MAKING MUSIC, MAKING MEANING

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Disco, House and Techno: rethinking the local and the global in Italian Electronic Music

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- Abstract -

How can we conceive the relationship between global and local for those musical styles, which have no explicit geographical reference and which also do not use speech to define their own local identity?

In this paper the author tries to further this debate through the example of Italian electronic music production and dissemination. In fact, three cases of dance and popular music produced in Bologna, an important city for music in Italy will be presented: *Disco* at the end of the 70s, *House* in the '80 and the *Hardcore Techno* scene in the 90s.

For all these music fields firstly, there is firstly a reconstruction of the little-known history of how these musical forms began to be introduced and produced in the city of Bologna, and how they have been disseminated on the foreign market with different practices of showing or not showing the Italian identity. Then it is considered, for

example, how some disco tracks produced in Bologna became hits at the *Warehouse Garage* in Chicago in the early of 80s, where *House* music was born; how UK techno tribes moved to Bologna at the beginning of 90s escaping from British police repression of free rave parties. We will also see that the common specificity which represents the continuity among these different italian music formss is a particular use of melody.

Therefore, concerning the representation of identity, it is possible to recognize strategies of "dissimulation" in Italian disco music, as well as practices of "exoticism" in Italian dance music in the 90s. On the other hand, in hardcore techno production we can find other practices such as the "adaptation" of Italian tribes to the European rave subculture, as well as the elaboration of practices of "citation" of specific cultural references, such as Pasolini's films.

At the end of the paper, the role of the city in a global flow of cultural production is assessed and finally, the different practices of representation – or no-representation – of Italian musical identity are confronted with the concepts of de-territorialization and re-territorialization, in order to connect the elaboration of a local identity with the relationship between music, localness and media.

Key Words: electronic music – Italy – globalization – identity – Disco – House – Techno – Rave .