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In Mezz'una Strada Trovai una Pianta di Rosa

Italian Folk Music collected in New York & New Jersey / Volume One:
The Trentino, Molise, Campania (Avellino & Salerno), Basilicata (Matera) & Sicily
Plus "Trallalero" from Liguria

Recorded & Edited by Anna L. Chairetakis



COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE



A. L. Chairidakis with Vincenzo Ancona

Side One:

Dove Te Vett, O Mariettina?
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(Liguria)
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trallalero (Genoese 5-pt polyphony)
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Mazurka—string trio (Palermo)

Cover Photos:

Top (left to right): *Stornellata: Elvira Muriello, Gerardo Paternostro and members of the Vallatese Club; Vincenzo De Luca; Coro Trentino at the Smithsonian Festival in Washington, D.C.*
Bottom (left to right): *Joseph Cusenza; Antonio Davida; Alla Carrettiera: Nino Curatolo, Filippo Pascia.*

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*In Mezz'una Strada Trovai
una Pianta di Rosq*

Recorded & Edited by Anna L. Chairidakis

Italian Folk Music collected in New York & New Jersey
Volume One:

The Trentino, Molise, Campania (Avellino & Salerno),
Basilicata (Matera) & Sicily
Plus "Trallalero" from Liguria

Recorded & Edited by Anna L. Chairidakis during 1975-1978

Translations from Sicilian by Calogero Cascio

Photographs by Anna L. Chairidakis, and also courtesy of
William B. Davis, Antonio Mastrolia, Mario Dallao

Volume Two: "Calabria Bella, Dove T'hai Lasciate?"

Italian Folk Music collected in New York, New Jersey & Rhode Island: Calabria.
Ethnic Folkways Library FES 34042

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

In Mezz'una Strada Trovai Una Pianta Di Rosa

Italian Folk Music Collected in New York and New Jersey, Volume One:
The Trentino, Molise, Campania (Avellino & Salerno),
Basilicata (Matera) & Sicily

~ plus, Trallalero, from Liguria ~

Recorded and Edited by Anna L. Chairetakis

Translations from Sicilian by Calogero Cascio

Trascrizioni e spiegazioni dei testi:

Calogero Cascio, Antonio Davida, Louis Flaim, Antonio and Maria Mastrolia, Edward Niell, Members of the Vallatese Club.



V. De Luca, Alessandro Capra, A. De Luca and Mr. & Mrs. Gioieni in Washington, D.C.

The poet John Keats once wrote that the most beautiful melodies are the melodies unheard. Keats' words have a special significance when one thinks of the seldom heard and barely known *musica popolare* of Italy. Italian folk music deserves the interest and appreciation of a larger audience—and not least of Italian Americans—as it has lived too long in the shadows due to the impact made by opera and Neapolitan and commercial songs all over the world. Classical composers such as Mozart, Meyerbeer, Tchaikovsky, Scarlatti, Verdi and Vivaldi (among others) admired *la musica popolare* and made liberal use of its melodies in their operas and concertos. But in America today the music of the Italian working people is ignored or belittled by many rising members of the Italian community itself—not so much because of its association with poverty, but because of the insidious and pervasive form of class prejudice which the Italian peasant and worker, especially of the South, have for centuries experienced, and still encounter. However, a new and enlightened appraisal will reveal that Italian folk music can hold its own with the best European and American music of its genre. It is certainly the most genuine musical expression of the Italians who immigrated to these shores.

Calogero Cascio
Anna Chairetakis

The presence of a grassroots popular music in the Italian American community is one of its better kept secrets. When aired publicly the genuine village traditions seem to touch upon sensitive chords. Possibly, the power and rusticity of the unadulterated folk song clashes with the modernizing spirit that many wish to emphasize. Perhaps, too, this music evokes double-edged memories of the past. Above all, Italian folk music is extremely varied, locally and regionally. It is a mosaic work patterned by the flux of history over 2000 years, by a variegated geography that in some places welcomes and nurtures, in others isolates or protects, and in yet others is harsh and exacting; it is the creation of a people who have endured, fought off, and here and there blossomed with, the passage of an amazing parade of civilizations, kingdoms, principedoms and migrations. The music and dance, as well as dialect and custom, of each Italian locale bears the stamp of a unique history. Overarching local and regional patterns are marked stylistic distinctions between the

chorus-singing, harmonizing north (musically part of East-Central Europe), and the solo-singing, lyrical South (belonging to the Mediterranean and the Orient). Along the shorelines, in the agricultural expanses of Sicily, Puglia and Campania, in Umbria and Tuscany were fostered the large, complex forms of old empires and modern civilizations; while the mountains and remote interior villages of both north and south harbored the archaic musical traditions of Old Europe.^{5, 6} Thus one might say that there is no "national" folk music, one that can with justice represent either the whole of Italy or any Italian American community—for these too are mosaics of town or village enclaves. It may be this very lack of a national style that has preserved the genuine flavor of local music where it is still to be found.

It is something to reflect upon that most of the performers on this record came of age in an essentially preindustrial agrarian economy which has been transformed only in the past 15 years or so; but they have adventured long and far. Many of them worked in the cities of Northern Italy and Germany before coming to the U.S., leaving their families for months or years at a time. They have been muleteers, shepherds, agricultural workers, vendors, farmers, artisans; now they are industrial workers in America, owning cars, homes, businesses. Yet in working class Italian neighborhoods the old social relationships and dependencies between households constitute an important backdrop of security. In spite of its hardships, Italian immigrants speak with regret of Italy, giving in fact the impression that it was a great personal sacrifice that they left it. Many say they miss the intimacy, sociability, and the pre-television pastimes of village and neighborhood life—the story-telling, the gatherings, the festivities, the songs and dances "of antiquity". These are things some writers have been wont to call "simple" pleasures; but they are not so simple—rather more fully participatory, more effervescent, than many amusements of contemporary life. At any rate, the relevance of contemporary American culture to everyone it embraces is questionable—as Giuseppina Zampardina, Neapolitan and 50 year resident of the Bronx, put it, "On television you only get to see horses."

In homes, and small clubs in Brooklyn, the Bronx, New Jersey and elsewhere, there are people who prefer the savory humor and fire of their own entertainments to television, dinner dances or even the street festivals in which, in many cases, they have ceased to play a significant part.

- On Flatbush Avenue a farmer turned butcher serenades carcasses of meat as he works in the freezer, with long, eloquent ballads from his native Lucania.
- In Newark a factory worker treasures his bagpipe, though he has no oboist to accompany him, and few call for his services. So that the heat of his apartment will not crack and dry it, he makes the bag for his pipes out of a flowered material lined with rubber, instead of the usual goatskin.
- An ex-shepherd from an old agro-town in central Sicily works in a Brooklyn factory. He still fashions and plays the Greek cane flute as his ancestors did. Calogero Cascio, a Sicilian himself, found the people who were willing to perform the worksongs that are Sicily's oldest heritage in folksong—the tuna shanties, vendors' cries, the threshing invocations, and the Arabic-style carers' serenades.

Side 1

1. DOVE TE VETT, O MARIETTINA

In Brooklyn there is a large settlement of Northern Italians from the Val di Non in the Trentino-Alto-Adige, a valley in the high Alpine slopes bordering the Tyrol. Once farmers, woodsmen and artisans, they have gone into the construction trades and the professions in this country, and remain a close-knit community through their Brooklyn club where they gather to eat, drink, play cards, and to sing their mountain songs in the improvised four-part harmony that comes so easily to them. In keeping with the ancient democratic spirit of their villages, they deliberate carefully on all matters of group concern. At my first meeting with the Coro Trentino I was told they would not be able to sing for me without months, even years, of practice. Minutes later, in their club, a group of fifteen had gathered and were harmonizing effortlessly and superbly. Guido Endrizzi recalls the Trentino of thirty years ago when, in the wintertime, the men used to sing in the animal stalls under their houses, warmed by wine from the *cantina* and the body heat of the cattle. Simone Fellin (*capocoro*), Mario Dellao, Cornelio Facinelli, Luis Flaim, Umberto Flaim and Guido Endrizzi here sing a classic ditty from Lombardy.

Dove te vett, o Mariettina
dove te vett, o Mariettina
dove te vett, o Mariettina
insei bon ora in mezz' al pra?

O me ne vado in campagnola (3)
in campagnola lavorà.

Se la rozada là se alza (3)
là te bagna il grembiolin.

Il grembiolin l'è già bagnato (3)
stamattina in mezz' al pra.

Where are you going, Mariettina
through the meadow so early?

I'm going to the fields
in the fields to work.

But if the dew rises
it will wet your apron.

I've already wet my apron
in the meadow this morning.

2. LA VILLANELLA

In the following song from the Trentino, the Coro Trentino evokes the echoing of song on the mountain sides.

Varda, che passa la villanella!
Oscè che bella, te fa enamorà!
Varda che passa la villanella!
Oscè che bella, te fa enamorà!

Chorus: Oi come balli bene bella bimba, bella bimba, bella bimba!
Oi come balli bene bella bimba, bella bimba balli ben!

Varde chel vecio soto la scala!
Oscè che bala ch'el m'ha combinà!

Repeat, chorus

Varda che merlo su quella pianta,
com'è ch'el canta il fa innamorà!
Repeat, chorus

Look, the country girl is passing by;
oscè, she's pretty enough to make you fall in love!

Chorus: Oh how you dance, pretty baby, pretty baby
Oh how you dance, pretty baby, pretty baby how you dance!

Look at that gaffer under the stairs!
Oscè, what a drunk he's got on!

Look at the blackbird on that tree;
the way he sings makes you fall in love!

*Oscè: interj. deriving from Ostia (Host).

3. ENTE STU CARLEVÀ

The Coro Sacco from Ceriana in Liguria was a guest of the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife in 1975. Liguria is an old center of polyphonic singing, and according to Lomax, the vocal style of the Genoese *trallalero* is to be found in only two other regions in Europe—Sardinia and the Caucasus. In Ceriana, a medieval town of the San Remo hills, the ballad has long flourished, and in its wine-odorous streets and cellars, late at night, one can sometimes hear the strains of the 6th century "Donna Lombarda". Like the Trentini and other Northerners, these singers harmonize naturally and flowingly, and their voices, open and relaxed, come from the chest. In the following ballad a young couple fall in love during Carnival. Afterwards the girl falls ill (with passion), and her lover, disguised as a monk, gains entry to her sick chamber in order to "confess" her. Following is the complete text in Ligurian dialect. Pietro Martini, Roberto Crespi, Giuseppe Bruno, Domenico Embriaco, Roberto Rebaudo, Giovanni Martini, Nicodemo Martini.

Leader: Ente stu carlevà
nu me non fai tu inamorosa.
E ma non pensà
L. + Cho.: d'andarla a ritrovar,
vestìo da capucino
nu ghene sun andao.
Vestìo da capucino
g'he non piccao la porta:
"Per carità fai pian,
e nun staine a ballurì,
che non eu na figlia in leitu
ca me ne veu murì."
"Ma sa ne ve murì
fattela confessare."
"Ma vui che ne sei pa-a
padre de confesor,
entraine in quella stanza
e confessaila vui!"

"Se vurrei che la confesse,
serraine porte e barcui,
a ciò che nessun senta
la nostra confession."
"Dimene, O Bella:
canti aimanti hai?"
"Ma mi dai manchi,
ne tengo ventidue.
Ma u mei aimante caro
sei solo che vui."

4. INTU DE STENDI I DRAPPI

The Squadra di Canto Popolare Nuova Pontedecima was recorded at the Smithsonian's Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C. Though not Italian Americans, their Genoese ancestors were among the first Italians to settle in this country, but their folk polyphony is unknown here. The *Trallalero* tradition was moribund even in Genoa before the musicologist Edward Neill did much to revive it through the Pontedecima and other groups. Genoese *trallalero* was the specialty of the *portuali* (longshoremen) and twenty years ago could still be heard in their dockside taverns. The origins of this complex genre are something of a mystery. Polyphonic choruses have been documented in Genoa since the 16th cent. and were doubtless in existence much before. Dr. Neill believes that the *lonna* voice, sung by a male, may have been borrowed from the falsetto singing of the *castrati* in Renaissance sacred music. In its present form *trallalero* was inspired early in this century to rival Neapolitan song. The chorus consists of five parts: *donna* or *contretù* (falsetto), *primmu* (tenor), *contribassu* (baritone), *chitarra* (the *den-den-den* voice), and three or more basses. The men sing in a closed circle (usually around a table provisioned with wine) so that they can watch one another and coordinate their vocal attacks. *Trallalero* songs usually consist of single 4-line verses, led off by the *donna* and elaborated in nonsense syllables by the other voices, and by repetition of the refrain *tra-la-la-la-lero*—whence the name.

Intu de stende i drappi
bella Marinin gh'e chéita a canna
e u l'è u furnà ch'ù a ciamma (2)

Intu de stende i drappi
bella Marinin ch'è chéita a canna
e u l'è u furnà ch'ù a ciamma:
"Bella Marinin vegni a fa u pan!"⁸

When she hung out the wash
bella Marinin's clothes pole collapsed;
it's the baker who's calling her:
"Bella Marinin, come and bake your bread!"

5. LA PASTORALE

"I want to tell you about my little village, which would be San Polo Matese, province of Campobasso, Abruzzi and Molise. We are just a little village. Unfortunately, humans are few. We have more sheep and chickens and so on. . ." (Alessandro Capra, oboist)

In small mountain villages such as San Polo Matese it is still believed that a shepherd bagpiper and his companion, the *ciaramella* (oboe) player, presided at the birth of the baby Jesus. Thanks to the undiminished popularity of the novenas played by bagpipers during the nine days preceding the Immaculate Conception and Christmas, the bagpipes are still in use throughout south-central Italy—though their limited function has narrowed the once rich repertoire. Now, as in the past, pairs of bagpipers travel to distant towns and cities to play during the Christmas season, reaping what is for them "a real harvest" in extra cash. One such piper, an immigrant to New Jersey, takes the plane to Italy in November in order to play the *novenas* in the town that has patronized his family for three generations. In this recording Vincenzo De Luca, from Newark and Campobasso, plays the Christmas *Pastorale*.



La Pastorale: Vincenzo De Luca, R. De Franco, Assunta De Luca

6. CANTO DELLA MIETITURA – Reaping Song

Frank Mazza, an enthusiastic young scholar and politician from Vallata, Avellino introduced me to the Vallatesi of New Jersey. He arranged these recordings at their club, which is tucked away on a quiet street in Elizabeth. On short acquaintance I found the Vallatesi at once high spirited and tough-minded, full of stories, proverbs and ribald jokes, and frequently shaking with silent laughter over some innuendo I was too slow to catch. Choral litanies such as the following were sung during the July wheat harvest, mainly by hired reapers working together on large estates. A line of men advanced up the field in parallel rows, cutting the wheat with sickles, while the women followed behind, bunching and tying the grain. It was back-breaking monotonous work, lasting twelve hours or more, and leaving the hands and arms cut and bleeding. Giuseppe Crincoli, Vincenzo Milano, Pasquale Guiducci.

Eh, tatiné, dicono quant'è bella!
Addo-ve l'hai fatta essa cacciola?

E l'aggi fatt' alli parte 'ella Maiella,
dove la neva non si leva mai!

E non si le-va ne n'inverno ne n'estata,
manche lu mese 'ella primavera!

Repeat
Della primave-e-ra!

Manche lu mese de la primavera!

Eh, *tatiné*, they were saying how beautiful she is!
Where did you make this little filly?

I had her on the mountain of Maiella,
where the snow never melts.

It never lifts, in winter or in summer,
not even in the month of spring!

7. STORNELLO VALLATESE con TARANTELLA

Gerardo Paternostro sings about what happens to the men who stay all night in the fields during the harvest and are up singing past the hour of curfew. The tarantella that follows, recorded at the Vallatese Club, was danced by men only, with hands held high and fingers snapping, to the accompaniment of whistling, clapping and singing in the *Montemarinese* style. Angelo Muriello, accordion.

[E quande reste mizze a li campi,
chi more more, e chi campa campa!]
(Repeat each line)

So' sunate l'undici e mezze,
nota mezz'ora pi mezzanotte.

Lu maresciall' cià date rapport'
alla caserma ci vole purtá!

Nun aggie che ti lascíá,
ma te lu lascie nu mазze re fiore.

Bona sera allu sunatore,
lu cantatore arriterá!

For tarantella montemarinese:

Cante lu galle cu la verde penna
lascia la bona sera e ci ne iamme!
Hoi ne ne na! Ho ne ne na!
Lascia la bona sera e iamme nille!

[And when you sleep in the middle of the fields
some die, some survive!]

Eleven thirty has struck;
another half hour to midnight.

The marshall has reported us,
he wants to bring us in.

I have nothing to give you
but I leave you a bunch of flowers.

Good night to the accompanist,
the singer must go home!

The green-feathered rooster is crowing
give us a good evening and let's go!
Hoi ne ne na! Hoi ne ne na!



Doyen of the Vallatese Club



Antonio & Maria Mastrolia

8. VOGLIO SALIRE SOPRA UNA CANNA

The following serenade from Palomonte, Salerno is a *stornello* or *canzona* (an 8+ line lyric stanza divided into endecasyllabic couplets), here sung, as often in the south, in alternating fashion: one singer sings a couplet and another responds, or "echoes" it in somewhat abbreviated fashion, invoking a flower. Antonio Mastrolia and his wife, Maria, sang it to the *Chitarra battente* one warm spring night at an Easter party, under the trees and soft lights of their garden in Belleville, N.J.

Maria: Voglio salire sopra a una canna,
voglio fare la cimmola e poi la fronne!

Antonio: O che contorne!
Voglio fare la cimmola e la fronne!

[Aggie perdute ninne mie avv'un anno,
nu voglie jié trová no saccie donne!
(Repeat)]

Nu voli avviare attorna a lo mara,
chissà lo troverei sope a l'onna.
(Repeat)

E pi fortuna mia ce l'ho trovajio,
ca l'uocchio mi tiravan 'a calamita!

[Eh-e, Rosa Fiorita!
Jié, che l'uocchie lu tiravan a calamite!]

[La calamita la porta a lu sina,
l'amore la fai venire tanto lentana!]

Jiá-a, Stella Diana!
Jiá, l'amore la fai venire da lentana!

I want to climb a cane (palm) tree,
I want to reach the top and then the leaf.
(i.e., she wants to achieve her heart's desire)
Oh, what a throng!

I want to reach the top and then the frond!
I lost my darling a year ago;
I want to go looking for him, I know not where.

I want to walk around the sea;
maybe I'll find him among the waves.

And by good fortune I found him,
for my eyes drew him like magnets!
Eh-e, Flowering Rose!
Your eyes drew him like magnets!

She carries the magnet in her lap;
it makes love come to you from so far away!
Jiá-a, North Star!
You make love come from so far away!

9. SERENATA ALLA CUPA-CUPA

Anne Cornelisen pictured Basilicata "a bare, sepia world, a cruel world of jagged parched hills, dry river beds and distant villages. . ." With Calabria, it was perhaps the poorest and most neglected region of the South, where, the peasants used to say, Christ had never come. Antonio Davida comes from Pomarico, Matera, and there, while working in his wheat fields, olive groves and vineyards he sang the poignant ballads and work songs of the region. Now a householder and butcher in Brooklyn, he works all day in a freezer. "My life has been hammered by work like iron on the anvil," he told me one day. Antonio accompanies himself with a large friction drum called the *cupa-cupa*, native to Lucania. The friction drum is not believed to be a European instrument and may have originally come into Italy and Spain from Africa.

Un giorno ci ba caccia li marina; *(Repeat each line)*
truvabe l'amore mi ca l'acquagneva.

Mi feci segno chi' nu fazzulettu:
"Vieni tu amore, mi veni m'amponna!"

"Dop' imbennuta mi dammí la mano,
ma pi la vi' sciemmi cantanne canzon d'amore."

Quanne fumm'arrivati a terra piana,
"Lasciami amore, che me pari mamma!"

"Ji quannu pare lasciala pareijo,
ca tu sei ci m'ha chiamat'a me!"

"Comm'aggia fa che mi daré nu bacio?"
"Viene alla casa mi pigghiar' nu fuoché."

One day I went hunting on the plains;
I found my love filling her water jar.

She signalled to me with her handkerchief,
'Come, love, give me a hand up!'

'When I've shouldered the flask give me your hand,
and on the way we'll sing a song of love.'

And when we reached the high ground,
'Leave me, love, mamma will come!'

"And if she comes, let her come—
you're the one who called me."

"What must I do so that I can kiss you?"
'Come to my house to get some fire. . .'

... And the song continues:

"Tu t'inchilina a chi pigghiar' lu lu fuoco',
ji' m'inchilina che da te nu baci"

"Ci si n'avverti mamma d'istu baci,
dilli che d'è i sciendille delu fuoco."

"Non è sciendilla mica delu fuoco:
qualche cori d'amore e sazziate!"

"Ià amore amore, no lo vuoi finire?
Dentre le tue braccia voglia morire!"



Antonio Davida playing the *cupa cupa*

10. ALLA ZAMPOGNARA

A love song, to be sung to the bagpipes—a form of accompaniment that long preceded that of the accordion in the Italian South. Its tones mingle well with the voice of the South, often producing almost-human harmonies with the singer. Antonio Davida, with Vincenzo De Luca on bagpipes.

Menzà na strada ce na chiantà de rosa;
tant'è l'adore non si puo passare. (2)

Non è la chiente manche 'e la rosa;
è quella l'amore mia che m'adore tante!

I' me cala che pigghia nu ramí di rosa;
oi la brutta spina mi pungí la mane!

Ci è spiní di rosa non fe niente;
ci è spiní d'amore che m'è tremenda. . .

Chorus. . .

'On ci serva ca te lave, ca te liscia:
a ci bella a vivr' e esse, a viva nascia!

... and it continues:

"You bend this way to get the coals,
and I'll bend that way to give you a kiss."

"And if mamma discovers this kiss,
tell her it's embers from the fire."

Mother: "It's no fire that burned you;
but some heart is satiated with love!"

Girl: "Love love, let's make an end of this:
I want to die in your arms!"

Side II

11. MATTINATA

A serenade sung in the early dawn. Antonio Davida (singing) also calls this an *allegria*—"something you would sing at a *festa*". Giuseppe De Franco, concertina.

I' mu m'assitto a 'stu maragghion'
senza giacchetta e senza camisol;

Repeat

e mo veni l'amore miu, "dammi la mano e sciammuní!
E ne sciamme a ripi lu mare,
e tutte e due faccimo l'amore."

Chorus

E lu puzzo a do' chilonne
sta chini chine di cirimoní;

Repeat

Angiolina era la più bella,
si voleva marità.

Here I sit on this stone wall
without jacket or undershirt;
and here comes my sweetheart,
"Give me your hand and let's go!
Let's go to the seaside
and the two of us make love."

And the two-shafted cistern
is a place full of ceremony.*
Angiolina was the prettiest,
and she wanted to get married.

*i.e., A place where women meet and talk.

12. MARRANZANU

It is thought that the jews harp came into Europe from Asia. It was widely played in Italy by the 16th cent., later on a virtuoso scale, though it is now confined mainly to Campania and Sicily. The Sicilians use it to accompany their melismatic *ottave* and *strambotti* and as a solo instrument, and it is called variously *scaccia pensieri* (Italian for "thought-chaser"), *tromba*, and by Sicilians *marranzanu* or *mariolu*. The Sicilian jews harp is large and heavy, and made of iron. Filippo Pascià of Leonforte, Enna (Sicily), and Brooklyn.



Vincenzo Ancona, poet

13. CANTO DELL'AIA — Threshing Song

Elio Vittorini's Sicily was "la terra bruciata"—the burnt land. The Romans deforested it and turned it into a vast grainary, and the Spanish barons did likewise. At threshing and winnowing time in early July, the Sicilian wheat farmer marked out a circle over which he laid the sheaves. Standing in the center of this threshing floor, he held his mule by the end of a rope, urging him to trot round and round over the grain, calling out to the saints in the manner, it is probable, of his ancestors who labored for the Roman Empire. The mule worked in response to the words and intonation of the song, while for the farmer, "the song was everything; it unburdened you of thoughts, the sacrifices, the misery".³ Vincenzo Ancona, poet of Castellammare Del Golfo, Trapani, now lives in Brooklyn. As he sang this *trebbiatura*, he cracked a rope whip and rustled some straw to recreate the *aia* sounds.

E chiamamu a Gésu!

Gésu Santu!

E lu nomu di lu Patri, e di lu Figghiu e lu Spiritu Santu!

Repeat above

E lu spritu Santu sia

e lu nomu di Gésu, Giusepp' e Maria!

E caccia cumpagnu!

E ti vogghiu a dda via! . . .

Santa Rusulia!

Santa Anastasia!

Bedda è la Santa

e tutta la sò biata cumpagnia!

E caccia cumpagnu,

e ti vogghiu a dda via, sai!

Acchiana mul' acchiana!

E botati la cera a tramuntana!

Acchian' e scinni.

And let's call on Jesus!

Holy Jesus!

And the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!

Repeat above

And holy is the Spirit

and the name of Jesus, Joseph and Mary!

(to mule) Drive on, comrade!

I want you on that course!

Santa Rosalia!

Santa Anastasia!

Beautiful is the saint

and all her blessed company!

Thrash, comrade!

I want you in that trace, you know!

Climb, mule, climb (on the sheaves)

and turn your face to the North!

Climb and descend,

e cchi lu tempu vinni!
 Vienni lu tempu
 e di patiri morti!
 E megghiu patiri ccà ca n'atra parti! . . .

Santa Nicola!
 E 'na bbona razza e 'na bbona nova!
 E st'armaleddi di rintra hann'agghiri fora!
 Aah ora ora!
 A la tunnata cocula!
 Santa Niculicchia!
 E n'ati affari n'ata 'nticchia!
 E longh' e bbona
 e tunna biddicchia,
 e ppo vi porta lu passapalora!

for the time has come,
 the time has come
 and of the suffering dead!
 It's better to suffer here than someplace else!

Santa Nicola!
 A miracle and good news!
 And these poor creatures must come out of the circle!
 Aah, now, now!
 Little Saint Nicholas!
 You must do another little turn!
 Make it long and nice,
 full and pretty,
 and then I'll give you the watchword! (*to stop*)



Giovanni Pellitteri (jews harp), with wife Vincenza

14. FRISCALETTU – TARANTELLA

Giovanni Pellitteri sold his flocks in order to immigrate with his family to America, but he retires early at night so that he can read and think about his native Sicily. His fathers and grandfathers were shepherds, and makers and players of the *friscallettu* (Sicilian cane flute), an instrument with antecedents in the ancient pastoral Middle East and Greece. Here he plays at the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C. (N. Curatolo, sticks; G. De Franco, tamborine.)

15. NUN FAZZU CCHIU LU CARRITTERI

Mr. Pellitteri sings a version of a carters' serenade from his home town of Sommatino, near Caltanissetta. Though the carters' profession is now obsolete, ex-carters (many now truckers and innkeepers) still gather for song contests (*gare di canto*) as they did of old, when on the road.³ (N. Curatolo, jews harp)

Ah nun lu fazzu cchiù lu carritteri,
 ah, ca lu cavaḍḍu nun mi voli cari.
 Ah curri cavaḍḍu mia, curri continuu,
 La via è longa e amm'agghiri luntanu. (2)

Ah, no more will I work as a carter,
 ah, because my horse doesn't want to pull me.
 Ah, run, my horse, run on and on;
 the road is long and we have far to go.

16. QUADRIGLIA – Quadrille

Mariano Principato, 88, came to Brooklyn from Giuliana, Palermo. He plays on a six-holed *friscallettu* made by him when he was a twelve year old shepherd boy. He recalls playing with a guitar ensemble in the city streets, and onlookers used to dance the *scotese* and the *chiodo* (the nail).

17. CI SUNNU TRI SURUZZI A LA FUNTANA

The *strambotto* (a monostrophe of 4-10 endecasyllables with rhyme) is the most widespread lyric song

type in Italy. Pitre believes it to be the oldest kind of Sicilian poetry, along with the *muttu* (motet). The Sicilian *strambotto* or *ottava* grew out of the Arab-Norman period of florescence, and is based on both popular and cultivated verse.⁹ The *carrettieri*, with their carts painted with scenes from the Chivalric Wars and the Risorgimento—and the muleteers before them—connected Sicily's hinterlands with its coastal emporiums of luxury and high culture. The Sicilian *strambotto*, with its emphasis on text, and its Arabo-Hispanic overtones and embellishments, became a specialty of the carters. In the following Castellammarese style *carrettiera*, sung by Antonino Curatolo, appear the undulating, descending cadences that shape many Sicilian melodies. Nino runs a bakery in the Ridgewood-Bushwick section of Brooklyn. He performs here at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. G. Pellitteri, jews harp.

Ah ci sunnu tri suruzzi a la funtana,
 ah chi sannu ma tagghiari pasta fina.
 La nica eni 'na stidda diana,
 e la ranni spacca l'arba a la mattina.
 O si voi biddizzi vidinni la minzana;
 e la stannu 'ncurunannu di riggina.

There are three little sisters at the fountain,
 and they know how to cut fine pasta.
 The youngest is a moon,
 and the oldest breaks the dawn in the morning.
 O but if you want beauty see the middle one;
 they are crowning her queen.

18. LEVA LEVA

Castellammare is an important center of the tuna fisheries in Western Sicily. The *tonnara* takes place every two years now, with the shanties which are an integral part of the work process. To trap the huge fish, the men encircle them in their boats, and draw an ever-tightening web of nets around them until they are caught in the *camera da morte* (death chamber). Singing the following shanty, the men in some 12 large boats haul on the central net until the fish surface; then they harpoon them and pull them in. V. Ancona, N. Curatolo, Angelo Curatolo, Giuseppe Turriciano, F. Pascià and Calogero Cascio sing at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in 1976.

O bella ciurma mia
 oé, oé, oé!
 Chiamanuni l'allegria
 sagliala saglialà!

Oh my fine crew
 oé, oé, oé!
 Call joy around us!
 haul it up, haul it up!

Chorus after every line:

Ah leva leva veni
 oé, oé, oé!
 Ah leva leva veni
 sagliala saglialà!

I tell you, Luca
 save him, he's drowning!

[I tell you, Tanu
 help Peppi the dwarf!

I tell you, Turi
 dry your sweat!]

Let's pull together
 and land the tunny!

[A tia ricu Tanu, etc.
 Aiuta a Peppi lu nanu, etc.]

Surface it! Surface it!

A tia ricu Turi, etc.
 Asciucati lu sururi, etc.]

Facemu forza para
 oé, oé, oé!
 E 'nterra la tunnara
 sagliala saglialà!
Assumma! Assumma!

19. V'ALAMÓ

This work chant executed by Castellammarese fishermen during the final phase of the *tonnara*, is suggestive of the weary, endless monotony of their work. Sabastiano Venza, N. Curatolo, V. Ancona, Gaetano D'Angelo, C. Cascio.

V'alamó e gghiemu avanti
 Gésu Cristu cu li Santi!
Chorus: V'alamó e v'alamó!

V'alamó and push on
 Jesus Christ and all the saints!
 V'alamó e v'alamó!

A lavanti affaccia lu sulì,
 a punenti fa sbannuri

In the East the sun appears,
 in the West it glitters

E lu raisi cu li ciuri,
è allegra e tutt' amuri

Palàscaimerì annetta zancuna
ammuccia li pisci sutta li bagnuna

Sta tunnara fussi mia
quantu cosi ci faria!

V'alamó e v'alamó
v'alamó e v'alamó.

20. ABBANNIATINA

Before coming to this country, Nino Curatolo was a *pescivendolo* (fish peddler) in Castellammare, walking barefoot from town to town with 50 pounds of fish for sale in a sack on his back. He gives his vendors cry in a high, narrow voice, a characteristic Sicilian vocal style.

Ah, si li etti a mmari sinni vannu arriera!
(Lu patrùni della barca me lu rissi chi ci la dari vivi e senza rana!)
Che bella sta sarda, eh!
Aiu nuciđđi atturrati e simenza:
una lira un quart'ì chilo!
Ancora n'aiu! Nuciđđi atturrati aiu!
Caliá!
Veni ccà, figghiu ri buttana!

If you throw them in the sea they'll swim away!
The boss told me to give them away alive and for nothing!
What a lovely sardine!
I have roasted nuts and pumpkin seeds:
one lira a quarter kilo!
I still have some left!
Roasted nuts!
Caliá!*

*A mixture of seeds, nuts and chick peas.

21. MAZURKA

String and wind ensembles have long been part of the allure of Mediterranean cities, from Valencia to Athens. This accomplished trio of old gentlemen play their mazurkas and waltzes with a measured charm that seems to come out of the 18th cent., when these dances reached the Kingdom of Sicily from abroad. They call themselves the Ridgewood-Cusenza Mandolin Group, after the Brooklyn senior citizens' center where for many years they have played for Thursday dances, and their lead musician, mandolinist Joseph Cusenza (82). Joseph Fazio, violin; Charlie Spadaro, guitar; Salvatore Malfa, guitar.



Charlie Spadaro, Joseph Fazio, Joseph Cusenza

And the chief with his flowers
is joyful and full of love

The oarsman cleans (each one)
and hides the fish under the boards

[The mate, that lousy spy
will make his report to the owner]

If this *tonnara* were mine
how much I could do with it!

22. AMURI AMURI

Each Sicilian town had its own *carrettiere* texts and melodies, and of Palermo it was said that there was a different song in each quarter of the city, and "from one window to another". Pitre said that the urban *strambotti*, often sung by women, were more dulcet than their rural counterparts. Calogera Gioieni, of Agrigento, performs in Washington with F. Pascià on jews harp.

Amuri, amuri ca tu si luntanu!
Cu ti lu conza lu lettu stasira?
Si ti lu conzu iu cu li me manu,
di malateđđ' agghiurnassi tu bonu.
Bedđu lu nomu to' chiamatu Turi,
Cu ti lu misi stu nomu d'amuri?
Bedđu lu nomu e bedđu lu cognomu,
e cu ti vattiau fu un galantomu.

Amuri, amuri, ch'avisti, ch'avisti?
Di ccà passasti e nun mi salutasti.
La manu a la masciđda ti mittisti,
eu l'atra manu l'occhi t'attuppasti.
È inutile c'allisci e fai cannola:
lu santu è di marmar' e nun sura.*

Affaccia bedđa ca staiu vinennu,
darre la porta to stai arrivannu;
darre la porta to stai arrivannu
sicuru lu vasuni ti lu rugnu!
Amuri, amuri ca m'ha fattu fari?
M'ha fattu fari 'na grossa pazzia.
A Bedđa Matri m'hai fattu scurdari,
la megghiu parti di l'Ave Maria!

*A Sicilian adage meaning, "You'll have no effect on me".

Love, love, you're so far away!
Who will make your bed tonight?
If I fix it with my own hands,
sick today, tomorrow you'll be well.
Beautiful is the name of Turi;
who gave you this name of love?
Beautiful the name and surname;
whoever baptized you was a gentleman.

Love, love what was wrong, what was wrong?
You passed by here and you didn't greet me.
You held one hand to your cheek,
and with the other you covered your eyes.
It's no use for you to preen and curl your hair—
the saints are made of marble and don't sweat.*

Show yourself at the window, beautiful, I'm coming,
I'm about to arrive at your door;
I'm about to arrive at your door,
and surely I will kiss you.
Love, love, what did you make me do?
You made me commit a great folly;
you made me forget the Blessed Mother
and the best part of the Hail Mary.

23. MAZURKA

Ridgewood-Cusenza Mandolin Group.

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A. L. Chairetakis was born in New York City, and through her background developed her longstanding interest in Italian folk music.