Prokop, Rainer , and Rosa Reitsamer , ed. Higher Music Education and Employability in a Neoliberal World. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. Bloomsbury Collections. Web. 14 Jun. 2024. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350266995>.

Accessed from: www.bloomsburycollections.com

Accessed on: Fri Jun 14 2024 11:01:19 Ora legale dell’Europa centrale

Copyright © Clementina Casula. Rainer Prokop and Rosa Reitsamer 2024. This chapter is published open access subject to a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International licence (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/). You may re-use, distribute, and reproduce this work in any medium for non-commercial purposes, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

Chapter 1

Balancing Demand and Supply in Music Labour Markets

The Shifting Role of Italian Music Conservatories

Clementina Casula

Introduction

Only twenty years ago in Italy, after a lengthy parliamentary process, a national law (n. 509/1999) established the system of Higher Education in Arts and Music (*Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale* or AFAM) on the tertiary level of education.[1] Music conservatories and other state-recognized academies for applied arts – historically assigned a marginal position within the national education system – were suddenly elevated to its most prestigious rung, until then exclusive dominion of Italian universities. As a consequence, higher art and music education institutions were adapted to the general rules governing universities, recently revised to comply with the Bologna declaration. Signed in Bologna in June 1999, this declaration defined a set of measures to be adopted to harmonize national higher education systems and establish a European Higher Education Area.

Several researchers (e.g. Štech, 2012) have noted how, behind the flag of European integration, the Bologna declaration shares common traits with neoliberal ideology. While an extensive debate has developed in Italy about the impact of neoliberal ideology in the restructuring of the university system (De Feo and Pitzalis, 2017), little attention has been paid to higher art and music education institutions.

In this chapter, I will address the latter issue, drawing on my research on Italian music conservatories (Casula, 2018a).[2] Following a neo-institutional approach (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2008), I consider conservatories not as neutral and autonomous educational organizations but as social constructions embedded in wider organizational fields, shaped in turn by historical paths and social processes. Organizations belonging to the same field are prompted to comply with the rules, norms and beliefs prevalent within the field: Although change is usually urged as aimed at reaching a greater quality and efficiency of organizations, more often it responds to institutional reasons such as legitimacy, conformity and self-reproduction (Meyer and Rowan, 1991). That is why scholars refer to those types of processes producing organizational homogeneity with the expression 'institutional isomorphism' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

This chapter begins by offering a brief account of the historical path of Italian music conservatories and then focusses, through a before/after comparison, on the main changes following the implementation of the 1999 reform, also pointing to some of the issues it has ignored, such as gender inequalities. This account will be illustrated with excerpts from the semi-structured interviews with nearly 100 conservatory students, teachers and professional musicians trained in Italy, conducted between 2013 and 2017 and updated more recently.[3] Conclusions note how the critical points identified in the reorganization of Italian music conservatories may find an adequate policy answer only from a strong political engagement that considers music a strategic asset for the country.

A Brief History of Italian Music Conservatories

The origin of Italian music conservatories dates back to charities founded around the sixteenth century to preserve ('*conservare*') foundlings and orphans by offering them vocational training in a series of activities that would allow them to make a living as adults (Colarizi, 1971). With the growing demand for musicians, conservatories served as a sort of recruitment agency supplying pupils to the thriving market of music production; they specialized in music training, appointing renowned musicians as *maestri* and also accepting paying scholars (Delfrati, 2017). Their name, having become a synonym for an organization for vocational music training, was adopted by the Paris conservatoire, founded in 1795. The French conservatoire, however, followed the more ambitious project to socially upgrade the music occupation, hiding its humble origins to achieve bourgeois respectability: The construction by its teachers of a specialized body of theoretical knowledge and techniques, taught through standardized state-legitimized training, was functional to this aim (Pierre, 1990).

This process, converting the know-how of qualified craftsmanship into expert knowledge associated with 'high culture' to turn vocational occupations into respectable bourgeois careers, had already proved to be successful in the process of professionalizing liberal occupations, such as medicine or law (Freidson, 1986). In the case of the music profession, this was further supported by the diffusion of the romantic aesthetics of 'absolute music', the celebrating of the *virtuoso* artist and the establishment of a canon of selected works by the (male) masters of the past (Weber, 1999; Frederickson and Rooney, 1990). The Paris conservatoire served as a model for the institutions for music education that were founded during the nineteenth century in the Western world (Kingsbury, 1988; DiMaggio, 1982).

In Italy, though, the process of including classical music into the realm of 'high culture' was met with resistance. The national education system, introduced after the political unification of the country in 1861, was based on an elitist ideology prioritizing theoretical over practical knowledge (Grimaldi and Serpieri, 2012). Conservatories, still associated with craftsmanship work and humble social classes (Aversano, 2021), were assigned a marginal position, which also meant greater autonomy in defining the boundaries of the field of professional music training

and exerting monopolistic control within it. During the fascist regime, a series of laws sets the norms that ruled Italian conservatories for nearly a century.

Actually, the decades following the foundation of the Italian Republic in 1946 saw the launching of a parliamentary debate over the proposal to introduce music education horizontally in all school levels, while reserving a vertical curriculum for vocational music training. However, in the face of parliament's inability to reach an agreement, in the last decades of the century, the government found a stopgap solution in the founding of new music conservatories scattered throughout the country. This led to the creation of positions for music teachers and to an exponential growth in the number of students pursing music training for recreational, rather than vocational aims. The radical change in the scope and type of educational demand, however, was not accompanied by a revision of the curricular offerings. Conservatory teachers who advocated for increased staffing resisted pressures for change and continued to reproduce the canonical classical music model to which they had been socialized but which, in the meantime, had become increasingly outdated.

Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, Italy and other Western states have started to adopt neoliberal prescriptions in response to global recession and the crises of the welfare state by cutting public spending and promoting deregulation and flexibilization of the labour force. In the 1990s, Italian opera houses were transformed from public to semiprivate institutions,[4] increasingly relying on short-term contracts to recruit new orchestra members, while three of the four orchestras of the RAI (National Radio and Television Company) were closed. As a result of these transformations, the demand for classically trained musicians declined, while the growing number of conservatories offered an oversupply of graduates.[5]

The increasingly urgent need to reorganize Italian music conservatories found an answer in the approval of the national law n. 508/1999, which introduced a system of Higher Education in Arts and Music (AFAM) at the tertiary level of the national education system. The law, however, only outlined the general framework of the reform but left to the national parliament and the Ministry for University and Research the difficult job of laying down the operational guidelines needed to implement it. Over the past twenty years, conservatories and arts academies have adapted at a slow and uncertain pace to the rules of the national university system, seen as the legitimate model for regulating higher education in light of the Bologna declaration.

In what follows, drawing on the interviews collected for my research, I shall discuss from a comparative perspective the shifting role of Italian music conservatories in balancing the professional training and employability of their students before and after the 1999 reform.

Education and Employability Before the 1999 Reform

Before the 1999 reform, Italian conservatories followed the norms established at the beginning of the twentieth century for the canonical training of professional classical musicians. The educational programme provided a limited number of

courses reproducing the main practices, repertoires and hierarchies of the canon. The length of studies varied between five and ten years, depending on the course of study, and was supplemented by a few complementary subjects in theoretical and practical music.

To ensure early training, students were admitted at the end of primary school after passing a selection process in which musical and vocational attributes were evaluated by an internal committee of teachers who assigned students to courses according to supposedly 'objective' criteria that in reality were often guided by social factors (Prokop and Reitsamer, 2023). A particularly influential factor was gender: Although since the beginning of the twentieth century the number of girls and young women within conservatories was almost as high as that that of boys and young men, the training of female students was limited to instruments associated with conventional feminine stereotypes and roles such as harp, piano and voice, which, in turn, limited their access to professional careers in music (Casula, 2023).

A prominent occupational opening for graduates from instrumental courses was offered by the concert scene. Students of the so-called 'noble' instruments, especially piano and violin, associated with upper-class education and the prestige of the romantic *virtuoso* artist, were encouraged to consider careers as soloists. Teachers' adherence to the ideal of *virtuoso* training could easily result in an explicit banning of their pupils to engage in any kind of activity (from school study to sports to dating) they considered a potential distraction from the ascetic concentration required to construct the solid technique and habitus of the *virtuoso*, reinforced by practices of distinction adopted to mark superiority over other musical careers. The latter aspect is well illustrated in the following quote from a conservatory teacher who studied with a famous violinist:

> There was a conflict with my *maestro* who just wanted me to study, and when he heard about the orchestra, he raged [. . .] because he was a great soloist and so whoever studied with him only had to think of becoming a great soloist, no? Nice thing, but let's come out of the clouds. (Violin teacher, female, 55)

Orchestral positions, on the other hand, were particularly sought after by students of the so-called 'agricultural' instruments, such as wind instruments associated with the rural or lowbrow classes and with a limited soloist repertoire. Teachers often managed to introduce their best students to national orchestras, because they were either acquainted with orchestra members or members themselves (a double public duty that was allowed until the end of the 1980s). Students' introduction as orchestra members often took the form of an apprenticeship reminiscent of the craft workshop model, as nicely illustrated in the following quote, describing how a young bassoon player was trained on the job under the careful supervision of his *maestro*:

> My *maestro* managed to place five or six pupils within [symphonic] orchestras. Today this would be impossible [. . .] but in the past, there was this workshop

> relationship where [conservatory] teachers formed the first rows in orchestras and those who followed in the row came from their school; [. . .] I still remember my *maestro* would let me play the solo part whenever he could and would check [. . .] if everything was all right; if he heard problems with the reed [. . .] he would come and give me a little flick without being noticed and put me in a position to play well. (Bassoon teacher, male, 55)

Another favoured occupational route for young classically trained musicians was teaching, a 'pool profession' offering economic resources, reputation and sufficient free time to launch and pursue an artistic career. Once more, the *maestro* served as a recruiting agent, introducing older students to families of beginners or suggesting graduates as substitute teachers to fill vacancies easily converted into permanent positions at the newly opened conservatories. As these examples show, teachers had a significant influence on their students' careers. This influence and the associated power could easily degenerate into various forms of abuse – from corporal punishment to psychological and sexual harassment – affecting female students more often and more severely than male students (Casula, 2018a, 2019).

Since the end of the twentieth century, the mismatch between the decreasing demand for classical musicians and the increasing numbers of conservatory graduates has intensified, exposing young musicians entering the labour market to persistent precarity forcing them to take multiple poorly paid jobs with no clear prospects for occupational stability. Those working in the classical field – trained to aspire to the most prestigious and protected segments of the labour market – recall this experience as quite traumatic, while their colleagues active in other musical fields normalize occupational uncertainty as a standard feature of artistic careers or even as a source of independence that nurtures creativity.

The latter interpretation of occupational insecurity prevails, regardless of the different musical specializations, among the younger generations of musicians interviewed, who seem ready to adapt to an increasingly flexible and uncertain labour market through different strategies, including the development of diversified 'portfolio careers' and the skilful use of social media for self-promotion (Casula, 2018b). The young age at which Italian conservatory students usually graduated before the 1999 reform (early twenties for instrumentalists, a few years later for other subjects), in addition to the high level of musical training received, has helped them in their gradual adjustment to the changing demands of the labour market. This, however, has often required them to move abroad to gain access to highly specialized training or more dynamic working environments.

Throughout the twentieth century, Italian conservatories managed to offer a solid grounding in music education to large numbers of future musicians recruited all over the country. In the past decades of the century, however, their inability to exit from the self-referential ivory tower in which they had entrenched themselves (Roselli, 2015), still structured according to an increasingly outdated model of music production, had become evident: A deep reorganization allowing them to take into account ongoing changes at the cultural, social and economic levels was widely recognized as a necessary and urgent step.

Education and Employability After the 1999 Reform

The original draft of law n.508/1999 foresaw the inclusion of only a selection of the nearly eighty conservatories within the AFAM system, while the others should have offered pre-academic training. However, as a result of a long-lasting corporatist battle won by the artists' trade unions, the final version of the law placed all conservatories on the level of higher education, leaving unsolved the crucial issue of the lack of public offerings for pre-academic music training.[6]

Once the law was approved, music conservatories and other higher art education organizations were asked to gradually conform to the general rules governing universities, as revised to comply with the Bologna declaration. One of the main objectives set by the declaration was the organization of higher education systems according to a degree-cycle structure, encompassing a first cycle of undergraduate programmes and a second cycle of graduate and doctoral programmes.[7] In the case of Italian conservatories, innovation was not limited to the adoption of the degree structure but also included a significant widening of the curricular offerings, entrenched throughout the twentieth century in the canonical model of classical musicians' training: New curricula included classical music courses going beyond the strict canon or the *virtuoso* ideal, such as baroque or ensemble music – or courses on a variety of musical genres or styles, such as jazz, pop, rock or electronic music. Age restrictions – quite strict in the previous curricular offerings – were formally abolished: To audition for entry at an Italian conservatory, candidates need a secondary school certificate and preliminary music skills, which vary according to the course chosen.

The significant changes following the introduction of Italian music conservatories into the field of higher education, however, were realized without additional state funding. In the case of new courses, each conservatory decided for itself which one to activate according to its budget, bearing the costs of the teachers hired on temporary contracts. The result is a paradoxical situation: Younger generations of teachers, artistically active and usually more innovative in teaching, are kept in precarious and underpaid employment conditions, while occupational stability is granted to their tenured colleagues who are often ill-equipped to meet the demands of the newly reformed institutions. A voice student sums up this paradox:

> Even here [in this conservatory] we have amazing, very good teachers. Most of them, strangely [with an ironic tone], are precarious, and unfortunately there are those others who have the posts instead, who do nothing to improve themselves, to teach in English, to better service their students who work their asses off. [. . .] There are [European] students who come to an [Italian] conservatory for an Erasmus [programme] and choose a teacher who is like a guru, and then in November they find out that no one knows yet where he will work the next year. (Student in the postgraduate classical voice course, male, 30)

Due to the artists unions' obstructions, the regulations for the flexible hiring of new teachers envisaged by the 1999 reform law have not yet been adopted. Currently, the

only possibility for new teachers to seek tenure is to replace tenured colleagues from the classical music department, whose course may be cancelled after retirement. This mechanism results in a zero-sum game between different departments, in which one side's gain is offset by the other's loss, enhancing conflictual relationships between professional groups (Abbott, 1988). Older generations of teachers in particular, whose professional identity is rooted in teaching and performing the classic musical canon, view the introduction of other music genres into conservatories as suicide for the classical music tradition. Some of them believe that it would have been better to create new institutions for jazz and popular music education, which would allow for richer music education offerings while preserving the classical music tradition. This kind of solution, as noted by other interviewees, sounds unrealistic at a time when public funding is being cut and the marketization of public education is on the rise. In the words of the teacher quoted below, the reform overtly follows a market logic that adapts the educational offerings to the demands of the 'students-clients' rather than to the autonomous logic of the music field:

> Like the audience for television, now we have a share: 'How many students do you have? Then your course is activated!' It's madness, because if one teaches a discipline that is elitist but finds its own necessity within an artistic field. (Piano teacher, male, 50)

The tensions between the classical music and popular music departments are also evident in the different understandings of the musical competence and technical proficiency demanded from students, both in the selection and the training processes. This, in turn, reveals different aesthetic, cultural and even socio-economic values underlying the respective 'art worlds' (Becker, 1982). As the following quote suggests, classical music teachers reward students who demonstrate technical and performative proficiency framed within specific bodies of theoretical knowledge, while their colleagues in popular music departments legitimize self-taught learning and 'spontaneous authenticity' (Hunter, 2019: 45). In the context of market logic, however, the increased demands placed on classical music degree programmes mean that their attractiveness among the 'students-clients' continues to decline.

> I'm a little critical on those new jazz music classes. I told you that I believe it's fundamental, very important to include them. But the recruitment of their students: They do two chords, two motives [and they're in], while we butcher our candidates [of the classical department] before selecting them. That's why I say: I understand, it's jazz, but it can't be that you can't read two chords [. . .]. But you know, in our conservatory, 70 to 80 percent are enrolled in these [new] courses, so it's a kind of market: 'Sell, sell!' But if you don't have clients, what do you sell? (Clarinet teacher, male, 50)

The differentiation in the criteria guiding selection and training processes in the classical and popular music departments also reveals a gender dimension: Quantitative and qualitative data on female students after the reform show their increased and legitimized presence in a greater variety of courses on the classical

canon (still limited to the lower levels of its traditional hierarchy) but their limited and often discouraged participation in non-classical music courses, with the exception of voice classes (Casula, 2019).

Another innovation introduced by the reform following the Bologna declaration is the introduction of external indicators and procedures for the certification and continuous improvement of the quality of higher education institutions. These new tasks are assumed by the teachers who are asked to formally monitor the teaching and production activities of the institutions, usually without technical or administrative support, in order to assess their consistency with the adopted strategic planning documents. As one pianist explains in the following quote, these burdensome activities, along with growing expectations of instantaneous responses to the hyperconnected communication via digital devices, are difficult to reconcile with the daily time required to practice an instrument and, indirectly, with maintaining the professional level and *ethos* of the teachers:

> Since the reform [of conservatories] my printer has no rest . . . But: Was I a musician? What have I become? It is a continuous: 'Fill in the form, the model, the declaration, the evaluation and the report . . .!' [. . .] With these emails, certainly great but, frankly, I can't take it anymore, because I'm afraid to check what has arrived [. . .] always problems in sight, it's not easy . . . and that's also work [to manage emails]; it steals your time. For me, who I'm a pianist, let's be realistic: If I have to practice a piece, I'm not able to reply [to emails] every half an hour. (Piano teacher, female, 55)

The reform also introduces the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), a key objective of the Bologna declaration. This tool, intended to facilitate the transition of students' educational careers from one national system of higher education to another, was welcomed by conservatories, given the long and established tradition of transnational vocational music education.[8] Its etymology, however, reveals its closeness with the neoliberal approach, applying business management criteria to public administration in order to improve efficiency (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). The logic underlying this tool encourages students to adopt a calculative approach to the accumulation of ECTS credits, which they tend to conceive as a certification of the knowledge achieved rather than an approximate assessment of course load. In the following quote, a teacher explains why this approach, weakening the teachers' role in terms of both control and responsibility over pupils' actual achievements, ultimately leads to the decline in the average proficiency level reached by conservatory students:

> [After the reform] I became a vending machine of hours, teaching hours. I mean, students came and said: 'I must prepare this, this and this . . .' When they reached a certain amount of teaching hours: '*Maestro*, I have finished, I have to take the exam'; 'You cannot do the exam, because you are not in the condition to take the exam: I know you've done all the hours and that you can do it, but you won't do it, because you're not ready!'; 'I don't care: I'll take the exam anyway,

> because I have finished the hours and I have no intention to continue attending the course'. (String quartet teacher, male, 55)

As noted by the interviewee in the following quote, teachers feel frustrated and 'blackmailed' by the new system, as it forces them to obey to a market logic linking the survival of courses to the economic contribution of the enrolled students who – even when not adequately committed to their studies – are still paying their fees:

> The problem, for instance, is how to dismiss students if they don't study: We [teachers] are also under blackmail [. . .] because if I know that the student has to be kept in [the conservatory], because he pays the fees, even if he only gets barely sufficient marks, this doesn't allow me to dedicate myself with the right commitment. (Electronic music teacher, male, 50)

Students' adherence to the logic of credentialism – privileging formal educational credentials over more practical assessments of competence or experience (Collins, 2011) – also emerges in the motivations for different categories of students mainly enrolled in Italian conservatories to achieve a qualification that is expendable in the Italian labour market. There are those, often mature, students who already have a career in music but are self-taught, or lack an academic degree, or are concerned about the validity of their pre-reform conservatory degrees, or aim to add a further qualification to their *curriculum vitae*; but there are also those young and talented students who are studying either privately or in foreign music institutes with internationally renowned teachers but who wish to easily obtain a degree from an Italian conservatory to widen their employability in the Italian labour market. Students' motivations seem to match with the type of demand mostly encountered by conservatory graduates in the national labour market. A recent report on the employability of students with an AFAM degree (the majority of whom graduated from conservatories) shows that more than half of the respondents reported being employed within one or two years after graduation (respectively, in 2013 and 2014), but only one-fifth in artistic occupations, while the majority is employed as teachers of artistic or other disciplines (AlmaLaurea, 2016), a job usually obtained through rankings defined on the basis of formal certifications.

In sum, although the 1999 reform law has undoubtedly contributed to a new visibility and prestige to higher music and artistic education within the national educational system, in the case of music conservatories its implementation has produced significant shortcomings that do not seem sustainable in the long term without affecting the quality of the training and of the employment chances granted to their students.

Conclusion

The implementation of the law upgrading Italian music conservatories to the tertiary level of education, welcomed by many as a departure from the self-referential ivory

tower in which they had entrenched themselves during the twentieth century, has met with mixed results. The process of institutional isomorphism that followed this change – prompting conservatories to conform with the rules, norms and beliefs regulating the university system according to the Bologna declaration – has produced a series of shortcomings. As discussed in the chapter, some of these shortcomings seem to have been created by resistance to change (as in the case of the powerful obstruction of trade unions, taking advantage of the government's disinterest in the field to defend teachers' vested interests regardless of the consequences to the overall system). Others, in contrast, seem related to the wider global pressures to regulate national education systems according to neoliberal models, privileging the quantity of 'students-clients' over the quality of their training and shifting the role of higher education institutions from recruitment to certification agencies.

The complex picture that emerges calls for a thorough policy intervention that reconsiders the organization of Italian conservatories in terms of efficiency and equity, both at the internal level and in relationship to the wider national system of education. This policy, in my view, should primarily focus on the following objectives: Regarding internal reorganization, a meritocratic system for the recruitment of staff and students needs to be adopted that critically addresses issues of implicit biases and other forms of direct or indirect discrimination. With reference to external reorganization, music education needs to be horizontally integrated into all segments of compulsory schooling in order to offer all citizens the basic knowledge necessary to appreciate and practice musical culture. At the same time, the music curricula should be vertically integrated following a pyramidal rather than the actual funnel-shaped model, granting access to advanced training in music only to a selection of students aiming to pursue a professional career, countering the market logic prompted by neoliberal ideology. Obviously, none of this can be achieved in the absence of a political will to recognize music as a fundamental cultural, social and economic value for the country.

Notes

1 Law n. 508 of 21 December 1999 (entered into force on 19 January 2000): Reform of Fine Arts Academies, National Dance Academy, National Academy of Drama, Higher Institutes for Artistic Industries, of Conservatories of Music and state-recognized Musical Institutes.

2 I refer here to state-recognized music conservatories and musical institutes, funded either by the state or local authorities (the 1999 reform defines them as Higher Institutes for Musical Studies, but the term did not come into use).

3 Interviews reconstructed the educational and professional paths of musicians and were analysed following an inductive and comparative approach (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). Excerpts cited here from the interviews, conducted in Italian, were translated into English by the author. In addition to interviews, the study included the analysis of official statistics, parliamentary records, newspapers and a questionnaire for conservatory teachers. The research complied with the rules and ethical codes concerning the collection, analysis and protection of data for social research.

4 Italian Opera Houses are institutions organizing opera and concert activities, considered by the state of relevant public interest as intended to promote the musical, cultural and social education of the national community. Originally set as public bodies (Enti lirico-sinfonici, Law n. 800, 14 August 1967), they have been later qualified as private law foundations (Fondazioni lirico-sinfoniche, Decree Law n. 367, 29 June 1996), although they still obtain significant state funding.
5 To give an idea of the scale of change, in the school year 1966–7, there were thirty-five music conservatories, encompassing 6,026 students and 1,279 teachers; twenty years later, the number of conservatories rose to sixty-nine, with 33,884 students and 5,352 teachers. In the academic year 2019–20 there were seventy-eight institutes, with 43,713 students (72 per cent of whom registered in academic courses) and 6,363 teachers (38 per cent on temporary contracts) (source: Statistics on education collected by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) and by the statistical office of the Ministry of Education, University and Research – Department for Higher Artistic and Musical Education (MIUR-AFAM), various years).
6 A stopgap was found allowing conservatories to temporarily activate pre-academic courses and with the creation of musical lyceums, whose scarce distribution in the territory and limited curricular offerings do not solve the issue.
7 Doctoral programmes were to be added later in a third cycle.
8 Wagner (2015). In the academic year 2019–20, the percentage of foreign students enrolled in Italian conservatories was nearly 12 per cent of the total student population, while for state universities, it was nearly 6 per cent in the following academic year.

References

Abbott, A. (1988), *The System of Professions. An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

AlmaLaurea (2016), 'Esiti occupazionali dei diplomati accademici delle Istituzioni di Alta Formazione Artistica, Musicale e Coreutica (AFAM)', Report. Available online: https://www.almalaurea.it/sites/almalaurea.it/files/docs/universita/altro/afam-occupazione-2016/report_occupazione_afam_finale.pdf (accessed 11 December 2021).

Aversano, L. (2021), 'La musica nella formazione scolastica degli italiani', in A. Estero (ed.), *La cultura musicale degli italiani*, 3–35, Milano: Guerini.

Becker, H. S. (1982), *Art Worlds*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Brinkmann, S. and S. Kvale (2015), *InterViews. Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Los Angeles: Sage.

Casula, C. (2018a), *Diventare musicista. Indagine sociologica sui Conservatori di musica in Italia*, Mantua: Universitas Studiorum.

Casula, C. (2018b), 'Torn between Neoliberal and Postmodern Trends, Corporatist Defence and Creative Age Prospects: The Ongoing Reshaping of the Classical Music Profession in Italy', *Cambio. Rivista sulle Trasformazioni Sociali*, 8 (16): 71–82.

Casula, C. (2019), 'Gender and the Classical Music World: The Unaccomplished Professionalization of Women in Italy', *Per Musi Journal*, 39: 1–24.

Casula, C. (2023), 'Class and Gender Inequalities in the Recruitment of Classical Musicians: Reflections on the Case of Italian Music Conservatoires', in A. Bull, C. Scharff and L. Nooshin (eds), *Voices for Change in the Classical Music Profession: New*

Ideas for Tackling Inequalities and Exclusions, 19–30, New York: Oxford University Press.

Colarizi, G. (1971), *L'insegnamento della musica in Italia*, Roma: Armando.

Collins, R. (2011), 'Credential Inflation and the Future of Universities', *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 3 (2): 228–51.

De Feo, A. and M. Pitzalis (2017), 'Service or Market Logic? The Restructuring of the Tertiary Education System in Italy', *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, 2 (LVIII): 219–50.

Delfrati, C. (2017), *Storia critica dell'insegnamento della musica in Italia*, ebook, Ancona: Antonio Tombolini.

DiMaggio, P. (1982), 'Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America', *Media, Culture & Society*, 4 (1): 33–55.

DiMaggio, P. and W. W. Powell (1991), 'The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields', in W. W. Powell and P. DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, 63–82, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Frederickson, J. and J. F. Rooney (1990), 'How the Music Occupation failed to become a Profession', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 21 (2): 189–206.

Freidson, E. (1986), 'Les professions artistiques comme défi à l'analyse sociologique', *Revue française de sociologie*, 27 (3): 431–43.

Grimaldi, E. and R. Serpieri (2012), 'The Transformation of the Education State in Italy: A Critical Policy Historiography from 1944 to 2011', *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 4 (1): 146–80.

Hunter, M. (2019), 'Considering Techne in Popular Music Education: Value Systems in Popular Music Curricula', in Z. Moir, B. Powell and G. Dylan (eds), *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music Education: Perspectives and Practices*, 45–58, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Kingsbury, H. (1988), *Music, Talent and Performance. A Conservatory Cultural System*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Meyer, J. W. and B. Rowan (1991), 'Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony', in W. W. Powell and P. DiMaggio (eds), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, 41–62, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Osborne, D. and T. Gaebler (1992), *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*, Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Pierre, C. (1990), *Le Conservatorie national de musique et de declamation*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.

Powell, W. W. and P. DiMaggio, eds (1991), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Prokop, R. and R. Reitsamer (2023), 'The Role of Music Conservatoires in the Making of Classical Music Careers', in A. Bull, C. Scharff and L. Nooshin (eds), *Voices for Change in the Classical Music Profession: New Ideas for Tackling Inequalities and Exclusions*, 31–41, New York: Oxford University Press.

Roselli, E. (2015), *Uscire dal ghetto. Riflessioni sulla riforma dei Conservatori di musica a 15 anni dall'approvazione della legge 508*, Roma: Armando.

Scott, W. R. (2008), 'Lords of the Dance: Professionals as Institutional Agents', *Organization Studies*, 29 (2): 219–38.

Štech, S. (2012), 'The Bologna Process as a New Public Management Tool in Higher Education', *Journal of Pedagogy / Pedagogický casopis*, 2 (2): 123–42.

Wagner, I. (2015), *Producing Excellence: The Making of Virtuosos*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Weber, W. (1999), 'The History of the Musical Canon', in N. Cook and M. Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music*, 336–55, Oxford: Oxford University Press.