" written on it. So sometimes, there are things that are misunderstood. (native musician and founder of Stregoni)

This issue inevitably risks fuelling further ruptures and frustrations which may also be aggravated within the project by a lack of dialogue, clarity and communication – once again, especially with respect to economic management – as an external observer points out:

> I would have liked more transparency. I understand that the first phase could not have been like this, but then, with the more stable ones, greater transparency or, thus, simply a ladder, a financial plan, to avoid some disagreements and also to amalgamate the management. [...] Communicate to each concert if there is pay or not, for example. [...] We know that, in general, those who arrive here, at the beginning, have no money. Later, perhaps, he works, therefore, this remuneration no longer interests him. Sometimes they say themselves: "I don't care about being paid, because I like doing it for another reason." But, here, a little more dialogue would be necessary. [...] That is also to say that some complaints derive from a lack of understanding of a certain music system. So that's why clarity and some fixed points are fundamental in these phases where you don't know who does what, also to understand what musical world you are in. (Native activist for migrant people rights)

The numerous empirical examples reported return a chiaroscuro image of Stregoni in which innovative practices of social inclusion through art and music are intertwined with diverging expectations and difficulties of communication.

Figure 10. Stregoni before a live show

Conclusions?

Born from the idea of two Italian underground musicians and aimed at getting to know the people

housed in the reception centres and establishing a relationship with them that overcomes stereotypes and labelling, the project has broadened its social, spatial and musical horizons: planning concerts in reception centres scattered throughout Italy and Europe, achieving moderate success with the public and bringing in some supporters who actively contribute to its survival and to the realization of its aims.

Following the original intention of its founders, the project has never taken on a permanent form, thus becoming "the largest band in the world", even if some of the migrant members became more stable, by joining the two native musicians in the workshops and in live performances or, as in the case of Verona, establishing friendly relationships that transcend the mere musical boundaries of the project.

This core of founders and veterans has given back some ways of understanding the project and representing themselves within it. These representations intertwine, making the project a real bottom up workshop of active citizenship in which hierarchies and social stratifications are redefined, and convey a social message about unity and the fight against discrimination that has repercussions on the audiences and on local society. In fact, as recognized by all its members, live performances metonymically represent the challenges and daily effort required to achieve mutual rapprochement between people from different national origins, legal statuses and linguistic-cultural backgrounds, offering views, sounds and musicalities that create processes of social transculturation and examples of possible new worlds. Therefore, the Stregoni network constitutes a medium to overcome and break down a multiplicity of boundaries: that between the inside and the outside of the reception centres, that between performers and audience, and that between people of different origins, opening up processes of empowerment and reflexivity.

At other times, the different representations come into conflict with each other, ignoring expectations, creating misunderstandings and generating frustration. At the same time, it should be noted that Stregoni is a young project, a project in the making, open and fluid, like the life plans of migrant musicians and – albeit on a different scale – also those of the native musicians, often without a stable job and family life. Therefore, within the framework of forced flexibility and (im)mobility, the difficulty of long-term planning emerges, as well as the need to invent and re-invent, from time to time, new ways of managing the project itself. Furthermore, it is necessary to be aware that in a project that involves such a large – and often indefinite – number of subjectivities, it is almost impossible not to have misunderstandings and conflicts, inequalities and tensions, which are, in part, the embodied reflection of the structural ones existing in the wider society. On the contrary, perhaps, these tensions, which often unfold in the purely musical dimension, contribute to the creation of alliances and forms of collaborations that transcend the consolidated "native/migrant" division lines.

In any case, Stregoni undoubtedly constitutes an unprecedented reality in Italy and Europe for organizational purposes and methods. Despite its recent creation, it is an innovative project for the promotion of cohesion and social inclusion through music. Whether it manages to strengthen itself, expanding its range of action and its transformative scope, will depend, above all, on the ability to deal with and resolve the internal problems that it will face.

Figure 11. The band that is not a band