



Typical songs, dances and instruments of Sicilian folklore

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Sicilian folk music

Sicily has always been very rich of folk songs, ditties, serenades, lullabies, Christmas carols. Every event in life was sung by the people. Notes and harmony sometimes are the perfect tools to talk about history, people and customs.

So, **Sicily** has an important **musical tradition**: from Christian music to work songs, from brass bands to jazz, from folk songs to the most famous contemporary artists and composers such as Carmen Consoli and Franco Battiato.

Folk music

Folk music is very important in **Sicilian tradition** and generally includes many different instruments such as a small end-blown flute called *friscaletto* and the frame drums.





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Ciuri Ciuri

Ciuri is the Sicilian word for flower and is normally used as a term of endearment. In this song it is being used with sarcasm and the man is saying that he is taking all the love that he was given and giving it back to his woman. The author of the lyrics is unknown, while the music was written by Francesco Paolo Frontini in 1883.

Some of the lyrics:

Ciuri di gelsumini rampicanti
mi scialu,ridu,
e cantu allegramenti.

Non cantu nè pi' amuri
nè pa' amanti
pi' fariti dispettu
eternamenti.

Ciuri ciuri
ciuri di tuttu l'annu
l'amuri ca mi dasti
iù ti lo tornu.

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Nostalgia - Rosa Balistreri

Rosa Balistreri was a great songwriter, as she traveled all around Sicily collecting songs of Sicilian folklore and tradition, and wrote them down. We have to thank her if nowadays we can still hear traditional Sicilian songs, especially the ones whose authors got lost. *Nostalgia*, among all of them, is the one that touches the most. It talks about Sicily and nostalgia when one is far away from the island. Some of the lyrics are in the next column.

Pensu a sta terra ca mi sta luntana,
sta terra profumata sutta 'u sulì,
ca iu lassai pi ghiri a travagliari,
cu gran duluri e granni dispiaciri.
Pensu a la me casuzza chi lassai,
a li biddizzi di sta terra mia,
iu ccà li viù
'nta 'u sonnu e m'adduluru,
e pensu notti e jurnu di turnari.





Dances

As regards folk dance, there are bridal ones as "chiavu", dancing in circles (diavulecchiu), tarantellas as the "puliciusa" and "fasola".

Tarantella can be both a majestic and elegant courting tarantella, and the so-called curative tarantella.





The Sicilian curative tarantella comes from Taranto in Puglia. The bite of the tarantula can cause a person to fall into a trance. This person is just a woman, who is called tarantata. The trance can only be cured by dancing the tarantella for several hours or several days during which the victim becomes more and more delusional and twisted by the sweat of the venom from the spider bite. The courtship tarantella, danced by a group of male and female partners. It is accompanied by tambourines decorated with many coloured ribbons and is very often danced at Sicilian weddings.





Instruments

The typical instruments of Sicilian folk music are the friscalettu (flute-beak) and the frame drums.

- The Friscaletto is an ancient flute, produced by a cane (like bamboo cane), with 7 holes in the front, and 2 holes on the back side. This kind of holes allow several variation in the music style.
- Frame drums are one of the most ancient types of musical instruments. They have a simple structure with strong spiritual and entertaining effects. They are usually round, made of wood with animal skin and sometimes metal rings or plates incorporated into the drum to provide jingle.





Thank you



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