

ERC Consolidator Grant: MUTE

Principal Investigator: Dr Anna Papaeti
UCY Collaborator: Dr. Maria Margaroni

The research programme MUTE investigates the much neglected role of music and sound in situations of confinement and displacement from the Cold War period to contemporary times. It explores for the first time empirically, theoretically, and comparatively the use of music and sound in new methods of torture which emerge during the Cold War in the context of new technologies of terror and continue to be practiced to this day. Refusing simplistic dichotomies that would posit music as intrinsically negative or positive, it documents, analyses and theorizes the experience of music in detention with emphasis on the entanglement between positive and negative effects even in situations in which music is weaponized. Focusing on the interlocking of politics, ethics and aesthetics, MUTE explores the ethics of witnessing, sound and the ethics of research. Led by Dr Anna Papaeti, its multidisciplinary team consists of researchers from the disciplines of (ethno)musicology, social anthropology, philosophy, history, trauma studies, critical theory, sound art, and human rights law. MUTE innovates by transforming our understanding of music and its social role, contributing to scientific knowledge as well as public debate and policy with regard to torture and conditions of detention in such spaces as prisons and detention centres for asylum seekers and refugees.

Anna Papaeti holds a PhD from King's College London. Her research explores opera and musical theatre, music, violence, and ideology, as well as the interlocking of politics, ethics, and aesthetics. It has been supported by the EU research programmes FP7 and Horizon 2020, as well as such institutes as Onassis Foundation, Centre for Research for the Humanities, and DAAD. She was a Marie Curie Fellow at the University of Goettingen (2011–2014), investigating music as a means of terror and manipulation under the dictatorship in Greece, as well as at Panteion University (2017–2019) where she investigated the use of music in detention during the civil war and the post civil-war period in Greece. She has published in collective volumes and scholarly journals. In 2013 she co-edited the special issues *Music and Punishment / Music and Torture* for the journal *world of music (new series)* and *Music in Detention* for the journal *Torture*. Her monograph *When Music Meets History: Representations of Trauma, from Auschwitz to the Financial Crisis* is forthcoming by Asini Press (Athens). Translating her research into artistic media, she has created the podcast *The Undoing of Music* (Museo Nacional Reina Sofía, Madrid), and with Nektarios Pappas the sound installations *The Dark Side of the Tune* for the 'Hypnos Exhibition' curated by Yorgos Tzirtzilakis (Athens: Onassis Stegi, 2016) and *New Parthenon* for the 'Iasis Exhibition' curated by Tilt Platform (Loutraki, 2019). Since 2020, she is Chair of the Research Group Music and Violence of the International Musicological Society (IMS).