

The musical culture of Europe through the Middle Ages, Renaissance and early Baroque featured recognizable variability in performance style, musical structures, transmission modes, performer identities and more. These differences were distinguished by and often named based on combinations of geographical, linguistic and political variations. Yet from a distance, we can identify a broad pan-European musical style and culture, created through the hegemonic constraints of theology and liturgy. Grounded initially in plainchant, its technical and stylistic developments (counterpoint, polyphony, compositional structures, etc.) spread quickly across European Christendom and beyond. European musical outposts across South and Central America as well as in Goa and other points East rapidly featured 16th- and 17th-century liturgical music nearly identical with that heard in in the Old World.

While Music History narratives tend to focus on the spread of musical culture overland from north to south (in the Renaissance) and south to north (in the Middle Ages and Baroque era), music spread perhaps more quickly and effectively across and throughout the Mediterranean basin. The linked musical/political cultures of Spain and Naples are but the most obvious examples of this shared Mediterranean musical culture.

Despite an 800-year presence in Spain, Arabic musical influences were limited principally to theoretical themes and to the geographic Iberian fringe in large part because of clear political and religious threats and conflicts. But the mining of New World and Asian colonies led to not just filling Iberian coffers and warehouses, but also allowing (sometimes even welcoming) cultural imports as well. That these imports arrived by sea and spread from Iberia to the rest of Europe via Italy points up the significance of the Mediterranean in the introduction and dissemination of musical curiosities and innovations in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The decimation of indigenous peoples and their cultures through conquest, colonization and infection played out in musical culture, too. But just as genetic, linguistic, gastronomic and other cross-fertilizations played a role in creating the presence of conquered peoples in Europe, so too did musical cross-fertilizations based on the interpretations, misinterpretations and importations of indigenous musical elements play a role in European musical culture. And in some ways, the lack of sonic borders, especially in the lands on the Mediterranean coast, allowed benign musical imports to become musical invasive species that spread rapidly and widely, contributing to the development of more identifiable national styles and variant musical forms.

This short musical program offers examples of instruments and music that developed as a result of external contacts and importation. It spotlights themes of musical Othering as well as cross-fertilization, appropriation and misinterpretations. Yet it also points up the

speed with which these foreign or fringe approaches to music-making spread, in part thanks to communities on Mediterranean coastlines. These invasive musical species took root quickly and aggressively across the continent to the point that the musical styles, forms and more became integral parts of European music-making.