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The Migrants Music Manifesto [MMM] project: an integrative musical approach in a cultural Europe under construction

Denis Laborde

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**BASQUE ANTHROPOLOGICAL
RESEARCH INSTITUTE**
on Music, Emotion and Human Societies



Co-funded by the
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The Migrants Music Manifesto [MMM] project: an integrative musical approach in a cultural Europe under construction

by Prof. Denis LABORDE, ethnologist, CNRS & EHESS

ARI Institute – CNRS

City of the Arts – 3 avenue Jean Darrigrand – 64100 Bayonne – France

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Report

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ARI Institute – CNRS

City of the Arts – 3 avenue Jean Darrigrand – 64100 Bayonne – France

General objectives announced

Actions initiated by the MMM project are active in what we aim to refer to as the "world of world music," research, or the promotion of minority cultures. They focused on three items: (i) Music, (ii) Languages, (iii) Links between music and history.

To put such an ambition into action runs on four levels:

- Creation of a curriculum to develop the capacities of cultural professionals in the field of enhancement of the heritage of minority cultures (mediation, pedagogy, promotion, and marketing) and their languages;
- Creation of transmedia content for cultural operators, formal and informal education professionals (creation of educational e-palettes dedicated to the enhancement of these cultures and languages for educational use);
- Development of a label and access to European and international markets: *Migratory Music Manifesto*. Creation of a financial mechanism to ensure the sustainability of the project and the development of the label on a European scale
- Strategy for inclusion of migrants and refugees in creative processes.



Evaluation *versus* co-construction

As a social sciences research lab, the ARI Institute has been asked to manage an evaluation of the Migrants Music Manifesto [MMM] project. Specialized in assessment, the mobilized researchers designed the on-site evaluation process throughout the project in a continuous dialogue with the partners involved. Our team created the story of what we have been able to observe and integrated interviews with the target audiences. However, this evaluation is not precisely an evaluation but rather a way of contributing to the project itself to better understand the network process and the success of the social implementation of this Manifesto.

For this reason, this qualitative approach of the Migrants Music Manifesto [MMM] project is complemented by a quantitative evaluation work, conducted by Musiques de Nuit Production which complements the expected evaluation criteria on previous actions (interviews, emargement, hot evaluations).

Leading a qualitative analyze of the MMM project involves paying attention to the legacy of two scientific disciplines, ethnomusicology and social anthropology. Ethnomusicologists and anthropologists have long been studying music in a wide variety of migration contexts¹. In this context, the MMM project entitled us to make a distinctive contribution to this problematic by drawing perspectives that contribute to a renewed attention to the relationship between music and migration by anchoring it in a multi-disciplinary network. But here is a form of astonishment: how is it that despite the expertise it has developed on this theme, both within its own field and, more broadly, within the social sciences, ethnomusicology is reduced to an ancillary condition in contemporary debates on mobility, global cities and super-diversity, when the social sciences see it, as suggested by Milena Doytcheva, as "a real turning point in the study of the phenomena of heterogeneity and cultural pluralism"², but also in the broader debates which affect the musical practices of populations in situation of forced migration³? We share a world in which the health, social, economic and cultural impact of migratory crisis, climate changes and the Coronavirus

¹ We consider here ethnomusicology and anthropology of music as lexical equivalents. Whenever we are talking about ethnomusicology, we are also talking about anthropology of music.

² Doytcheva, M. *Le multiculturalisme*. Paris: La Découverte, 2018 : 1.

³ Crul, M. R. J., Schneider, J., & Lelie, F. (2013). *Super-diversité*. Amsterdam: VU University Press.



pandemic are shaking up our frames of thought, our ways of making society or even making science. Social sciences dealing with music have to take their rightful place in these social debates, as they have made music a tool for understanding human societies⁴. Such ways of considering the role of social sciences in our societies lead us to consider the “evaluation” of the MMM project not just as a top-down process that would entitle scientists (who are not involved in the making of the project) to make some judgment or to produce an “objective analyze” from an external point of view. It is not the case. Our ways of considering the role of social sciences in our societies make us thinking a more horizontal way of dealing with collective action in human societies.

This is where the co-construction takes place. It entitles a symmetrization of the relationship between cultural operators, artists, migrants, and social scientists. For this reason, which is as much an epistemic reason as a methodological one, this report takes the form of a co-construction.

The troubled context of a pandemic

The Migrants Music Manifesto [MMM] project took place in the troubled context of a pandemic that profoundly questions our ways of living in society. We are now drawing up this balance sheet, which therefore covers an arrhythmic period, during which phases of intense musical and social activities have alternated with periods of confinement during which we were silenced, the opera houses, the theaters, the cinemas were closed, and our public spaces were made silent by the constraint of derogatory displacements. However, "music" came to intrude in the interstices of our connected confinements as well as on the edge of our enclosure areas. A musical sociability of the balconies was deployed in our streets which resounded every evening at 8 pm of applause dedicated to the medical staffs. Musicians shared moments of musical conviviality with their windows wide open. The city of Montreuil (93) even organized a "festival of the balconies". In Italy, entire streets sang the "Va pensiero" from Verdi's Nabucco. In San Sebastian, the Basque

⁴ I refer to three works that were classics from the time of their publication: cf. Laurent Aubert, *La musique de l'autre. Les nouveaux défis de l'ethnomusicologie*, Geneva/Paris: Georg and always left hand on my desk: Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology. Twenty-nine Issues and Concepts*, Urbana and Chicago, The University of Illinois Press, 1983.2001; Philip V. Bohlman, *World of Music. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2002; Peter Wade, *Music, Race, and Nation. Música Tropical in Colombia*



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singer Izaro sang on the roof of the Victoria Eugenia theater for the audience of the windows. This musical sociability made of precariousness, of benevolent improvisation, sought to produce something new in a space of awe in which our world was immersed. This musical sociability created social bonding, despite everything.

This context has had a profound impact on the partners involved in the Migrants Music Manifesto [MMM] project. In particular, this has reinforced everyone's questions about the role that music is made to play in human societies: the so called "capability of music". I mean here, not merely the power of sounds, but the consequences that programs conducted (by institutions, by individuals, by NGOs) "on behalf of music" produce in social environments. The reasons for acting in common, the participative action, the repertoires mobilized, the differentiated modalities of engagement in music-making situations as well as the integrative strategies that can be implemented through music were the interests shared by all the partners involved in the MMM project. The objective of the analysis shared in this context was to reflect on music as a valuable tool for the intelligibility of human societies. It also was to better understand the tensions between hospitality and belonging that arise from the conflict between the participatory ideal of cultural professionals and the growing emergency of social situations. the tensions between hospitality and belonging that arise from the conflict between the participatory ideal of cultural professionals and the emergency of situations. **Finally, the aim of the MMM project was, above all, to make music a tool for transforming attitudes and, therefore, a tool for social change.**

May 3, 2020, Weimar, Germany, the beginnings of a reconquest of sound spaces. We live in the Tartar Desert. The virus remains a threat. The musicians of the Bach Collegium Thuringia play "Bach with masks" before an audience that is itself subject to the rules of social distancing on the occasion of the Live Is Life event in the park of the Belvedere Palace. This event, which is already taking us into the "next world", was organized to provide financial support for independent artists. A way, for the musicians, to activate, once again, " we recognize here the old humanist belief, always belied by experience, yet never impugned, that an onslaught by beauty and greatness will be able to defy the wickedness of the world" (Patrick Boucheron, *Of what is History capable? Inaugural Lecture delivered on Thursday 17 December 2015*, Paris, College de France). The MMM project has added another challenge to its action thwarted by the pandemic: **how to make**



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music - and languages, as the linguistic question has proven to be central to this project - the tool of an integrative European construction?

A thwarted calendar

The Migrants Music Manifesto [MMM] project was supposed to run from November 2019 to the end of November 2021. Due to the pandemic and the unpredictable lockdown periods, this calendar had to be altered in close cooperation with the Creative Europe authorities. Finally, the MMM project did run from November 2019 until August 2022, which entitled the Cenon Workshop (3 – 6 April 2022) to take place at the Rocher de Palmer, and the final Abusuan project to take place in Bari (Festa dei Popoli, 20 – 23 May, 2022).

Those changes in the schedule made it possible to complete the development phase and make available the educational tools provided for in the initial charter. They also made it possible to achieve the four languages Website that will now survive (or, to put it more elegantly, extend) the project itself with interviews, reports, and a huge variety of online resources (see further): <https://lerocherdepalmer.fr/mmm/>

Committed partners who knew each other

The Migratory Music Manifesto (MMM) project offers cultural operators a space to share creative common ground, aimed at enhancing the value of minority and devalued cultures, and more particularly those of migrants and refugees. The main objective of this space is to strengthen intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding and respect for other cultures in order to contribute to the social integration of migrants and refugees. MMM, mobilizes European cultural operators who wish to renew and share their know-how in the enhancement of minority cultures.

This project did not start from nothing "ex nihilo". It is presented as a continuation of projects promoting the mother tongue of allophone migrants and refugees in Europe, particularly in the educational sector: *Musiques migratoires* / 2017-1-FR01-KA201-037478 conducted by Musiques de Nuit Diffusion or the JANUA-LINGUARUM project conducted by the European Center for Modern Languages, which recalls that "education must encourage respect for the multilingualism of others and the recognition of languages and their varieties, whatever the image

they have in society". These projects are supported by the European Union through the Creative Europe programs: Refugees integration projects or the Erasmus+ program.

I am quoting here the *Musiques migratoires* project led by Musique de Nuit, but I must truthfully say that each of the participants involved in the MMM project is familiar with European programs related to cultural policies and each is a project leader in other projects involving other networks. It is important to underline this, as it will orient our analysis towards collective action rather than towards the singular actions carried out by each of the partners. To put it differently: the evaluation of the MMM project is not reduced to the sum of the actions carried out by each partner as the project unfolds. As in every case in which groups of experts in the same field of competence are brought together, the interest of the linkage prevails over the interest of the scattered achievements.

A quick presentation of the partners involved in the project will allow us to measure the very high level of expertise at which the MMM project is situated.

- **Musiques de Nuit Diffusion.** Created in 1987, the Musiques de Nuit Diffusion (MDN) association organizes cultural actions within the framework of territorial development. These actions are aimed primarily at populations in difficulty. The association is in charge of managing the Rocher de Palmer establishment, ensuring its musical programming, the production of digital works, and awareness activities. Territorial and national cultural policies support its activity. Located in a sensitive urban area, in a priority district on the right bank of Bordeaux in the heart of a multicultural territory (66 nationalities) and specializing in international cooperation projects around music, the association works in particular on the expression of citizenship in public space. Le Rocher de Palmer has opened 6700 m² of stages and studios for world music and cultures. The hall offers an extensive musical program where all musical genres are present (one with a permanent hall for 1200 seats, one for 650 seats, and one for 250 or 450 standing seats). Equipped with a digital studio, exhibition and training spaces, a digital forum for residents, a business incubator for Cultural and Creative Industries, and a resource center dedicated to world music, Le Rocher de Palmer is a place to live and exchange: workshops, residencies, masterclasses, meetings, "musical naps," conferences, concerts in apartments, "one month, one instrument" cycle... Since its

opening in 2010, Palmer Rock has become a networking space for operators in the cultural and creative industries. Its state-of-the-art equipment has enabled it to welcome artists who use digital tools in their practices. Its international activity helped Le Rocher de Palmer to develop European partnerships.

- **European Network of Cultural Centres (ENCC)** is one of 28 networks selected by the European Commission to represent Europe's arts and cultural sector for the period 2017-2021. It represents 3000 cultural centers in 22 countries, more than 15,000 jobs, and hundreds of volunteers. The ENCC seeks to empower individuals to make their voices heard in society through the arts and culture to enable and facilitate the creative expression of citizens in cultural spaces while respecting cultural equality and intercultural diversity. The ENCC organizes a wide variety of events contributing to the professional development of its members, the structuring of the sector, and the development of cooperation and innovation at the European level: itinerant Academy, BECC staff exchange program, Short Cuts conferences. The ENCC network is composed of full and associate members. Full members are national, regional, or local networks of cultural centers and individual cultural centers.
- **Alba KULTUR** has been working as an independent office for 30 years, based in Cologne, the largest city in North Rhine-Westphalia. He specializes in the cultures of the world: non-Western classical music, traditional and popular music transmitted orally and hybrid and Creole projects of contemporary fusion and crossing, all of which express the concept of cultural diversity in a globalized world. The work is based on the philosophy that music is a fundamental human expression that creates and sustains social and cultural identity. Addressing both one's own music and that of the world's cultures helps to establish openness, tolerance, respect, self-consciousness, sensitivity and the ability to give and receive criticism - all valuable criteria for peaceful coexistence and the development of a vibrant civil society. The objective is to promote, preserve and represent the diversity of musical cultures.

Activities throughout the year include artist management and production, conservation work, concept development and consultation, music and cultural

education, music and sustainable development, and cultural policy engagement. Here are some of the tools implemented to develop its global project:

Klangkosmos NRW www.klangkosmos-nrw.de Alba KULTUR has been leading a network specializing in global and local acoustic music since 2000 with organizers in 25 cities in the region, 2,500 concerts and alumni artists in more than 120 countries around the world. Each month, an artists' residency is organized with about 10 to 15 concerts, workshops, conferences and other activities. An audience of about 30,000 people is reached each year.

Globalflux (www.globalflux.de) This open platform was initiated in 2009 by Alba KULTUR. It aims to strengthen the world music scene in North Rhine-Westphalia in order to connect and encourage the various actors in the sector, artists, other professionals in the field of musical diversity, ethnomusicologists, specialised producers and promoters, actors from musical institutions, politicians and the media. The objective is to improve the working and living conditions of all in the highly multicultural region and to integrate and mobilize people willing to share the values and philosophy of Alba KULTUR and to give a common and public voice.

Musiker der Welt im Jekits Klassenzimmer (music education) Cooperation with the North Rhine-Westphalia Music Education Foundation since 2013: 60 different musical ensembles from more than 50 countries visited 120 primary schools to give 250 workshops for children aged 6-7 years as part of the school education programme. In addition, each year, some 20 music workshops are organized with organizations such as UNESCO schools, cooperative schools and institutions for the elderly to present the diversity of world music cultures, to organize lively encounters with musicians from other cultures, songs, instruments, musical styles and rhythms from all countries.

Project development is also an important element of innovation in the cultural sector. Alba KULTUR works closely with the German Commission for UNESCO and regional and national ministers to develop sustainable model projects in the field of world music for the North Rhine-Westphalia region (e.g.: concept of creative music industries in cooperation with Central Asia, the Indian Ocean, Ukraine and Morocco; mobility of artists; scientific and mapping research on cultural diversity).

Curatory Works, <http://www.albakultur.de/festivalsandspecialconcerts.html> Alba KULTUR regularly organizes world music concert series in major concert halls in Germany (Berliner Philharmonie, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Elbphilharmonie) as well as small format series (Klangkosmos NRW, Weltmusik in Hessen - since 2017) and festivals and special events.

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- **Muziekpublique (MZP)** is a bilingual non-profit organization based in Brussels whose main objective is the promotion, preservation and representation of traditional music and dance from all over the world. Its activities are developed through a program of world music concerts throughout the year, the World and Dance Music Academy and a label that oversees professional music projects (recording, booking and artist management). MZP is working in depth to provide a stage for artists representing musical cultures from around the world and to destigmatize cultures through music. MZP also provides a framework and support for artists to keep their music alive and enable them to act as intercultural mediators, fostering sociability in the multicultural context of Brussels. MZP is also a citizen movement that integrates and mobilizes people who want to share its values and philosophy. **CONCERTS** - Concerts with Belgian and international artists take place every week at the Théâtre Molière (concert hall with around 400 seats), located in the heart of the Matonge district (the African district of Brussels). MZP also organizes off-site events and festivals and develops numerous collaborations in Brussels. **WORLD ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DANCE** - Nearly 50 annual world music courses given by experienced teachers and with more than 1000 students enrolled per year. MZP offers a wide range of music and dance classes from all over the world, from folk dance to Greek bouzouki, from Brazilian cavaquinho to Armenian doudouk, from flamenco to oud (oriental lute) and African balafon. It is the only offer of this size and variety in Europe. **LABEL** - MZP has been

developing a label since 2008 that provides a framework for professional music projects and supports their development at the international level, by recording CDs, booking and managing Brussels artists, especially those of immigrant origin. He has released 10 CDs and is currently managing 4 bands.

- Created in 1998, with the support of the Municipality of Bari, the Province of Bari and the Puglia Region (Italia), the **Abusuan Intercultural Center** founded and managed the first Intercultural Centre in the region, <https://www.abusuan.com/>

It offers support services for the reception of migrants (advice, linguistic mediation, social and health prevention, educational support, support for access to housing, training, rights, placement, etc.) and promotes initiatives aimed at fostering genuine social, professional and cultural integration. ABUSUAN operates in two main directions:

- Knowledge and information for the promotion of cultures:
- Rights, reception, integration, social and professional integration of children, vulnerable groups and migrants: advocacy, counselling, social and health prevention and work support services

During these twenty years, Abusuan's six employees have acquired knowledge through constant training and the ability to act in socially relevant situations to improve the quality of life of migrants. Some employees are assigned to an immigration office to help foreign citizens find their way around; others have acquired skills and experience in the field of cultural activities and entertainment in music films, particularly ethnic music and jazz.

- **EDRA**, <http://www.edra-coop.gr> The cooperative of social activities for vulnerable groups "EDRA" is an association of 150 employees based in Athens. Since its creation in 2001, "EDRA" has been active in promoting social inclusion and specific audiences by collaborating with teachers and trainers qualified in different fields. It has set up a series of community programs and structures to support the quality of life and the rehabilitation and integration process of these people (women, migrants, ethnic minorities, people experiencing poverty, the homeless, people with disabilities, etc.).

- **ARI-CNRS Institute.** Inaugurated on 9 October 2018, The Basque Anthropological Research Institute on Music, Emotion and Society (ARI) is a research team of the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) affiliated to the UMR 5319 Laboratory “Passages” (Bordeaux Montaigne University, Bordeaux University, Ecole nationale supérieure d’architecture et de paysage Bordeaux, and the CNRS) based in Bayonne and which aims to study music as a social fact.

The research conducted by the ARI-CNRS team contributes to the development of theories and analytical tools essential to describe, analyze and understand societies and human beings using music as an epistemological tool. Throughout their history, human beings and societies have been the creators of speech, language and signs. They have designed forms of expression and representation, supported and transmitted cultures, and built knowledge and theories. They have also played a role in complex political, social, legal and economic arenas. They lived on Earth, explored it, used its lands and seas. They have occupied it, often triggering conflicts and having an impact on other living species and the planet's resources. To what extent can music help us to better understand social issues? It is this set of elements that the ARI-CNRS research team is trying to understand. They allow us to probe the way in which the various spheres of art emerge from the different forms of practice. Its researchers come from a variety of backgrounds - history, sociology, anthropology, law, philosophy, literary studies, German studies, ethnomusicology - to address a range of issues and challenges. The most important research program is conducted through a collaboration between Denis Laborde (ARI, CNRS-EHESS, Bayonne) and Ana Maria Ochoa (Columbia University, New York) and concerns musical practices in situations of forced migration.

Interlocutors involved in the project:

- Patrick Duval, Director, Musiques de Nuit Diffusion, patrick.duval@lerocherdepalmer.fr
- Birgit Ellinghaus, Director, Alba KULTUR birgit@albakultur.de
- Koblan Bonaventure, Associazione Abusuan, koblan@abusuan.com
- Peter Van Rompaey, Director, Muziekpublieke, peter@muziekpublieke.be

- Graciela Murga Project Manager, European Network of Cultural Centers
graciela.murga@encc.eu
- Maria Kerasoglou President, Kinonikes Sineteristikes Drastiriotites Efpathon Omadon,
mkerasoglou@gmail.com
- Denis Laborde Director, Institut ARI – CNRS, denis.laborde@chess

Intercultural dialogue, social interaction, capabilities-oriented training

The Migratory Music Manifesto [MMM] project implemented priorities:

- Intercultural dialogue and social integration of migrants and refugees
- Capabilities-oriented training and education
- Professional integration

The first step focused on language competencies. Communication in the mother tongue is one of the European Union's key competences for lifelong learning. However, the migration crisis in Europe is bringing new students to schools, especially allophone children, who do not speak the language of their teachers. They are helpless in this situation due to a lack of training, translation and knowledge of migratory movements. This problem is of concern to municipalities that wish to develop reception policies adapted to these forms of migration, which are not comparable to previous ones (number of migrants, countries concerned, length of journeys, repeated tragedies, legislative and political tightening...).

The languages of immigration contribute to the cultural diversity that characterizes Europe. They are practiced to varying degrees, in a way that is always minor compared to the majority language: in the family environment, in administrative procedures and access to the law, in work between people of the same nationality or community, in cultural associations, in community media, etc.

Whether they are considered as a social handicap or an asset, it is the representations as much as the facts that are the subject of debate. Why and how to recognize languages that are in a minority because of the socio- economic status of their speakers? How can they be taken into account in an education for multilingualism? In what way can they be valued in a professional context and for what purpose can they be invested in cultural practices?



Let us focus here on the point of vocabulary that marks the whole reception policy in Europe. I examine it here from the French case.

A matter of vocabulary

In France, we have long spoken of "émigrants" to refer to immigrants. The Service Social d'Aide aux Migrants (which no longer exists but has permanently installed a discriminating vocabulary in our language habits) considered the country of departure of people seeking asylum or integration in the broadest sense. This is still the point of view we adopt today when we talk about exiles. But the sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad (1933-98) denounced this usage and emphasized the double condition of the migrant: emigrant for the country of origin, immigrant for the country of destination. In the great movements that characterized the "crisis of 2015," about which I must now say a word, the press generally referred to Syrian and Afghan asylum seekers as "migrants." Generally speaking, the associations helping asylum seekers prefer to talk of exiles.

This issue was not raised during the meetings between the MMM project partners. Generally speaking, the words Migrants, Refugees, and Immigrants had been considered lexical equivalents. If we take up a heuristic distinction proposed by the ethnologist Gérard Lenclud, we would say that people involved in the MMM project did not problematize the lexical field: these words were tool words and not problem words. The tool-words are different from the problem-words because they are used without paying any attention, without stopping. No specific definition appeared to be necessary.

When we used the word "migrant," "immigrant," or "refugee" in our debates, everyone could understand what it was about, and there was no need to dwell on it. There was no need to look for a legal definition of these terms to mobilize them in our exchanges. Contrary to this usage, the problem-words are tool-words on which we have decided to focus. The MMM project did not bring out any problem-words.

For sure, we can consider it as being regrettable. But it can also be seen as a sign that the people involved in the project speak "the same language" and that it is unnecessary to specify the use of terms, including approximate forms of use. Finally, it can be noticed as a sign of a commitment to collective action that makes the collaborative effort more significant than the words used to describe it. One can regret it, but one can also consider it the common mark of commitment.



As Prof. Riëks Smeets, Ethnolinguist, professor of Caucasian languages at the University of Leiden, who was from 2003 to 2008 head of the Section for Intangible Cultural Heritage at UNESCO and Secretary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH at UNESCO, once told me: "Fortunately we did not wait for ethnologists to agree on the word culture to launch the Intangible Cultural Heritage program. If that had been the case, UNESCO would still be waiting and would never have been able to implement this program."

The MMM project leaders considered that words are less important than what they allow to designate and they put the making of a common action in the foreground. We called them Migrants, immigrants, refugees, asile seekers, and above all musicians⁵.

A matter of semantic field

However, the words came in to the very practical way through the organization of Local Workshops. Four workshops have been organized in four different local residences: Brussels, Cologne, Cenon and Bari. Each residency brought together: Minimum 5 artists (migrants & local artists working in the cultural mediation sector and wishing to be integrated into the project (singer or musician). The choice was made by each institution staff and submitted to the steering committee.

Here came the question of words and the distinctive ways of considering migrant artists on one side and refugee artists on the other. The Migrants Music Manifesto is dedicated to Migrant musicians. As the title suggests, these musicians are at the heart of this project. For this reason, it has been repeatedly made explicit that the administrative status of the migrant had to be taken into consideration for legal reasons.

Perhaps it should be recalled here that, even if the European Union has shared tools for managing migration policy - a security-inspired policy based on the triptych Frontex (European Border and Coast Guard Agency), Eurodac (European Union's first multinational biometric system), and the Dublin Regulation establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Member

⁵ See Karen Akoka, *L'asile et l'exil. Une histoire de la distinction réfugiés / migrants*. Paris, La Découverte, 2020.

States by a third-country national - migration policy remains a prerogative of the States. The cultural operators of the MMM project have therefore been subjected, like other employers, to the vagaries of the reversals of migration policies decided at the national level, which every observer has observed in the 2014-2020 period in particular.

Thus, the Migrants Music Manifesto promoters worked in close relationship with the referent of the European Commission funding this project, as for the choice of partners concerning the chosen foreign artists.

One of the problems led is the administrative discrepancy in the treatment of artists. Despite a common European law, it appears that not all countries were able to employ and remunerate these artists. This administrative setup had to be considered, discussed, and explained, always in relationship with the common law.

This situation has given rise to local arrangements in the case. Therefore, rather than harmonizing concerns within the MMM project, the project leaders decided to respect the local customs and ways of doing things of each institution involved in the project. But we always assumed that the first objective was to privilege and enhance music, artists, and their history. For this reason, and without more reflection, the decision had been made from the very beginning of the project to talk about “migrant artists” rather than “refugee artists”.

Let's now consider the “European migratory crisis” syntagma. The Migrants Music Manifesto took place after the 2015 so called “European migratory crisis”. This migratory crisis is now shedding new light on the issue of cultural practices in situations of forced migration. Many major symposia and works, most of them exploratory, attempt to identify as closely as possible the issues related to musical practices in such contexts⁶. The questioning comes from afar. It is anchored in this base constituted by a set of ethnomusicological studies that deal with the circulation of musicians⁷, musical performances and the repertoires mobilized by migrant

⁶ Among the many recent meetings are Ana Maria Ochoa (Columbia University, New-York) and D. Laborde (CNRS, EHESS), *Musical Displacements, Economic Dispossession and Climate Change*, Institut ARI, Bayonne, May, 23-25th 2019 ; Monika Salzbrunn (ISSR-UNIL), International Conference, *Migrating through the Arts: Rethinking worlds of music and dance through the lens of contemporary (im)mobilities*, Université de Lausanne, 6-7 juin 2019.

⁷ Luc Charles-Dominique: *Les « Bandes » de violons en Europe : cinq siècles de transferts culturels. Des anciens ménétriers aux Tsiganes d'Europe centrale*, Turnhout, Brepols Publishers, 2019.

populations, such as those of Veit Erlmann⁸ and Adelaida Reyes⁹, acoustic landscapes and the link to technological devices¹⁰ and the construction of public spaces and forms of citizenship through music¹¹. Other studies seek to understand how musical idioms stabilize or, on the contrary, invent themselves in diasporic forms that aim at the transnational scale¹² or mobilize the musical experience to make it an instrument of resilience¹³. However, this accumulated knowledge and specific expertise today meet a significant challenge, which is the responsibility of scientific research, and particularly of anthropology or ethnomusicology as a discipline of otherness, to forge appropriate responses to a large-scale societal crisis linked to immigration, for which it is customary to make 2015 the point of origin.

Let us point out that if we are talking about a "European migration crisis" or a "major societal crisis", we are talking about a political crisis. The crisis arises from the confrontation of the European Union's social, security and economic model with a model of integration which is marking time since it is seen as a matter of urgency and has a complicated relationship with the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the status of refugees. If we are talking about a "migratory crisis" in the discussion that follows, it is on the condition that we consider the crisis

⁸ Veit Erlmann, *Nightsong: Performance, Power, and Practice in South Africa*, Chicago University Press, 1996.

⁹ Adelaida Reyes, «Tradition in the Guise of Innovation: Music among a Refugee Population». *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 1986, 18 : 91-101 ; *Songs of the Caged, Songs of the Free. Music and the Vietnamese Refugee Experience*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1999.

¹⁰ Alejandra Bronfman, *Isles of Noise. Sonic Media in the Caribbean*, Chapel Hill, Uni. of North Carolina Press, 2016.

¹¹ Martin Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music. The Musical Construction of Place*, Oxford & New York, Berg, 1994 ; Anne Damon Guillot & Méline Lefront, *Comment sonne la ville ? Musiques migrantes de Saint-Etienne*, Villeurbanne, Centre des Musiques Traditionnelles Rhône-Alpes, 2017; Michael O'Toole, *Sonic citizenship: Music, migration, and transnationalism in Berlin's Turkish and Anatolian diasporas*, Doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, 2014 (dir. Prof. Philip Bohlman) <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1559962172>

¹² Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. London, Routledge, 1995 ; Laurent Aubert (dir.) : *Musiques migrantes, de l'exil à la consécration*, Collection Tabou, vol. 2. Gollion : Infolio / Genève : Musée d'ethnographie, 2005 ; Emmanuelle Olivier (dir.), *Musiques au monde. La tradition au prisme de la création*, Sampzac, Ed. Delatour, 2012 ; Hugo Ferran, «"Rate This MezmuR". Ethnographie d'un groupe de discussion Facebook sur le gospel éthiopien », *Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie*, 28, 2015 : 107-125.

¹³ Akombo, D.O. 2000. "Reporting on Music Therapy in Kenya", Nordisk Tidsskrift *Musikkterapi*, 9: 1; Ditty Dokter (ed.), *Arts Therapists, Refugees and Migrants. Reaching Across Borders*. London & Philadelphia, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2005 ; Tia DeNora, *Music Asylums. Wellbeing Through Music in Everyday Life*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2013; Brynjulf Stige, Gary Ansdell, Cochavit Elefant ans Mercédès Pavlicevic, *Where Music Helps : Community Music Therapy in Action and Reflection*, Mondon ; Routledge, 2016.

as a relational form between asylum application and reception arrangements, at the heart of a dialogical form that links wandering and reception, flight and hospitality¹⁴.

In 2015, more than one million people passing through countries disorganized by wars - wars in which European countries are involved (Libya, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan) - will be arriving at the gates of the European Union: 972 500 by sea, 34 000 via the Balkans¹⁵. Let us try to control the orders of magnitude. In 2015, the European Union will have 508.2 million inhabitants. In raw data, the arrival of these migrants, therefore, represents 0.2% of the European population. How can we speak of a "crisis" given the low orders of magnitude of migration? Let us wager that we should focus our attention elsewhere than on statistics, no longer on flows but their management, no longer on absolute values but on reception facilities, no longer on tables but on daily experiences. Shifting our attention in this way is also a way of dealing with public action when it comes to dealing with mobile populations in the context of contemporary European migration policies.

It is where the music comes in. As soon as we change the focus to question the multiple forms of solidarity, welcome and collaboration, music comes to occupy a prominent place. It becomes a crucial tool of intelligibility¹⁶, including for observing, in real-time, the world that we invent in the form of a "regulatory improvisation" that is globalized, clumsy, worried and that draws in a lasting way our common world. Of what is music capable in such situations? This was the question the MMM focused on.

Situated actions

This attitude conditioned the way the workshops were conducted throughout the project.

Local Workshops have been organized in four different local residences in Brussels, Cologne, Cenon, and Bari. Each residency brought together: Minimum of five artists (migrants & local artists working in the cultural mediation sector and wishing to be integrated into the project

¹⁴ «Quelle crise migratoire ? », *Plein Droit*, 111, Décembre 2016.

¹⁵ <https://www.unhcr.org/fr/news/stories/2015/12/567a746ec/million-refugies-migrants-rejoint-leurope-2015.html>

¹⁶ Laborde, Denis, « La musique pour s'entendre ? L'accueil des migrants à Baigorri » in Talia Bachir et Anne Damon-Guillot. *Une pluralité audible ? Musiques et mondes sonores en contact*. Tours : Publications Universitaires François Rabelais, 2019 : 27-51.



(singer or musician). The choice has been made by each institution's staff and is submitted to the steering committee.

In this project, the migrant or refugee artist question remained central. Migrant musicians were at the heart of the project (I would rather say: that musicians were themselves the heart of the project). We will work with the referent of the European Commission who is funding this project. As for the choice of partners concerning the chosen foreign artists, we will finalize it and explain it in the reports we will carry out.

One of the problems is the difference in administrative treatment between countries to be able to employ and remunerate these artists. Depending on the problems encountered, we will decide together on the solutions chosen to explain them in our assessments.

Each partner is, therefore, free to choose to work and pay for this or that foreign artist. The first objective here is to privilege and enhance music, artists, and their history. A decision is made to talk more about migrant artists than refugee artists.

Action 1

The conduct of the project has been punctuated by meetings that allowed its good governance. These meetings took place according to the following schedule: Paris (November 2019), by videoconference (July 2020, then December 2020 and May 2021), Cologne (September 2021), Cenon (April 2022), and Bari (May 2022).

These meetings allowed for adjustments and often (in Cologne in particular) turned into discussions that clarified positions on the issue of world music and the link to the artistic and social actions carried out within the MMM project. Similarly, in Cenon, these meetings linked to the conduct of the project spilled over into questions related, for example, to the issue of cultural rights. In Brussels, the question of artistic value was linked to the question of status. These exchanges were of very great richness. As a social scientist involved in the framework of this Creative Europe project, it invites me to link as strongly as possible the contents related to the management of the project and the contents linked to the idea that one has of the actions carried out under this banner. This consideration is a precious lesson: the inseparable character of the concepts governing the program and its implementation tools.

Action 2

The project partners planned four local actions. They took place in Italy on September 9 and 13, 2020, then in Belgium in January and February 2020, in Germany from September 13 to 16, 2021, in Italy for two days in May 2022, and France in January 2021. The team of the ARI Institute followed these projects, and Anna Cuomo, a young researcher under CNRS contract at the Institute, met the young musicians hosted by Le Rocher de Palmer in the framework of this project. I refer here to the report written by Anna Cuomo during an ethnographic survey that she conducted in April 2021 (cf. infra Appendix, Ethnographic moment). **MMM Workshop lab**, soit plus de 20 Workshops organisés pendant 3 jours, du 13 au 15 septembre, qui a bénéficié d'une aide exceptionnelle du Land de Nordrhein Westfalen ;

- MMM MedienLab is funded by the MKW NRW in cooperation with Soziokultur Nordrhein Westfalen
- MMM Conference "Cultural Policy, Music & Migration"
- Creation of the MMM orchestra in the framework of the MMM Projektorchester program, in partnership with the German UNESCO delegation
- The participation of the students of the Master „Kulturpädagogik und Kulturmanagement“ from the Hochschule Niederrhein was one of the highlights of those three days long meetings. They could attend all the debates and events in Cologne with their professor, Prof.´in Dr. Donja Amirpur. In february 2022, they published a 41 pages fascinating report entitled "Inwieweit ist eine Postmigrantische Musikszene in Bezug auf die anhaltende Orientierung an politischen Kategorien in Zukunft möglich?" (To what extent is a postmigrant music scene possible in the future concerning the ongoing orientation towards political categories?) which will be found on the website: www.ari.hypotheses.org

Action 3

The partners have embedded mentoring actions in these actions of exchange, production, and diffusion. There were 5 of them, each lasting five days: in Brussels during February and



December 2020, in Bari in November 2020, then in March 2021, in Cologne during the massive events of September 2021, then in France in April.

These mentoring actions have allowed accompanying the project by guaranteeing respect for the initial line. Conferences on themes related to the project:

- MMM Conference "Cultural Policy, Music & Migration" in Cologne (see above);
- Conference on Cultural rights in Cenon

Action 4

Artistic residencies are the most visible part of the project, where Migrants Music Manifesto meets the public and mobilizes all the technical, human, and financial resources of the cultural structures that support the project.

The MMM project carried out four artist residencies in each main partner structure. Muziekpublieke launched the initiative in December 2020, Cologne took over during the big week of September 2021, Cenon organized performances of the artists' residencies in April 2022, and the dynamic ended in May 2022 in Bari on the occasion of the Peoples' Day. Each residence lasted four days depending on the circumstances and gave rise to a public presentation.

These actions were not isolated and allowed the creation of events conducive to collection and dissemination operations: what we called in the project the data collection.

The collaboration with "Atelier 144 - Fabrique des Arts Numériques" allowed the editing and the finalization of 51 videos that embody the project today. It is worth saying a word about this exciting collaboration that marks MMM in its duration. Atelier 144 has indeed a very special status.

Atelier 144 was founded by Marc Benaïche, a well-known figure in the world of World Music, as Marc Benaïche himself had previously founded Mondomix, the magazine of world music and culture, a symbolic tool in this field of cultural activity.

Atelier 144 was particularly well suited to work on the Migrants Music Manifesto project. Indeed, this familiarity is used to working in solid conspiracy with artists, scenographers, architects and engineers, and creators with diversified skills. Its designers invent, imagine and realize digital,



interactive, and immersive installations, sometimes spectacular, sometimes moving, and always informative. Atelier 144 is accustomed to disseminating the work of artists' collectives and cultural institutions. Its teams are used to working with institutions such as the Fondation Royaumont, the Musée du Quai Branly, and international events such as Great Black Music in Brussels or the Festival d'Automne in Paris. As the MMM project unfolded, Atelier 144 technicians documented each event.

Marc Benaïche's suggestion was not to make a new tool and instead create a brand (MMM) that allows the project to gather the resources and put them online in the name of this label on all platforms and distribution tools already existing and used by all.

The data collected in this way have enriched each institution's initiatives taken in this field separately. A joint base was thus constituted that led to the publication of 51 videos that can be watched in four languages (French, German, English, Italian) on the website <https://lerocherdepalmer.fr/mmm/artist/?lang=en>

This collection is composed of different interviews with artists: three conducted in Cenon, four in Brussels, four in Cologne and four others in Bari. These interviews are accompanied by a collection of initiatives aimed at refugee artists as well as a bunch of photos and videos of actions carried out within the framework of the Migrants Music Manifesto project partnerships.

They also accompanied the creation of the digital platform with the drawing of a map indicating the origin of the artists (a difficult task that gave rise to passionate debates on how to assign an origin to an artist) and integrating all the videos produced by Atelier 144: manifesto, directories of initiatives, videos of actions carried out and interviews. This Promethean work is still being finalized as I finish writing this report.

The whole of the work brings us back to the initial question, which is that of the powers attributed to music to create social links in situations of promoting forms of musical, and therefore cultural, otherness. What is this integrative force attributed to music? How can we make music a powerful tool to promote the issue of Cultural rights? How can we make music a means to interest political decision-makers, economic operators, and those responsible for significant educational policies in the question of cultural diversity, social inclusion, and justice for all? And how to engage such a dynamic without ever renouncing the quality of the artists we produce, according to the significant concern repeatedly expressed by Peter Van Rompaey on behalf of



Muziekpublique or of the events we promote in the institutional space directed by the partners involved in the Migrants Music Manifesto project?

These questions have been significant issues throughout the meetings and decisions that had to be made at critical moments of the project, and I dedicate my conclusion to them.

Prospective conclusion

To better understand the evaluation of the action and the areas of reflection to be opened in the future, let us emphasize several points based on the activities carried out within the framework of the Migrants Music Manifesto project. This report is, therefore, neither an exhaustive summary nor a summary of all our analyses. In terms of evolution over the three years of this project, we can say that a significant change occurred concerning the relationship between cultural operators, artists, and the political and institutional sphere.

Here are some of the points that support this change

- the fact that local elected officials are showing their interest in social inclusion initiatives led by cultural actors;
- the fact that the worlds of music do not renounce the level of excellence to base the question of musical otherness on a foundation of excellence;
- the mobilization of these programs as a cultural tool for a territory;
- the solicitation of elected officials to elaborate public cultural policies on the scale of a city or even a region.

We can understand this increase in the interest of elected officials in the light of two significant events that profoundly affect the organization of our European societies in this first half of our 21st century:

- what has been misnamed "the European migration crisis" (see above), the beginning of which is supposed to be inaugurated in 2015;
- the two years of the pandemic during which artistic and cultural activities were constrained by public health, lockdowns, and security policies and marked by a

generalized questioning of the social link and the role of cultural policies in constructing a "living together."

The topicality and insistence of these questions highlight a new political relevance of the MMM action, fulfilling through its functioning the objective n°1 of the European Union's programs: to solicit art to reflect on contemporary issues. This seems to presage an increasingly sustained interest in the upcoming actions, given the political significance of the theme of participation. The MMM project is part of a series of activities that are bound to play a decisive role in its capacity to bring society closer, not only to artists but, perhaps above all, to its elected representatives. The presence of representatives of different government bodies and the company of elected officials in a very particular way in Germany during the Migrants Music Manifesto in Cologne, where their testimonies and analyses were solicited, but also a recurrent pattern in all the actions carried out by the MMM project in Cenon, Brussels, and Bari, testifies to this growing interest in the mobilization of musical practices to "make society" in times when health, social and environmental challenges violently question the social bond.

Due to the substantial experience of the cultural structures involved in the MMM project and the anchoring of their practices in their territories, there has been a significant evolution in the relationship that artists have with the cultural institutions involved in the MMM project. The artists seek to value the action of these institutions and, in turn become ambassadors of these cultural policies to the members of their original community and the first circles of their professional activity. When forms of recognition are proven (see the detailed testimony by Anna Cuomo in the Appendix of this report), they become ambassadors of the MMM project to the institutional art world. This contributes to strengthening recognition in the worlds of cultural activities in general and influencing the frameworks of our cultural policies in a sensitive way.

Throughout this project, other dimensions of the project have emerged, which had not necessarily been anticipated. These dimensions are linked to the internal level of the action and concern:

- The choice of artists involved in the residencies and the public visibility of the MMM action,
- The artistic format of the training courses chosen,
- The pluralization of the ways of doing cultural mediation.



This third point appeared particularly salient in the discussions, the confrontations. Nevertheless, the imperative of loyalty is expressed through the shared concern to make the Migrants Music Manifesto project a "common work."

This last element constitutes, in our opinion, a considerable work in progress that has directly to do with ways of constructing a European cultural space.

"United in diversity." Remember that this is the motto of the European Union. To implement this shared concern, the European Union enforces actions to support national policies and finance projects thanks to a dedicated program of its own (this is the case of the "Creative Europe" program, which supported the Migrants Music Manifesto project), but also shares of budgets dedicated to cultural development in large-scale programs such as Horizon Europe, Erasmus +, Europe for Citizens or the European Structural and Investment Funds. The idea of "cultural diversity" is enshrined in these programs. But in order not to remain at the level of devices or declarations of intent, the European Union is also involved (i) in the promotion of artistic creation, (ii) in the economic development of the cultural sector, (iii) in the access of citizens to culture and (iv) in the influence of European culture throughout the world.

Considering these four requirements, we witness that the Migrants Music Manifesto project meets them all.

These demands remind us that the European Union must not build a Europe of cultures based on the principle of erasing the unique richness of its cultural practices; it must create a unification of ways of doing things that preserves the richness of this cultural diversity. If we consider this, we can assume that the meaning of a common European cultural policy has to be centered on the specific idea of conferring a "use value" to artistic commitment. And this is precisely why a theme such as cultural rights has reappeared in the debates and meetings that have animated this MMM project. It is on this point that we must conclude.

A greater emphasis on the collaborative dimension of the project construction process would further broaden the political scope of projects like the Migrants Music Manifesto. In this case, it will be a question of not only valuing initiative as the only key to citizen and artistic action, but this specific and rare alliance between initiative and collaboration, between autonomy and cooperation, which is today one of the great building sites to give a completely different scope to the citizen action when it is carried by highly competitive cultural institutions similar to those



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which will have brought the Migrants Music Manifesto project. Those partners shared the concern to build a world in which the cultural otherness is not a handicap to be fought but a given of the contemporary societies, which it is advisable to reflect, to analyze, and, finally, to value by calling upon the best artists, those who can carry this concern of requirement, altruism, and hope which can make of rich multiculturalism and built in common the desirable horizon of our living together.

Denis LABORDE , anthropologue,
Directeur de Recherche CNRS / Directeur d'études EHESS
Institut ARI – CNRS
3 avenue Jean Darrigrand 64100 Bayonne



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Appendix

Mikis, an ethnographic moment



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LABA and Patrick Duval coordinated a first workshop at the Rocher de Palmer in September 2020. In April 2021, Anna Cuomo met them at the Rocher de Palmer while they were rehearsing and doing a filmed interview as part of a professionalization process that would lead them to write a group presentation to find a label. I see them again in September 2021, one year after the creation of the group, to make a point. Yamen (Syrian) is not there, but the others are present: Artur (Albanian), Ebrahim (Iranian Kurd), Nico, and Thomas, two musicians from Bordeaux. The group was called Mikis.

Miksi, a name

The name Miksi was found during a collective discussion, according to Nicolas: "I like the idea that it's not fixed; that's why I didn't want a singer to become so charismatic that the band would just become an accompanist. Miksi is the mix. We discussed us to find the name, as I often use Esperanto, the language between the people, so we had put some words in Esperanto. Besides, we still did not find how to define our music: world music, Mediterranean music but Kurdistan does not touch the Mediterranean (smiles between him and Ebrahim), I retained I had my course of history/geography ". Nicolas shows me the page of a notebook on which words have been written. Ebrahim reads some of them: ancient, Mediterranean, continental, elite, modern, fusion. He adds, "Aquarium, because there are lots of fish in it." Nicolas says that they had talked about Aquarius. This boat that goes to the rescue of migrants in the Mediterranean, "but for me, it was perhaps a little too connotative. I'm going to play in support of SOS Mediterranean and all that, of course, but labeling it is not necessarily interesting. Maybe they don't always want to be brought back to that. When the children questioned them, well, it was fun for one class, two classes, but in the third class where they asked 'what did you take in your suitcase, did you sleep in the street, I think they want to move on, don't you?" Ebrahim agrees. He adds that he does not like the word



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refugee. He finds it negative. "That's why I don't like to carry the name refugee with me because we are human beings. That's it."

Nicolas Lescombes is a multi-instrumentalist musician from the Bordeaux region and a music conservatory graduate. He has participated in many projects as a musician, conductor, and artistic director. He notably directed the JOSEM (Young Symphony Orchestra of Entre Deux Mers) for 6 years. As a member of an institutional and associative network in Bordeaux, he was contacted by LABA following another "migratory music" project conducted two years ago with Roma people in Bègles. The project consisted in conducting workshops in schools with newcomers enrolled in courses to learn French. He worked with a writer from the Bordeaux region on nursery rhymes and provided musical accompaniment. The people in charge of the project decided to record these nursery rhymes as a record of the experience. In this context, Nicolas met the people from LABA who were interested in his career. "I was in this dynamic of working with young people and going a little further than being in the testimony. I also intervene at the Gustave Eiffel high school with Unaccompanied Minors, Congolese, and Burkinabe, and we write songs, slam, and rap. I take care of the arrangements, and they write the text. One thing led to another, Sophie from LABA suggested that I take part in a training course in Barcelona to train young professional musicians. Then she suggested that I manage the project with three refugee musicians and two musicians from the network, including myself, so now I wear several hats: musician, manager, and artistic director. The idea of associating two musicians from Bordeaux who was already involved in the musical network was to help the group integrate better to find dates. I know Patrick Duval well, which allowed us to be welcomed and work in good conditions".

Contacted by the LABA and Patrick Duval to supervise the Bordeaux workshop of the MMM project, Nicolas turned to the Bordeaux association JAMIRA, created in 2017, which listed and gathered refugee artists musicians/singers from the Bordeaux region, thanks to a European fund. The association found about fifteen artists to have them all play together: "It fell apart because no one knew what they were doing there, then there were egos, not everyone got along. It was complicated because we didn't speak French because most of us arrived here in 2016, and Jamira was created in 2017, but none of us spoke French. There were many different nationalities and languages" (Ebrahim). Despite this, meetings took place, and the group "Meso together", in reference to Mesopotamia, was born, composed of 6 musicians from the association. The group

then split up into different smaller formations, to be able to work better. Without funding or scheduled dates, the group finally dissolved. Despite everything, the association allowed to create a network of musicians and put them in the spotlight on their website, where each musician is presented. Through this initiative, Nicolas could listen to what each musician was doing, and then choose those he wanted to contact to participate in the MMM project. His choice was first artistic: "I work a lot with strings, so I wanted strings. Then I hesitated for a long time, good violin/cello was sure, Thomas who is from the network I've been working with for a long time, who is also a violinist but who is mostly on machines, because I wanted him to be the link between these different cultures, with this modern computer/electronic side. The problem that I didn't finish solving was that I wanted vocals, but it wasn't very easy because I wanted vocals, not from only one country. Either I took a singer from Bordeaux who could adapt to everything, or I took a refugee singer who could sing in other languages. So I had a problem between singing and percussion because the percussion gives the country color. And the fact that Ebrahim plays the Daf and the Cajon was good because the cajon goes everywhere, it's a bit universal, and it's a bit world music, and the daf is more specific. But above all, I was satisfied to take the best. And we invite female singers, like the last time at the Palmer Rock we invited Ninar, a Syrian singer who is a refugee here, whom Yamen knew.

The Jamira website presents in this way the three musicians Nicolas chose:

- Artur ZEQRIRI, for more than fifty years, has been committed to transmitting the incredible heritage of Kaba. He is one of the last representatives of this millenary Albanian music that he makes vibrate with his legendary 130 years old violin. He accompanied him during concerts in Europe and the Mediterranean area and allowed him to receive several prizes and medals for his music.
- Ebrahim AHMADI landed in Bordeaux, his suitcases filled with percussions: Daf, Koozeh, dayereh, cajon but also setar. His fingers twirl on the taut skin of his daff, his faithful instrument. A Kurd from Iran, he studied psychology and believes in the power of music therapy, which he taught for ten years before arriving in France.
- Yamen AL YAMANI is a cellist and bass player and has acquired a lot of experience during his years in radios and recording studios. This Syrian composer and producer likes to venture into the free zone. In jazz, rock, or classical music, he distills the music

of his country, as in the Syrian Expat Philharmonic Orchestra, and experiments with what he calls fusion.

The desired mix for the project was challenging to put in place. Finding female musicians is complicated; traditional and classical music is played mainly by men in most countries including France. The compromise was for Nicolas to call upon female singers more punctually.

Accustomed to projects with European funding, Nicolas is critical: "When Patrick asked me to work on Music Migrant Manifesto, I asked to see the European project which was to fight against glossophobia. Ebrahim asks what the word means. "It's discrimination because of the language. You arrive in France; if you don't speak French, you'll be put aside. Or, if you have an accent, the exclusion is also glossophobia. Ebrahim says that each region has its own accent and that it is the same in his region. Nicolas adds: "So the project was to set up a professional project between people of different languages and to study the process. And this is also happening in Belgium, Greece, Germany, and Italy. In the beginning, the European project was a workshop that we did in September last year. And we thought that there would be researchers to observe us during this workshop. For Nicolas, the challenge of the European project was to study the process, and he was surprised that we were not there even before the workshops, "to study how we recruited because that's where the problems of glossophobia appear in fact, on the choice, the meeting, how they integrated, it's more difficult for Artur who is a little older and has more difficulty to learn French quickly. And in fact, Yamen and Ebrahim have found work, and Artur has difficulty finding employment because of his age, 57. I talked to them a little about the European project at the beginning, but what I was employed for was to get them to meet and make music together without knowing why we were there.

The project was to end at the end of the workshop in September 2020. There was to be the second workshop in May, postponed to November 2021. At the end of the first workshop, Patrick Duval proposed they perform in the first part of the basque singer's Beñat Achiary trio, a Basque group. Following this first 20-minute stage performance, the group decided to continue, and Patrick Duval opened the doors of the Rocher de Palmer to rehearse in the context of the health crisis. He organized a residency, financed with funds from the Rocher de Palmer, which allowed them to record five tracks in the Rocher de Palmer studio. The demo was accompanied by a photo session and a description produced by the structure's communication department. From then on,



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the group evolved outside the network: "At the end of the first week, what pleased Patrick (Duval) and everyone else was that the spark was born musically. So, from there, we wanted to continue, and quite quickly we asked ourselves the question of what we do as music" (Nicolas).

Together, they decided to take traditional music from each of the countries of the group's musicians and make arrangements on this musical basis. Today, Nicolas has asked each of them to compose their own melodies, on which he can then write the scores of the others. From the beginning, Miksi did not want to cover classic French songs, such as *La vie en rose*, to be able to multiply the small scenes (restaurants etc.). All the musicians in the group read music and have a basic knowledge of music theory. Nicolas is the artistic director. He writes the scores of each one. He centralizes. One comes with composition, and then it's Nicolas who imagines how the others can tune it, referring to them. To have Thomas for the more electronic part allows us to leave the traditional aspect, "i.e., not to fall into a corny, old-fashioned thing" (Nicolas). According to Thomas, "we worked, and we quickly found a guideline even if we are at the beginning to shape the identity of Miksi, to see where we want to go. The advantage of electronics is that we have a multitude of possibilities to create our sounds. Do we want a lot of percussions to accompany the *daf*, or do we want a fine accompaniment to leave more room for Ebrahim on the percussion? So it's an ongoing search that's just beginning.

At the beginning of the experiment, the three Jamira musicians knew each other but did not know Nicolas or Thomas. According to Ebrahim, "at the beginning, everyone was quite confused about their presence. Little by little, we discovered the characters of the members of the group, we understood each other well, and now Miksi, for me, is like my family. Everyone brings his piece, and we rehearse. Now it's different. Now there remains the administration and the financing". Nicolas uses his network to provoke other meetings, notably with well-known personalities such as André Manoukian, who participated in an album entitled "Apatrides", Elina Duni of Albanian origin, whose father Arturo knows, or Gaël Faye. This type of collaboration would allow them to make the group known. Nicolas joins new national associative networks, such as *Artistes en Exil* in Paris, which can lead to help for studio recordings. The group plans several residences and stages thanks to Nicolas' network. He works on a project basis, which has allowed him to multiply his encounters and experiences in school, institutional and musical networks (festivals etc.).

I was interested in the individual stakes of this encounter born from the MMM project. For Ebrahim and Artur, Nicolas represented a possible professional opportunity. Each musician has a long musical experience in his country, especially Artur, who plays the violin since he was 11 years old and for whom art is a discipline, "like the army." He has made a career in several well-known orchestras in Albania and on Albanian television. To find success, you have to keep repeating yourself. Music is not a hobby for him, and he accepted the project because he felt in Nicolas his professionalism, skills, and ability to lead, to let everyone have their place in the group. The dialogue is difficult with Artur, who speaks barely French. He calls his wife and puts her on speakerphone so that she can play the role of translator. She is at work. She has only 5 minutes to give us. "He worked with Jamira, they played together, they were young people who organized concerts in schools, meetings with children to explain where he comes from, the instruments he plays, the music of his country. Now he sees the future with this project. He has seen almost all of Europe. He has been touring since 11 years old" (Rudina, Artur's wife, translating Artur, who speaks in Albanian). When she hung up, he asked me about my job, which he finds interesting, and he explains to me that in Albania the social sciences are not interested in the arts, that it is a field strictly reserved for the academy of arts. In spite of his weak French, I understand that he has a sharp knowledge of Albania, of the universities, of what the social sciences are. Ebrahim gives me the same motivations as Artur, namely the need to invest himself in a project that will lead to a tour, an album, and a professional valorization. He is forced to work on construction sites to support his family, and his goal is to quit as soon as the group finds the means to finance itself.

"I arrived in Europe in 2016. First, I applied to be an asylum seeker in Belgium. I was there in 2016, and there was the same musical project there. I was in a refugee camp, and I played with other foreign musicians for two months. But it wasn't very organized. It wasn't serious. I left Belgium because France accepted my request, and I was obliged to come to Bordeaux. It wasn't my choice. And I thought musical projects with refugees were just for fun. It's not very serious. The day Nico called me, I told myself I would try again. We'll see. I already knew Artur and Yamen, with Jamira (the association), and I got to know Nico and Thomas little by little. Nico is very organized, he is serious, he has a lot of ideas, he shares, and we exchange ideas. I think that here I am an important person. Sometimes you are in projects, but nobody asks you your opinion, your ideas. And you don't participate. Fortunately, with Nico it's really different. I hope we will tour next year, that we will make the first album. The residency we did at the Palmer Rock showed



me that it was serious. It's not fun, it's not for fun, nor to be in an administrative project. We don't want to say that we are refugees. We are musicians. Nico is really professional, he knows world music well, and that's very important, he knows the instruments, it's very important" (Ebrahim). Before coming to Belgium, Ebrahim was a musician but also an art therapist.

For Nicolas and Thomas, the issues are different. First of all, there is the idea of an artistic encounter, of exchange, and a desire to help these musicians tour, to get them into the local Bordeaux network, to get them out of the isolation that is sometimes difficult to live with, as for Artur who told me once in the streetcar on the way back that he had a lot of difficulties meeting French people with whom he could practice the language, exchange ideas, discuss. If he left Albania, it was because of his Egyptian origins which exposed him to discrimination (he told me he was considered black there) and also because of his political opinions. The experience appears overwhelming and rich in lessons for Nicolas and Thomas, who say they have deconstructed many of their prejudices thanks to this meeting.

Thomas has been a musician since he was a child and joined an orchestra in Créon at the age of 6, directed by Nicolas. Since then, he has been a member of JOSEM: "It's a bit of a family where everyone is very close. That's how I played with the rue Kétanou in the festivals, I was 14 years old, and I played at the Francos, it was very strong emotionally, and it really made me want to make music. We didn't necessarily play together anymore (with Nicolas), and he called me for another project, Derli, with the singer Wally. We like to play together with Nico. He took me not only for the violin in this project because I also make computer music, and Miksi's idea was to mix the world music of the Mediterranean, Albanian, and Kurdish, which is not next to the Mediterranean (laughs), with more Western music we will say, more modern, with this electronic side. If he has already played with foreign musicians in the context of meetings between orchestras, it was the first time he participated in a European project, but "this context of European funds does not concern me so much. It creates the encounter, and then it's up to us to take advantage of it.

"It is important to eat together, Nicolas says. The first questions were about food, what we eat, love, relationships with their wives, how each of them lives love, religion, their place in relation to religion, the influence it has in daily life, and freedom too. Thomas: "This is something that made me think a lot and take a step back in relation to France. Ebrahim was talking about it with children from the elementary school in Créon. He said that we are a free country, and we as

French people have our blinkers on, and we see that our country is never happy, and he said, 'you are right to complain and protest but you are still in a free country'. Ebrahim: "When you are free, you don't realize it. And the media is a disaster. You can't see what's really going on in Kurdistan. Nicolas, aware of the stereotypes that could animate him at the beginning, tells me that he has gained humility: "we all have stereotypes. I had a good time the first day I went to Gustave Eiffel, and they said to me 'but who are you to ask us where we come from, are you from the police?' I was in my carefree mode. Everybody makes music. It's a good life. And they, (talking about Miksi's musicians), I saw them maybe the same way, 'ah the poor are refugees so they are necessarily poor people who can't read or write...' and that's why the first discussion we had about Kurdistan, Ebrahim said to me 'you should know that in 1920 the Versailles treaty took away our...'. But who am I to say that I am going to help them? In fact, no, I'm not going to help them, we are musicians, and we are going to play together. And so to get out of this stereotype, that he is underneath because he is a foreigner or a refugee, you know. Artur was a violinist on Albanian television, he has a huge culture in traditional music, and at the beginning, I said to myself, "poor guy, he doesn't have letters because he can't speak French," but in fact, he speaks Russian, he speaks Greek, and on the historical and cultural level, they have three religions in Albania, it's a huge melting pot. They know their history, their cultural origins, the same for Ebrahim. They know where this rhythm comes from, this piece of music. In France, we're all pipes to know if a bourrée comes from the Gascon region or the Languedoc. So there, you become a little humble. Ebrahim arrives. He doesn't speak French. We're going to offer him a job as a mason. He studied psychology for seven years, but in the definition of a foreigner, he is not there for that. He's there to do the garbage and the menial jobs. That made me wonder a lot."

The group exists today mainly because Nicolas and Thomas, in contact with the three musicians and their living conditions as refugees, have questioned their prejudices and abandoned their dominant posture. The openness towards other cultures appears stronger in their speech than in that of Ebrahim or Artur (I did not speak with Yamen). They are fighting for the recognition of their status as professional musicians with the hope of making a decent living from their music in France. Their motivations for participating in this project are mostly related to the trust given to Nicolas' professionalism and experience as an art director and not to the desire for a musical encounter without career objectives. The human links forged between them have led Nicolas to question his own knowledge, and this change of perspective creates an empathy that motivates him



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all the more to take the project as far as possible, especially so that Ebrahim can resign from this job that exhausts him and does not correspond to his social status. In the coming months, they will perform on several stages in the region. Thanks to his network, Nicolas has found paid artistic residencies that will allow them to continue creating. If the MMM project provokes encounters that allow refugee musicians to better integrate into local artistic, associative and institutional networks, the project opens up to a decentralization of the French musicians involved. The direct contact with these musicians leads to a profound deconstruction of the European media image of migrants as vulnerable and illiterate people who need to be helped. Each experience within a European project leads Nicolas to understand the global stakes and to position himself in front of the decision-makers so that the construction of future projects is done in a more respectful dimension of people as human beings before being refugees or migrants.

Anna Cuomo, ethnologue, CNRS
Institut ARI – CNRS
UMR Passages
3 av. Jean Darrigrand
64100 Bayonne