# Correspondences in the Musical Archives of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini

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# THE CORPUS OF MUSICIANS' CORRESPONDENCE

The Istituto per la Musica was founded in 1985 at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice (FGC). It currently houses 21 personal *fonds* of Italian composers and musicians who were active in a period stretching from the late 19th century to the present day. Along with the manuscripts and printed material that bear witness to the genesis and context of their creative work (sketches, drafts, scores, texts, programmes, press cuttings, etc.), the correspondence is one of the richest areas of the Institute's documentary heritage. The corpus is made up of around 50,000 items (letters, draft letters, postcards, telegrams, etc.) that constitute a large network of correspondence between composers, musicians, institutions and leading figures on the international artistic and cultural scene.<sup>1</sup>

The documents belong to 15 fonds as shown in the following TABLE 1:2

TABLE 1. Correspondence items housed at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Istituto per la Musica (Venezia).

| Fonds                    | Correspondence documents |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Alfredo Casella          | 5298 items               |
| Siro Cisilino            | ca 100 items             |
| Luigi Cortese            | 3633 items               |
| Gino Gorini              | ca 100 items             |
| Domenico Guaccero        | ca 350 items             |
| Egisto Macchi            | 26 items                 |
| Gian Francesco Malipiero | ca 30,000 items          |
| Ida Parpagliolo          | 68 items                 |
| Ottorino Respighi        | ca 7000 items            |
| Fausto Romitelli         | ca 200 items             |
| Nino Rota                | ca 1000 items            |
| Giovanni Salviucci       | 107 items                |
| Egida Sartori            | ca 150 items             |
| Camillo Togni            | 581 items                |
| Roman Vlad               | ca 6000 items            |

Letters and correspondence materials constitute a key element in most of these *fonds*, not only in terms of their quantity, although this varies significantly from case to case, but notably for the kind of information they provide (for example, about a composer's life and working context, the creation of a work or the birth of a cultural phenomenon).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the very act of conservation itself and, more especially, the collection and sorting criteria that sometimes emerge from these documents could be important factors in helping to delineate the different

facets of a composer's activities and his/her working methods. His/her choice to keep letters received (and sometimes a copy of those sent) is not merely a practical – albeit justifiable – act of preserving documents for possible future use, nor are the letters kept just for sentimental reasons related to the memories they evoke. The decision to arrange these letters in a precise order may also go to prove that the composer is aware of the historical value of his/her own documentary heritage. This holds even more true when, not only does he/she decide to keep all correspondence received, but also to carefully preserve every minute. However, let us not forget that missing letters in a composer's legacy are not always indicative of a lack of interest in their conservation, but may be due to various circumstances, such as loss or accidental destruction, storage in a different location to the other materials donated to the Institute, and, as far as living composers are concerned, intention to make a donation in the future.

The way in which Gian Francesco Malipiero organised and preserved his correspondence is a particularly striking example. Not only did he adopt different filing methods (grouping by sender, by location, by relevance, by subject),<sup>4</sup> but his archive also reveals how the epistolary medium could be utilised in various ways and forms. Letters are much more than just a means of professional or personal communication: Malipiero considered them as a privileged form of self-interpretation and self-documentation. Sometimes, even years later, he repeatedly returns to his correspondence to rearrange it, to recall the fortune of one of his compositions or to resume an imaginary dialogue in the form of 'risposte postume' [posthumous replies]:

Often, going through old papers, we think that we are acting just out of curiosity, to try and evoke fond or not-so-fond memories of the past but, more often than not, we end up feeling let down. You need to put your doubts aside and reacquire that air of indifference if you want to reorganise a collection of letters (for example, my "correspondence with famous conductors"). However, you do have to ask yourself whether it's really worth digging up facts that are interesting to the person who rediscovers them, because the past always seems brighter than the present, but which could ultimately bore the indifferent reader.<sup>5</sup>

Such reflections upon his personal archives and particularly on the letters he exchanged with friends and colleagues are quite common in the composer's notes and published writings. In a notebook dating back to the early Forties, alongside his impressions after reading Alfredo Casella's *I segreti della Giara* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1941), Malipiero writes: 'I am putting A.C.'s letters in order (I've transcribed the one with the twelve-tone chord) and then increasingly material [letters]'. In a characteristic way, this point of criticism, which regards the

increasingly pragmatic nature Casella's letters assumed over time, would reemerge some years later. Indeed, in 1957 as Malipiero prepared to publish a selection of letters he had received from Casella in the first edition of *L'Approdo musicale*,<sup>7</sup> he confided to Alberto Mantelli, the journal's director: 'The letters I've chosen from the early period (1913–1917) are really interesting, fundamental. Then we see how much importance he gave to his wanderings around the world and how he bragged about it. Compared to what he might have been able *to see* and which he never mentions, what does reading his correspondence leave behind? His naiveté: in developing material values while forgetting about spiritual ones'.<sup>8</sup>

This example sheds light on the personal relationship between Malipiero and Casella, but it is not unique. In fact, most of the composers whose *fonds* are housed in the Istituto per la Musica were often at work in the same geographical areas and chronological periods,9 and, in many cases, already friends even before they embarked on any kind of working relationship (Guaccero and Macchi). They often worked together on compositions or in the organisation of cultural events (Malipiero and Milloss, Vlad and Malipiero) and some of them had even been students of others (Vlad and Togni studied piano with Casella; Gorini studied composition with Malipiero; Macchi improved his studies with Vlad). It therefore follows that numerous points of contact can be found in their correspondence. The letters from one composer to another, along with their respective replies, contained in two different fonds at the Istituto per la Musica, complement each other (for example, the exchange of letters between Salviucci and Malipiero or Casella and Malipiero). 10 At times, the corpus of letters can be integrated through the chance discovery amongst the papers of one composer, of letters addressed to another with whom a close relationship exists, and who also happens to be a creator of one of the Cini's fonds: for example, the Fondo Domenico Guaccero contains two letters from Antonino Titone to Egisto Macchi.

# THE CORRESPONDENCE AND ITS ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION

Various types of finding aids have been created over the last thirty years to provide access to the Institute's archives (see the Appendix for a selection limited to epistolary documents). However, these tools have gradually come to be used in an increasingly unsystematic way, not only because of the variety of outputs, but also and more especially on account of the considerable number of available resources (paper catalogues, computer databases, CDs, DVDs) and the ways they are put to use.

As a means of facilitating the uniform description of its archival holdings in accordance with international descriptive standards, and in order to make them available on the Internet through the use of advanced search tools, the Istituto per la Musica adopted the xDams (Digital Archives Management System) document description and management platform in 2014. Dams descriptive criteria follow the rules for multi-level description and are subdivided into the different information areas established by ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF) standards. XML is used for the long-term preservation of data, whereas metadata encoding is based on the EAD (Encoded Archival Description) and EAC (Encoded Archival Context) reference models.

In connection with the implementation of the xDams platform, the Istituto per la Musica launched a systematic campaign for archival description on two fronts: the retro-conversion of existing finding aids and the production of descriptions created ex novo for newly acquired *fonds*. Work was initially carried out on the Casella, Malipiero, Rota, and Vlad *fonds*. In accordance with the principle of hierarchical description, the corpus of correspondence within each *fonds* has been arranged into a series. Variable sorting criteria have been used to arrange the corresponding sub-series: these may be traced back to those used by the creator of the *fonds* himself (Malipiero, Vlad); the result of the previous rearrangement of archives (Casella) or designed to conform to new criteria for archival arrangement (Rota). It should be mentioned that the guiding principle governing the arrangement of these documents was to respect their original order wherever possible, whereas the remaining cases and loose items were arranged alphabetically by sender.

The amount of description and level of detail were determined in each case on the basis of the extent and complexity of the materials and the presence or lack of compiled finding aids. A file-level treatment was adopted for the correspondence conserved in the Malipiero and Vlad *fonds*, whereas item-level was used for the Casella and Rota *fonds*. In the first case, the description omits the details of each single document and aims to provide a certain amount of information on the files in which the correspondence has been assembled. Each file description indicates the types of documents it contains (letters, telegrams, postcards, etc.), their respective quantities; a brief description of content (subject matter, any accompanying documentation); chronological details; any headers, and the names of the correspondents (senders and recipients) via authority records. A significant access point is also given by the titles of the works mentioned in the letters, which are inserted via a specific authority record.

The item-level offers a description of every single letter in the correspondence by employing a specific layout on the xDams platform. Some of the available fields are: Type of document (letter, telegram, postcard, minute, etc.); Form (manuscript, typescript, photocopy, etc.); Reference code; Title (for example: 'Lettera di Massimo Mila a Alfredo Casella' [Letter from Massimo Mila to Alfredo Casella], or 'Telegramma di [Ernest] Ansermet a Gian Francesco Malipiero' [Telegram from Ernest Ansermet to Gian Francesco Malipiero]); Sender(s); Recipient(s); Date(s); Place(s); Extent and medium; Source of acquisition; Conditions governing access; Conditions governing reproduction; Language; Physical characteristics and technical requirements; Content; Container information; Physical location; Authority-controlled access (corporate bodies, persons, places, titles of works); Existence and location of originals; Existence and location of copies; Related units of description; Bibliography; Note; Processing information.

Particular attention has been paid to the creation and management of authority records. On the one hand, these guarantee the unique identification of a person or work in different contexts and with different functions, while, on the other, they provide access points that contribute to establishing networks of relationships and connections between one or more archival fonds. They also represent a key element in terms of the sharing of intra-institutional information. At the moment, two independent databases have been set up which both provide authority records to the archival resources: 'Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families' and 'Musical Works'. The former contains information that identifies corporate bodies, persons or families through their various authorized forms of name; chronological details; a description of the roles and functions carried out and performed; a description of any eventual hierarchical affiliations, family or associative relationships, and links to external resources such as the VIAF. The 'Musical Works' authority file contains information that allows the identification of a musical work: title; alternative title; serial, opus, or thematic index number; type of composition; dedicatee(s); medium of performance; date(s) of composition; author(s); editorial references.

The online inventories elaborated with xDams software can be consulted starting from the 'Digital Archive' portal on the FGC website: http://archivi.cini.it/cini-web/istitutomusica/home.html. By accessing the page dedicated to the Institute's archives, it is possible to explore the hierarchical structure of each *fonds* [FIGURE 1] and its catalogue records [FIGURE 2]; carry out a free-text search on all the descriptive metadata or use the predefined fields for an advanced search. The latter also make it possible to search all or just a part of the Institute's archival holdings through standardized access points: names of people, institutions or works. The search results can also be filtered by date and type of document.

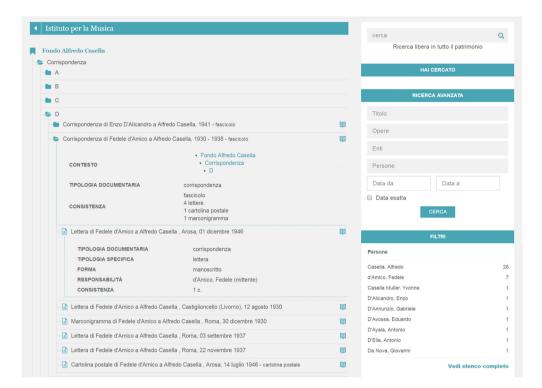


FIGURE 1. Alfredo Casella's correspondence: hierarchical structure

FIGURE 2 (NEXT PAGE)

Letter from Asaf'ev to Casella, 4 December 1926: online catalogue record

# ◀ Istituto per la Musica / Fondo Alfredo Casella

Corrispondenza / A / Corrispondenza di Boris Asaf ev a Alfredo Casella

Lettera di Boris Asaf'ev a Alfredo Casella, Detskoye Selo (Leningrado), 04 dicembre 1926

#### Area dell'identificazione

Titolo: Lettera di Boris Asaf'ev a Alfredo Casella

Cronologia: Detskoye Selo (Leningrado), 04 dicembre 1926

Numero: L.141

Tipologia documentaria: corrispondenza

Tipologia specifica: lettera

Forma: manoscritto
Responsabilità:

Asaf'ev, Boris Vladimirovič (mittente)

Destinatario: Casella, Alfredo Descrizione fisica: 2 cc., 219 x 124 mm

4 pp.

#### Area del contenuto

Abstract: Chiede a Casella indicazioni di studi recenti su Verdi. Accenna a compositori russi del XVIII secolo (Fomin, Bortnjanskij, Matinskij) che avevano studiato a Bologna e chiede informazioni per eventuali ricerche. Desidera ricevere le partiture stampate da Ricordi delle opere del giovane Glinka ed accenna alla grande quantità di partiture di musicisti italiani del '700 (Araja, Sarti, Paisiello, Galuppi) giacenti nelle biblioteche musicali dei teatri accademici russi. Conosce ed apprezza La giara di Pirandello-Casella.

Lingua: Francese

#### Chiavi di accesso

Opere:

La giara op. 41

Persone:

Araja, Francesco

Bortnjanskij, Dmitrij

Fomin, Evstignej Ipatovič

Galuppi, Baldassarre

Glinka, Michail Ivanovič

Matinskij, Mikhail Alexejevič

Paisiello, Giovanni

Pirandello, Luigi

Sarti, Giuseppe

Verdi, Giuseppe

# **APPENDIX**

The main publications dedicated to the letters conserved at the FGC, Istituto per la Musica (inventories, critical editions of correspondence and articles) are listed below in alphabetical order. Letters reproduced or transcribed in essays or articles primarily dedicated to other topics have not been indicated here.

#### 1. Inventories

#### Fondo Alfredo Casella

Catalogo critico del fondo Alfredo Casella. Carteggi, ed. by Francesca Romana Conti and Mila De Santis, 3 voll., Firenze: Leo S. Olschki (Fondazione Giorgio Cini. Studi di musica veneta, 18), 1992.

# Fondo Luigi Cortese

Archivio Luigi Cortese. Catalogazione musica, lettere, critiche e recensioni, scansione manoscritti, esempi musicali, ed. by Vitale Fano and Matteo Taboga, Venezia: Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Istituto per la Musica – Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Veneto, 2005 (CD-Rom).

# Fondo Ottorino Respighi

Ottorino Respighi. Manoscritti musicali e archivio documentario alla Fondazione Giorgio Cini di Venezia, ed. by Martina Buran and Vitale Fano, Venezia: Fondazione Giorgio Cini onlus – Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Veneto, 2008 (DVD).

#### 2. Critical editions and transcriptions of letters

#### Fondo Alfredo Casella

Maria Adelaide Caponigro, 'Il carteggio Alfredo Casella-D'Annunzio', *Italianistica*, I/2, 1972, pp. 268–291.

Luigi Rognoni e Alfredo Casella. Il carteggio (1934-1946) e gli scritti di Rognoni su Casella, ed. by Pietro Misuraca, Lucca: LIM (Aglaia, 3), 2005.

#### Fondo Siro Cisilino

Siro Cisilino. Epistolario (1941–1985), ed. by Cristina Scuderi, Udine: Forum, 2012 (transcription of 274 letters, seven of which are not dated, conserved at the Istituto per la Musica).

#### Fondo Domenico Guaccero

Dario Oliveri, 'Dieci lettere ad Antonino Titone', *Archivio. Musiche del XX secolo. Numero monografico – Domenico Guaccero*, Palermo: CIMS, 1995, pp. 139–169 (transcription of the letters written by Domenico Guaccero between 15 May and 28 December 1960; integration of the letters present in his Fondo at the FGC).

# Fondo Egisto Macchi

Dario Oliveri, 'Quindici lettere ad Antonino Titone', *Archivio. Musiche del XX secolo. Numero monografico – Egisto Macchi*, Palermo: CIMS, 1996, pp. 157–181 (transcription of the letters written by Egisto Macchi between 23 December 1957 and 29 January 1964; integration of the letters present in his Fondo at the FGC).

## Fondo Gian Francesco Malipiero

Francesco Balilla Pratella: edizioni, scritti, manoscritti musicali e futuristi, ed. by Domenico Tampieri, Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1995 (correspondence between Malipiero and Balilla Pratella).

Enrica Bojan, 'La favola del figlio cambiato: lettere di Pirandello a Malipiero', Rassegna veneta di studi musicali, 5–6, 1989–1990, pp. 301–330.

*Il carteggio tra Gabriele d'Annunzio e Gian Francesco Malipiero (1910–1938)*, ed. by Chiara Bianchi, Bergamo: Clusone, 1997.

Aurora Cogliandro, 'Il carteggio Malipiero – Bontempelli (1932–1952)', *Le Fonti musicali in Italia. Studi e ricerche*, 6, 1992, pp. 93–149.

Gian Francesco Malipiero, 'Così mi scriveva Alfredo Casella (1913–1946)', *L'Approdo musicale*, I/1, 1958, pp. 20–53.

Gian Francesco Malipiero: il carteggio con Guido M. Gatti, 1914–1972, ed. by Cecilia Palandri, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki (Fondazione Giorgio Cini. Studi di musica veneta, 24), 1997.

Fiamma Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel Ventennio fascista*, Fiesole: Discanto Edizioni, 1984, pp. 348–370 (letters from Gian Francesco Malipiero to Benito Mussolini).

*L'opera di Gian Francesco Malipiero*, ed. by Gino Scarpa, Treviso: Edizioni di Treviso, 1952 (cfr. 'II. Lettere di musicisti e di scrittori a Gian Francesco Malipiero', pp. 364–390).

Giorgio Petrocchi, 'Il carteggio Pirandello-Malipiero', Ariel, I/3, 1986, pp. 126-138.

Mario Verdone, 'Malipiero tra avanguardia e cinema', *Filmcritica*, 350, December 1984, pp. 519–537 (letters from Gian Francesco Malipiero to Emilio Cecchi). The correspondence between Malipiero, Cecchi, Pirandello, Ruttmann is taken up and commented on in the chapter 'Un acciaio

lungo un anno', in: *Acciaio. Un film degli anni Trenta. Pagine inedite di una storia italiana*, ed. by Claudio Camerini, Torino: Nuova Eri Edizioni RAI, 1990, pp. 237–265.

Roman Vlad, 'Arnold Schoenberg e Gian Francesco Malipiero', *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 5, 1971, pp. 264–270.

# Fondo Egida Sartori

Cronaca di una favola chiamata musica. Biografia artistica di Egida Sartori (1910–1999), ed. by Elena Pessot, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki (Fondazione Giorgio Cini. Studi di musica veneta. Archivio Egida Sartori. Studi, I), 2005 (contains a partial transcription of a selection of letters written between 1946 and 1992).

# Fondo Camillo Togni

Carteggi e scritti di Camillo Togni sul Novecento italiano, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki (Fondazione Giorgio Cini. Studi di musica veneta. Archivio Camillo Togni. Studi, I), 2001.

Carteggi e scritti di Camillo Togni sul Novecento internazionale, ed. by Cecilia Gibellini, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki (Fondazione Giorgio Cini. Studi di musica veneta. Archivio Camillo Togni. Studi, III), 2006.

### Notes

- 1 As regards this, see the selection of documents reproduced in Angela Carone and Francisco Rocca, 'The Composer's Mailbox. Documents from the Musical Archives of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini', *Archival Notes*, 1, 2016, pp. 169-190.
- The Institute's collection also comprises the following *fonds* in which no correspondence is conserved: Arrigo Boito, Alberto Bruni Tedeschi, Oscar Chilesotti, Giacomo Manzoni, Aurél Milloss and Olga Rudge. It should be noted that a part of Aurél Milloss's correspondence is housed at the FGC, Centro Studi per la Ricerca Documentale sul Teatro e il Melodramma Europeo. For more information about each of the *fonds* preserved at the Istituto per la Musica, see Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Digital Archive section: http://archivi.cini.it/ciniweb/istitutomusica/home.html
- Furthermore, correspondence with attachments (newspaper clippings, photographs, concert programmes, etc.) are generally highly informative documents, as is demonstrated by the six examples discussed in Carone and Rocca, 'The Composer's Mailbox. Documents from the Musical Archives of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini', pp. 169-190.
- 4 Some of the filing schemes used by Gian Francesco Malipiero to arrange his documents can also be seen in other *fonds*, where we find grouping by year (Fondo Roman Vlad) and by composition (Fondo Domenico Guaccero, Fondo Roman Vlad). In the latter case, other musical and non-musical material related to each work is also found along with the letters.
- Gian Francesco Malipiero, 'Ai direttori d'orchestra (risposte postume)', in: Gian Francesco Malipiero, *Il filo d'Arianna. Saggi e fantasie*, Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore, 1966, pp. 285–296: p. 285: 'Spesso, rovistando fra vecchie carte, si crede di obbedire ad una semplice curiosità, al desiderio di rievocare, più o meno serenamente il passato, mentre molto spesso non si raccolgono che delusioni. È necessario superare i dubbi e ritornare allo stato di indifferenza se si vuole riordinare un epistolario (per esempio la mia "corrispondenza con celebri direttori d'orchestra") però bisogna chiedersi quanto valga la pena il dissotterrare episodi che interessano chi li riscopre, perché il passato pare sempre meno nero del presente, ma che in ultima analisi possono annoiare il lettore indifferente'.
- 6 FGC, Fondo Gian Francesco Malipiero, quaderno [notebook] 04.06: 'Riordino le lettere di A.C. (ne riproduco una: quella dell'accordo dodecafonico) e poi [lettere] sempre più materiali'.
- 7 Gian Francesco Malipiero, 'Così mi scriveva Alfredo Casella', *L'Approdo musicale*, I/1, 1958, pp. 20-53.
- 8 FGC, Fondo Gian Francesco Malipiero, letter from Gian Francesco Malipiero to Alberto Mantelli, 28 December 1957: 'Le lettere scelte del primo periodo (1913–1917) sono interessantissime, essenziali. Quel suo vagare per il mondo poi dimostra che ad esso ci teneva e se ne vantava. In confronto a quello che avrebbe potuto *vedere* e di cui non parla che cosa rimane dalla lettura dell'epistolario? La sua ingenuità: stabilire un valore materiale, tralasciando quello spirituale'.
- 9 Such factors were often decisive in the creation of the archive. A recent example is the acquisition between 2013 and 2014 of the Roman Vlad, Domenico Guaccero and Egisto Macchi *fonds*. All three composers lived in Rome and were involved to varying degrees in

- composing music for television and cinema.
- 10 In order to bridge the frequent and often inevitable gaps that may occur in an exchange of letters, it can be useful to try and acquire copies of specific letters from other institutions or private entities. This holds especially true if the correspondence involves people other than the creators of the FGC fonds. For example, to integrate the lack of minutes in the correspondence between Roman Vlad and Igor Stravinsky, research can be carried out at the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basel which houses the Stravinsky Collection. In fact, the Swiss institution may have some of Vlad's replies to the letters he received from Stravinsky, which are preserved in his fonds at the FGC.
- 11 http://www.xdams.org/
- 12 General International Standard Archival Description and International Standard Archival Authority Record (Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families), respectively.
- 13 https://www.loc.gov/ead/