

## 6. Western Europe

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### Radio Luxembourg

After some initial experiments in December 1932, Radio Luxembourg started broadcasting in March 1933. Owned by the *Compagnie Luxembourgeoise de Radiodiffusion* (CLR), and having a franchise agreement with the Luxembourg government that allowed the station to use a very powerful transmitter and broadcast in foreign languages including English, it promised international broadcasts that would not favor any nation. The French service is well known, but it was the English service that brought fame to Radio Luxembourg. The English service was handled by an agency (Radio Publicity of London) and started in December 1933, initiating an unending war of the waves with the BBC. By the end of 1934, sponsored programs in English were on air from noon to midnight on Sundays, and for shorter periods during the rest of the week.

As could be expected, World War II changed European radio, and Radio Luxembourg's transmitter was used to broadcast Nazi propaganda to Britain. However, after 1945, US troops from the Psychological War Division took over Radio Luxembourg for a short time – enough to turn it into an entertainment station for their forces in Europe. In September 1946, Radio Luxembourg was freed from US influence, and it announced that English-sponsored programs would begin again at the end of the year. Success was huge and continued, brought on initially by programs of popular music, request shows, chart countdowns, the Top 20, and a mix of comedy, drama and quiz shows.

Although it was aired from Luxembourg, countless listeners assumed that Radio Luxembourg was broadcasting from the UK. In 1951, the owners decided the station could make more money using a long wave transmitter. English programs were switched to 208 meters/1,440 kHz medium wave, and broadcasts were confined to evenings only. Despite noise and a fading signal, '208' became the best known radio frequency in Europe. Priority was given to young people and non-stop music. In following this policy, Radio Luxembourg reached millions of teenagers. Later, Radio Luxembourg could be heard only on 1440 AM, resulting in bad sound quality. In spite of this, the success and popularity of Radio Luxembourg remained substantial until the end of the 1980s, when Radio Luxembourg lost its top position to other radio stations – by this time, the BBC had begun Radio 1, its pop channel, and commercial radio broadcasting in Britain was established. The 1440 AM frequency was closed down on 30 December 1991, and Radio

Luxembourg ceased broadcasting in December 1992, mourned by many fans.

The importance of Radio Luxembourg was highlighted by program director John Catlett on 30 December 30 1992, which was the last day the station broadcast: 'This station was the first in Europe to have success by programming what people wanted to hear instead of programming what the government thought people wanted to hear. That is why we could show such success against the BBC in England.'

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### Malta

Population: 386,938 (2002)

The Republic of Malta is an archipelago in the Mediterranean Sea, about halfway between the coasts of Sicilia (Sicily) to the north and North Africa to the south. With a total area of 122 sq miles (316 sq km), Malta is one of the world's most densely populated countries. It consists of mainland Malta, Gozo, Kemma (Comino) and two uninhabited islets. The capital, Valletta, is situated on mainland Malta and has a population of 102,000 (1999). The land is stony and moderately hilly with scant vegetation. There are no rivers, lakes or forests. Summers are hot and almost rainless, while winters are mild. Maltese culture, and popular music in particular, reflects the influences, adaptations and assimilations that foreign contacts brought to the islands.

Malta was already inhabited in the Stone Age, but subsequently it became a stepping stone between Europe and North Africa for various powers including the Romans, Phoenicians, Arabs, Normans, Carthaginians, Castilians and the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem. The Order of St John, an international religious order of soldiers and healers, left the clearest physical marks on Malta after successfully defending it from the Turkish Ottoman Empire in 1565. Their rule lasted for 270 years, during which time they built magnificent

fortifications, lavish monuments and churches. During this period the Maltese were introduced to European cultural values through the establishment of libraries, a theater and the university together with the salon, art and music.

The islands were captured by Napoleon in 1798 and annexed by Great Britain in 1815. During World War II, Malta served as an important British sea and air base resisting massive air bombing for more than two years. The British established the Royal Malta Artillery band that included Maltese bandmen and, later on, Maltese band masters who had been trained in the United Kingdom. The training, knowledge and experience of these military musicians were later dispersed through several Maltese villages, where the band tradition remains very strong.

The country gained full internal self-government in 1962 and became independent in 1964. Malta became a republic in 1974 and in 2004 a member of the European Union. Maltese and English are the official languages. Maltese, written in the Roman alphabet, belongs to the Semitic family of languages that includes Hebrew, Ethiopic, Phoenician, Aramaic and Arabic.

Italian is widely spoken due to traditional cultural contacts with Sicily and, more recently, through the reception in Malta of Italian television programs. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Malta was a refuge for many Italians who had been expelled from their country during the Risorgimento (the movement toward unification of Italy). Many were writers and journalists who contributed greatly to Maltese cultural life. Some of the earliest Maltese band clubs, for instance, were set up following recommendations published in the local press by exiles who saw such associations as a way to organize and develop national feeling.

#### Maltese Popular Music Genres

There are three principal genres of Maltese popular music: folk and traditional singing called *ghana* ('singing,' pronounced *aana* – the *gh* is silent); marches played by wind bands; and pop songs in both Maltese and English, stylistically imported from Italy, Britain and the United States. Although the three genres seem distinct from each other, a look at their development over the years reveals a different picture. Maltese *ghana*, for instance, was a popular form of entertainment in village *festas* until it was gradually replaced at these communal village celebrations by the music of newly established village bands towards the end

of the nineteenth century. Additionally, pop songs in Maltese are derived from sung poetry as manifested in *ghana*. Maltese poetry was initially transmitted orally in song form on beaches, and in fields, streets and bars before it evolved into its written form. Again, some Maltese composers who ventured into local pop had previously composed band marches – that are written in their hundreds each year – for *festas* and other occasions.

The movement of musicians from one genre of popular music to another is equally common, not least because of the limited opportunities for professional musicians in a small island country like Malta. For instance, band leaders who previously composed marches and arrange operatic selections for their own bands have arranged local songs for the Eurovision Song Contest. Furthermore, many *ghana* guitarists gave up *ghana* accompaniment to play a different repertoire for tourist in hotels. Fusions of *ghana* with pop have sometimes won local festivals and competitions.

#### *Ghana*

Malta's folk/traditional music *ghana* continued to be performed in bars and village clubs and featured on local radio and television in the early twenty-first century. For centuries, it has been regarded as the music performed and listened to by farmers, peasants, laborers, washerwomen and women going about their household chores. During the twentieth century, *ghana* evolved into a more organized and professional form of entertainment, even if it was still associated with blue-collar workers and, predominantly, men.

Renowned *ghannejja* ('singers,' pronounced *an-neyya*), such as Frans Baldacchino (known as Il-Budaj) are not only engaged locally but occasionally perform abroad for Maltese migrant communities in Australia, Canada, England and the United States. *Ghana* is very popular among these migrant communities. Maltese emigrants living in Toronto and Melbourne have their own community centers where they meet regularly, sometimes for an *ghana* session provided for them by Maltese *ghannejja* living in these cities. The annual National Folk Song Festival, as well as the local production of *ghana* cassettes and CDs contribute to keeping the tradition alive. *Ghana* is performed during popular national feasts such as Imnarja (a folk festival) and open-air variety shows organized in the summer by village bands, sports clubs and social clubs. Occasionally, it is also performed in hotels as entertainment for tourists.

## 6. Western Europe

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*Ghana* singing comprises three main subgenres: *la Bormliza*, *tal-fatt* and the *spirtu pront*. All *ghana* singing involves a tight voice, with throat muscles strained and the controlled use of the diaphragm to produce a very loud sound in the high tenor register. One or more guitarists supply triadic accompaniment, while a lead guitarist improvises within the parameters of a standardized form.

The three subgenres have more or less the same form: an instrumental prelude based on a familiar tune selected from the restricted repertoire of *ghana* tunes, a middle section consisting of rhymed stanzas alternating with improvised instrumental interludes, and the *kadenza* (cadence), a concluding vocal section marked by the singing of two or more stanzas without interludes (breaking the pattern of alternation) and an increase in the rate of harmonic change. The song comes to an end with a short instrumental coda.

The most practiced form of *ghana* has been the *spirtu pront* (literally, 'quick-witted'): a style of extemporized rhymed singing, performed by either four or six *ghannejja*. Two or three song-duels (depending on the number of participating singers) unfold simultaneously on the basis of thrust (*botta*) and riposte (*risposta*). The *spirtu pront* requires quick thinking as well as the ability to rhyme short (four-line) stanzas. The audience follows attentively the development of each simultaneous argument, be it serious or humorous. Clarity of expression on the part of the singers is expected as much as the correct rhyming and maintenance of subject and argument.

The second subgenre, *la Bormliza*, has been rarely heard in modern times, due to the limited number of *ghannejja* capable of singing it. This style also employs improvised stanzas, with each stanza normally divided between two *ghannejja* (although it can be sung by one singer). *La Bormliza* (after the historic Maltese city of Bormla) is sometimes referred to as *ghana fil-gholi* (singing in high register) or as *ghana bil-ksur* (singing with inflexions). The last two names indicate that this singing uses a high vocal register and that it is highly melismatic. The former suggests the strong possibility that this *ghana* was once generally sung by women and that over the years it has been taken up by men as women have been displaced from the world of *ghana*. The long melismatic phrases make this genre extremely difficult to sing and, also, to understand. *La Bormliza* is now rarely performed, but *spirtu pront* singers do sometimes employ some of its features in their singing. In this way, at least

some prominent characteristics of a dying style are being preserved.

The *ghana tal-fatt* is Malta's basic stanza-based ballad form: a tragic or comic story narrated by one singer. The tonality and tune established in the prelude give an indication of what the story will be about. *Fattijiet* (plural of *fatt*) recounting the deeds of well-known former *ghannejja* are also becoming popular. This kind of *ghana* that gave rise to a style of strophic pseudo-folk singing called *makjetta*.

In a *makjetta*, the singer is accompanied on guitars but does not employ the strained vocal quality of *ghana*. In Italian (from which this word is derived), *makjetta* means a caricatured performance and *makjetti* (plural) treat their subjects in a lively and humorous way. The *makjetta* was a very popular form of singing in Maltese theatrical comedies, especially between the 1940s and 1960s, when the *ghannejja* used the term to refer to this style of singing that lies somewhere between *ghana* and pop.

### The Pop Scene

The influence of foreign pop music transmitted and disseminated by the media and the recording industry had a considerable impact on the development of the local pop music scene. The 1960s and 1970s were marked by the rise of Maltese language pop and rock bands inspired by, and modeled on, Italian pop or Anglo-American rock. A kind of balance was generated between 'imported' foreign lyric themes – sometimes irrelevant to the Maltese – and local experience. The latter themes varied from exaltation of the island's natural beauty to broken love relations and painful loneliness. The Malta National Song Festival, established in the 1970s, encouraged the writing and composition of more songs in Maltese. It was still held annually in the early twenty-first century, although it had become less important than the Malta Song for Europe Festival held to select Malta's entry for the Eurovision Song Contest.

In 1991, Malta returned to participation in Eurovision after years of absence. Politically, this coincided with Malta's application to join the European Union, and the votes of judges in individual EU countries were sometimes interpreted locally in terms of national sympathies linked to the political lobbying associated with Malta's accession process. Good results stimulated national pride, indicating that the country was overcoming its insularity and lack of 'self-confidence,' and that

the nation, therefore, was 'psychologically ready' to participate, together with far bigger EU countries, in 'One Europe.'

Due to its strong competitive element, the Malta Song for Europe Festival helped significantly in introducing innovative performance practices and styles. This had an overall positive effect on the local production of songs in both Maltese and English. Singers who represented Malta in the Eurovision Song Contest became emblems of national cultural and artistic progress. Some of these considered their participation in Eurovision as the apex of their singing career and it led to television careers as presenters rather than as singers. Others have been exploring new musical ventures by performing songs specifically arranged for new occasions, for instance, village wind band concerts.

### Band Music

Wind band music has been one of the most popular traditions in Malta. Every town and village had at least one, usually two, band clubs. At the end of the twentieth century there were 82 such clubs in Malta, whose members were normally freelance semi-professional musicians. Since band music is the mainstay of many open-air events in Malta, huge amounts of money were spent annually on the hiring of these musicians. The highlight of the year for band music is the parish *fešta* – the week-long festivities in honor of the parish patron saint. Most of these *festas* are held in summer, with the summer season seeing the most intense band music activity.

Throughout the week-long celebrations, bands march for long periods along the village streets playing marches that stylistically resemble those heard in Sicilian feasts. Ensemble playing in these marches emphasizes the outer parts over the inner harmonies of the march: the music is loud and unbalanced throughout. The bands play for the merrymaking of their club supporters and for the villagers marching along with them. From time to time, the bands play the patron saint's hymn – a *fešta* is a time both for spiritual contemplation as well as communal festivities.

The village band club organizes an open-air concert on the evening before a feast, which falls on a Saturday. The traditional repertoire of these concerts mainly comprises operatic selections, overtures and cantatas for band, choir and solo voices that narrates in music the life of the patron saint. Most of these cantatas were composed by Italian

band leaders residing in Malta during the Risorgimento. These Italian maestri had set up and organized most of the Maltese wind bands established in mid-nineteenth century. By the mid-1980s some of these cantatas and old operatic arrangements were being replaced by a more modern repertoire that included jazz and semi-classical arrangements. Concerts given by British brass bands, regular participants in the then Malta Arts Festival, also inspired the updating of the repertoire.

### Conclusion

There are three important aspects to Maltese popular music and other Maltese artistic expression. Firstly, popular music has had to complement and nourish Malta's Mediterranean style of living. Secondly, Malta's European identity has often been manifested internationally through the medium of popular music. Thirdly, Malta is predominantly Roman Catholic and this has led to the celebration of certain themes, not only inside churches but also among all strata of society.

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## 6. Western Europe

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PHILIP CIANTAR

### The Netherlands

Population: 16, 250,000 (2004)

Located in the northwestern corner of the European mainland on the North Sea, the Netherlands consists of 12 provinces. Most of the Dutch population lives in the Randstad region in the western part of the country. The four major cities, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, 's Gravenhage (The Hague) and Utrecht are located in this region. The country

is a constitutional monarchy and a member of the European Union. It has borders on the east with Germany and the south with Belgium.

Due to its geographic position and advanced infrastructure, the Netherlands is often referred to as the 'gateway to Europe.' Rotterdam Harbor and Amsterdam Schiphol are among the world's biggest seaports and airports respectively. The country's political history contains episodes of foreign occupation (by Spanish, French and German regimes) and colonization (Indonesia, New Guinea, Suriname, Dutch Antilles).

Dutch physical geography is characterized by flatness, many natural and artificial waterways, and its 'polders' (dry land below sea level), where the 'molens' (mills) are. The Dutch have founded global enterprises such as oil company Shell, steel maker Corus, retail group Ahold and consumer electronics company Philips, inventor of the compact cassette and (with Sony) the Compact Disc. Dutch bankers do business worldwide. Fresh flower production in glasshouses (*kassen*) is for global export, mainly of tulips. There are two official languages, Dutch (national language) and Friesian (of the north-western province, Friesland).

The immigrant population rose considerably after World War II and the process of decolonization that followed. The 1950s brought Eurasians (Indos) from Indonesia (independent in 1949) and Moluccans from the Moluccan Islands, the former by choice, the latter by military decree. A large part of the population of Suriname emigrated to the Netherlands after the declaration of independence by that colony in 1975. The same occurred in the 1980s and 1990s with people from the Dutch Antilles archipelago, of which Aruba became self-governing in 1986. The poor economic situation of the new nations and semi-independent islands of the Antilles motivated these waves of migration. The Netherlands also has a considerable number of economic migrants from the Mediterranean (Turkey and Morocco). In 1979, they were granted the right to reunite their families in the Netherlands. In 2004, 19 percent of the population was of foreign origin.

The Dutch have a long standing reputation for open-mindedness toward foreign countries and their cultures. The small size of the country (13,130 sq miles [34,000 sq km]) and intensive trading and traveling abroad have resulted in a lesser degree of chauvinism than is found in larger European countries.

The eagerness to adopt and adapt has a distinct parallel in the incorporation and development of

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