Topics: Sounds of Italy

Prof. Nicola Cipani

Mondays, 12.30 - 3.15 p.m.
Casa Italiana, 2nd fl, Library

This course will acquaint students with a variety of sound artifacts and sound related texts, grouped around topics significant for Italy’s auditory culture between WWI and the 70s — between the early noise machines of the Futurists and the experiments of maverick singer Demetrio Stratos. Yet the focus will not be exclusively on music proper: we will examine sound in a range of manifestations and contexts — propaganda, magic-religious rituals, oral poetry, folklore, commercial sound design, soundtracks, etc. Accordingly, supporting critical readings will give students the opportunity to compare approaches on sound from different fields — sound studies, oral history, (ethnomusicology, cultural and media studies. The course will touch upon issues such as the relationship between music and other arts; the development of Italian media; the voice of Mussolini and Fascist sound politics; the discussion on technology for sound production/ consumption in Italian cultural circles; the survival of (largely non-textual) oral-aural art forms.

Note: No Italian is required for this course. English transcripts will be provided for sound files in Italian. Each lesson will include a listening part with sound samples and a class discussion based on required listenings/ readings.