Tracing the Neoclassical Casella: Compositional Projects, Models, Ideologies

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Alfredo Casella's connection to that vast and varied tendency that goes by the name of neoclassicism is a self-evident fact that requires no further investigation. Although he feared being classified with a convenient label, he also emphasized the discontinuity of post-war languages, imbuing this shift with epochal significance.[1] In the preface to his collection of essays *21+26*, the fulfillment of his own path coincided with the instances of *rappel à l'ordre*: Casella pinpointed his *11 pezzi infantili* for piano, op. 35 (1920) as a 'return to clear diatonicism and consonant harmonies', the goal before which 'all the previous ones were but less fortunate "stages" in a twenty-year struggle'.[2] He was thus offering a *Bildungsroman*-like perspective, where becoming adult paradoxically meant rediscovering the childish self, the lost joy, without this being perceived as a backward flight. Almost as if to avert the binomial between infantilism and regression, that a few years later Adorno would apply to Stravinsky, Casella framed his achievement not as naive, but as a heroic act, which demands taking on the contradictions of the present and the ability to transcend them ('Nothing is more difficult to achieve than naturalness and simplicity').[3]

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The author's self-reflection becomes a historiographical cliché, supported by the voices of the closest exegetes. Castelnuovo-Tedesco, dedicatee of the *Pezzi infantili*, was the first to speak of 'a phenomenon of stylization, of purification', which makes this Casella quite different from the 'cerebral' musician who for years had fallen prey to a 'dissonant monomania'.[4] Thus the threshold of a 'third style' is set (mentioned by the composer himself in a 1924 concert program and then discussed at length by Castelnuovo-Tedesco),[5] according to a tripartite logic of Beethovenian memory that accentuates, however, the idea of culmination as fullness and organicity – the opposite of Adorno's late style, in which the metaphor of ripe fruit bears the sign of furrows, of irreconcilable fractures. In face of the tragedies of the mid-century, Casella's 'stylistic clarification' began to appear somewhat contrived; to defend its rationale, Massimo Mila would invest the idea of a 'hard optimism of conquest' with existentialist pathos: 'a dimension acquired by Casella through the experience of pain, defeat and doubt' (implicitly identifying the 'flow of expressionistic lava' of the previous season as emblematic of negativity).[6] Critical readings vary on the basis of the underlying purposes. This has led, for example, to an opposite strategy aimed at rehabilitating the young Casella – who trained in the cosmopolitan French capital – 'saving' him from the reactionary zeal of his Roman years: the goal was to distinguish the avant-garde composer (open and progressive) from the neoclassical one (nationalist and fascist).[7] However, as studies have already shown, the reality is more complex, indicating a continuity of vision between certain currents of Parisian modernism and the identity traits of the interwar period.[8]

This article seeks to re-evaluate Casella's classicist lineage in light of archival testimonies. Facing the apologetics or biases present in historiographical discourse, research into primary sources acts as a powerful antidote, allowing the origin of ideas and stylistic evolutions to be explored from within. The traces of the composer's workshop become the litmus paper or the negative photo of the catalogue of works: in the sketchbooks – as Douglas Johnson used to say, recanting his old polemics against genetic study – we can perceive 'the hiding part of the game', i.e. an image in dialectical tension with the official one ('a sort of cover-up, in Freud's term an act of repression and in Lockwood's an act of disguise or elaboration').[9] In Casella's case, the sketches tell us of a backdating of the neoclassical phenomenon, revealing an urgency always present as an undercurrent, which was only waiting for the propitious historical moment to emerge and assert itself 'victorious'. There is no clear-cut before and after, but a succession of potency and actuality, so to speak: the early 1910s are the creative and ideological forge of Casella's mature output.

OMENS AND TACIT INTENTIONS

Alfredo Casella's sketchbooks – sixteen in total, now housed at the Institute for Music of the Fondazione Cini in Venice – serve as valuable resources for research, not only for the music drafted within but also for the notes found 'on the threshold', as Genette would say, in the blank pages of the back covers or endpapers. These paratexts act as interpretative frameworks, disclosing the underlying dynamics of the creative process. At the beginning of *Quaderno 3*, used in the years 1910–13, Casella outlined a work plan, divided into a shortlist of titles, among which is a composition with an undeniably neoclassical flavor: a 'Concerto o Serenata nello stile italiano' (see the second item in FIGURE 1). The piece features a string quintet [first indicated as quartet], two flutes, oboe, two clarinets, two trumpets, guitar and mandolin. The sequence of the movements is noted on the right, namely: 'a) Toccata [which substituted an erased Preludio] – b) Burlesca – c) Padovana – d) Finale'.

Further details of this project can be found on the *verso* of the same sheet (FIGURE 2). Casella changes the names of the last two movements of what he calls here 'Divertimento nello stile italiano'; they become 'Pastorale' and 'Finale alla padovana'. We then find a diagram of the instrumentation that gives an idea of the colorful sound picture foreshadowed: in addition to guitar and mandolin, there are harpsichord, two harps, harmonium, celesta, xylophone, glockenspiel and triangle; at the end of the list, next to the strings, the note 'Voci???' indicates doubt about a possible encroachment of pure instrumental music into the realm of singing, as was also the case in Baroque serenades. The multiple experiences of the Parisian Casella, balancing between the cult of the antique and a fascination with modern orchestration, are somehow conveyed in these unusual mixtures of timbres. He was a long-standing harpsichordist with Gustave Bret's *Société Bach* and the *Société des Instruments Anciens*, founded by his piano teacher Louis Diémer and continued by Henri Casadesus (the programs of the tours conducted throughout Europe in the years 1906–09 included, among others, Bach's harpsichord concertos, Mozart's divertimentos, a *Burlesca* by Domenico Scarlatti and a *Ballet Divertissement* attributed to Michel Pignolet de Montéclair (1667–1737), which Casella had planned to orchestrate).[10] The idea of using guitar and mandolin, rather than a stereotypical reference to Italian folklore, can be read as a homage to Gustav Mahler, who had made use of the two plucked instruments in the second *Nachtmusik* of the Seventh Symphony, the most 'sunny' he ever composed, in which the anguish is dissolved in a soft serenade as a prelude to the festive, concluding Rondo in C major (Casella transcribed the symphony for

FIGURE 1. Quaderno 3 (1910–13), projected pieces, front flyleaf recto. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella.

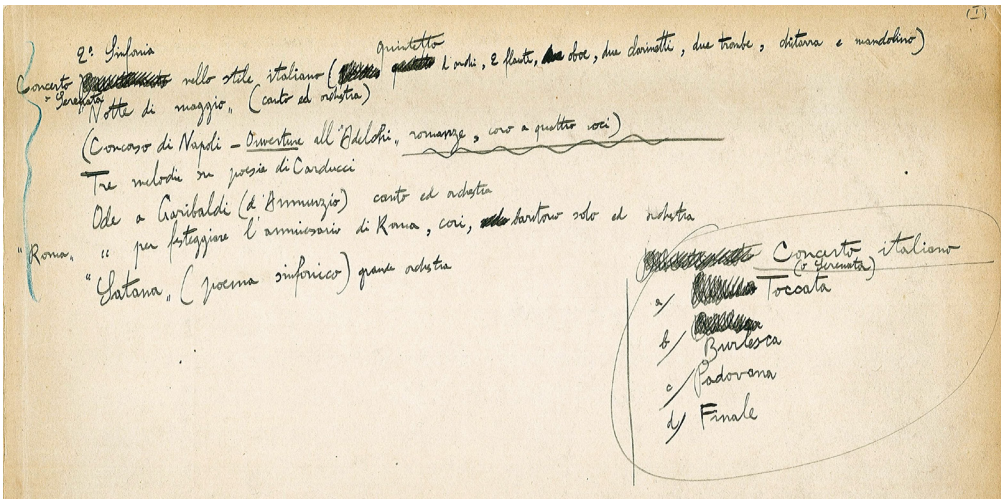
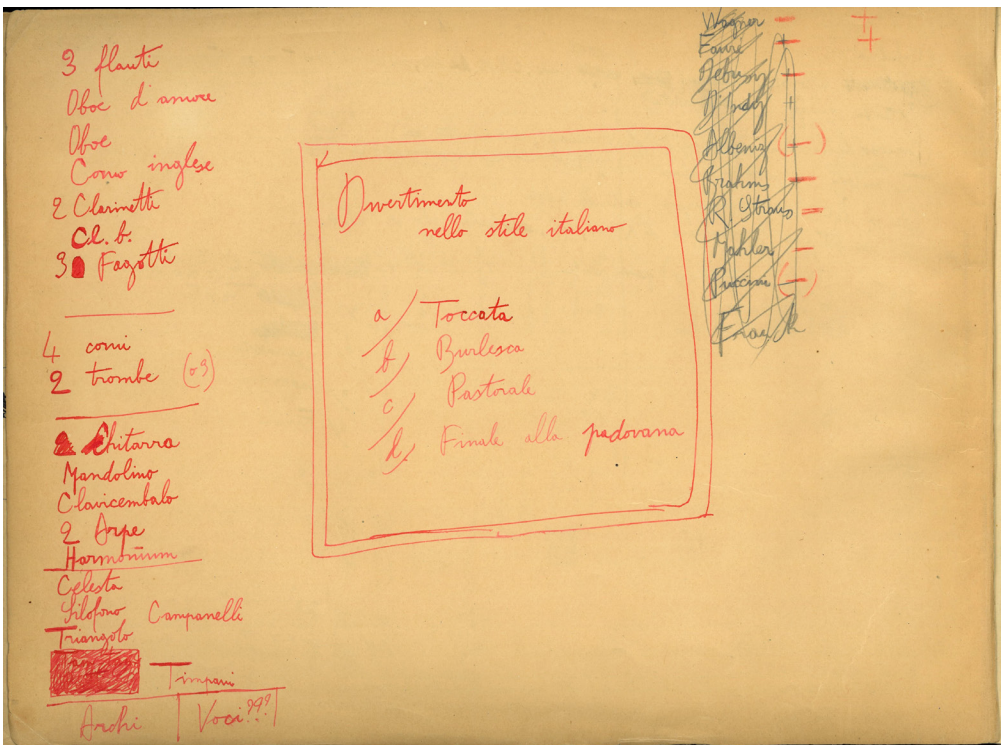


FIGURE 2. Quaderno 3 (1910–13), scoring and movement enumeration of 'Divertimento in stile italiano', front flyleaf verso. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella.



piano four hands in 1910).[11] If one wants to find an even closer example of a rearrangement of gallant dances that shows an analogy with the timbral imagery of the planned 'Divertimento', the *Pas des vieilles dames* from the ballet *Le couvent sur l'eau*, op. 18 (1912–13) comes to mind: here Casella created a shimmering tone-band in the manner of a carillon by combining mandolin, two harps, celesta, xylophone, glockenspiel and triangle, in order to paint the landscapes of a dreamy eighteenth-century Venice.[12]

The 'Concerto o Serenata' alias 'Divertimento nello stile italiano' never came to light. It would take another decade for elements of that idea to resurface. The palette would be stripped of the 'French-Mahlerian' orchestral preciousness and the harpsichord would be absent, but the same titles ('Toccata – Pastorale – Burlesca') appear in the endpaper of the *Quaderno 8* (1923–24), where Casella planned a 'Concerto grosso [word added later] per pianoforte, oboe, tre clarinetti, tre trombe, timpani e archi'. This piece would soon become known as *Partita*, op. 42, one of the defining works of his 'third style'.

Then there is another significant direction among the compositive projects in FIGURE 1, which was also silenced, not pursued, but destined to emerge strongly in the 1920s and 1930s: a patriotic art, in tune with the expectations and mythographies dictated by the political agenda. As the sixth item on the list reads, Casella intended to transpose for chant and orchestra an 'Ode a Garibaldi' by Gabriele D'Annunzio. This was *La notte di Caprera*, which the Vate dedicated, in 1901, to the survivors of the landing of the Thousand, including it among the songs of the collection *Elettra*. According to its author, it was not composed in the 'usual hendecasyllable', but in the 'heroic verse of the ancient *chanson de geste*, formed on the mould of the crude Latin verse sung by the plebs and the Roman legionaries'; the epic song was meant to resonate in the aedo's performance 'to be heard by a multitude of free men'; it is not surprising that it found new popularity close to Italy's entry into the war as a foment for irredentist aims.[13]

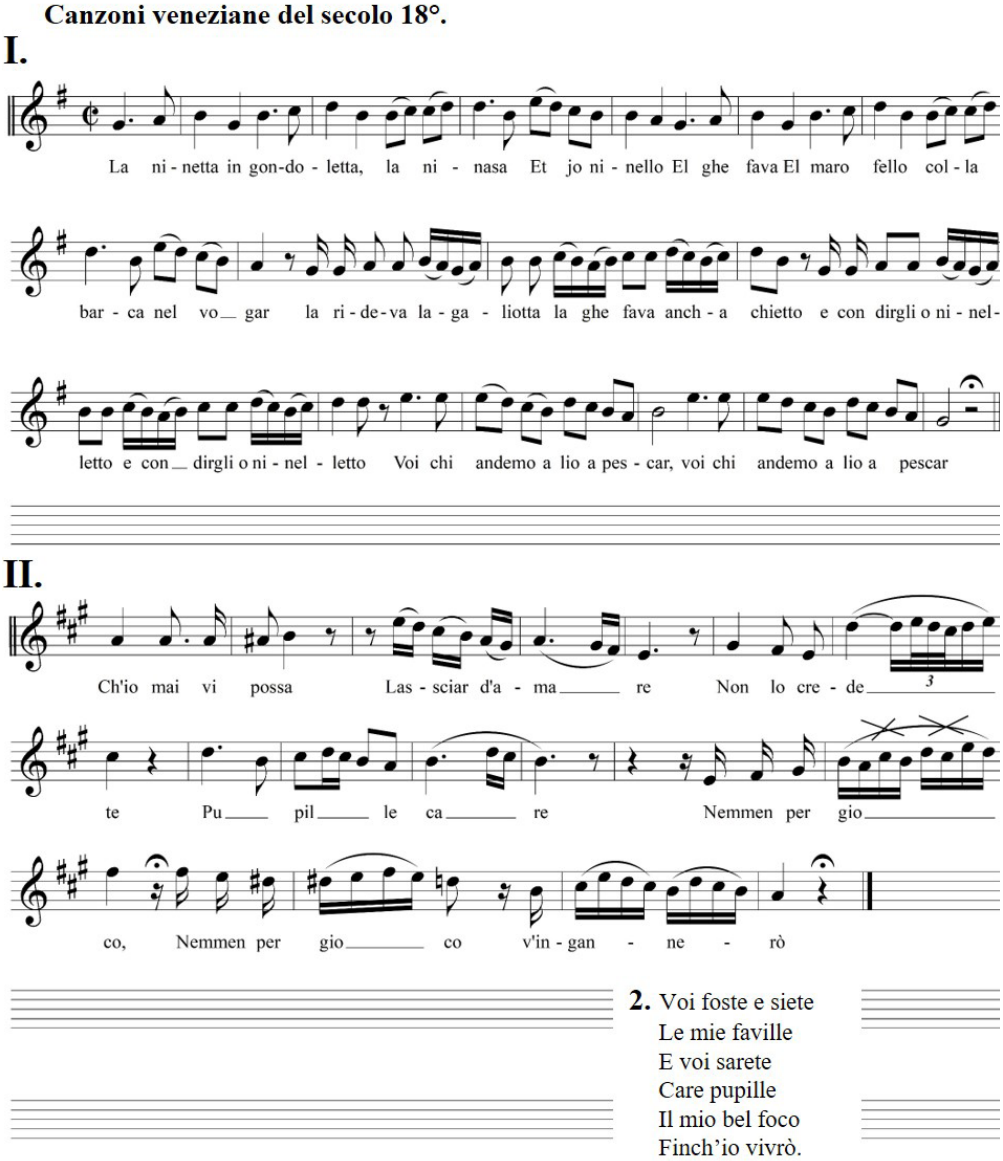
Even more explicit is the celebratory tone of the next work on the list, entitled *Roma*, which Casella imagined setting to music 'per coro, baritono solo e orchestra', again drawing on a D'Annunzio source: the ode *A Roma*, composed for the 30th anniversary of the Breach of Porta Pia and present in the above-mentioned collection of heroic lauds *Elettra*. In those verses, the poet recalled the victories of the Punic wars and the deeds of the 'Magna Madre', a goddess of glory and fertility who seems now forgotten in a drifting present without heroes. He thus relied on the nostalgic cult of ancient glories, in the expectation of what sounded like a certain redemption ('Ai liberi ai forti materna, / o dea, spezzerai tu novo il pane / dicendo la nova parola').[14]

Although Casella exalts in an article entitled 'Nell'ora di Roma' the start of a 'victorious war', announced by 'our greatest Poet, speaking in the name of a great people before the majesty of the Latin sea',[15] none of this rhetoric seems to permeate his music from those years. Among the planned works on the list, Casella chooses to transpose for voice and orchestra an unusual lyric by Carducci, *Notte di maggio*, expressing a poetics of mystery, influenced by the gloomy introduction of the second part of the *Sacre du printemps*, somehow close to the disorienting accents of expressionism: a man wanders alone in a forest populated by specters, comforted only by the dim light of the moon. The compositional code of the years 1913–18, identified by works such as *L'adieu à la vie*, op. 26 or *A notte alta*, op. 30, embodies the other side of triumph, namely images of introspection, of falling, of waiting. It is a lugubrious and pensive music, densely chromatic, the opposite of that 'Mediterranean' style desired by D'Annunzio, attainable through the rediscovery of 'ancient arias and dances' (just think of the soundscape of the play *Sogno d'un tramonto d'autunno*, in which canzonettas and villanellas by Stradella and Falconieri are heard, or of the famous novel *Il fuoco*, where boat songs in Venetian dialect symbolize a lost youth).[16] But once again the sketchbooks betray 'broken paths', left on the edge of the chosen route. Precisely on the sheet adjacent to the continuity draft of *Notte di maggio*, the starting work of Casella's modernist experimentation, we find notes of 'Canzoni veneziane del 18° secolo' (**EXAMPLES 1a–b**).

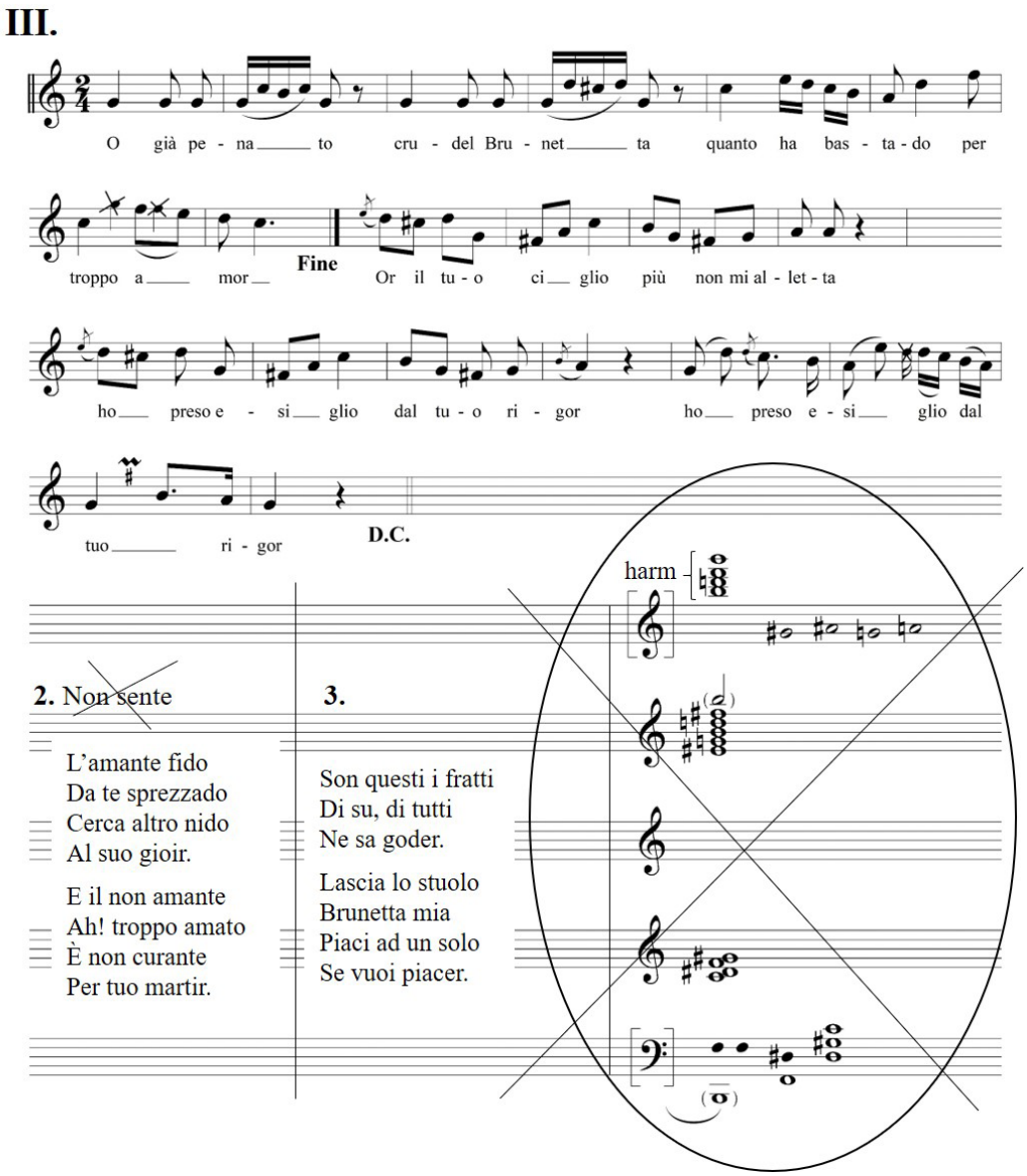
These are clearly transcriptions, which can be read in continuity with similar rewriting trials already carried out by Casella on ancient popular repertoires during his Parisian period.[17] The annotated tunes are quite rare. The first of the three is *La Ninetta in gondoletta*, an anonymous canzonetta in G major for voice and 'guitar accompaniment' which is found in a manuscript collection of 1833. The second one, *Ch'io mai vi possa lasciar d'amare*, takes its text from the cantata *Siroe, re di Persia* by Metastasio, set to music by various composers, but appears with this melody (Andantino in A major) in another collection of Venetian canzonettas from the mid-nineteenth century.[18] In the current state of research, the musical source of the last song, *[H]o già penato crudel Brunetta*, remains unknown, but the text is by Paolo Rolli, an Arcadian poet, who adopts the typical 'lover's quarrel' of folk pre-stilnovistic poetry in his rhymed verses.[19]

The three 'Venetian songs' remained at the draft stage and were never harmonized, but the idea of drawing on the poetry of past centuries to shape his own compositional language would remain a constant, emerging with programmatic afflatus a decade later, when Casella devoted himself to the project of some 'Canzoni antiche', later changing the title to 'Tre ballate popolari [word erased] del XIII e

EXAMPLE 1a. Quaderno 4 (1913–14), transcription of the first two Venetian songs, f. 1*r*. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella.

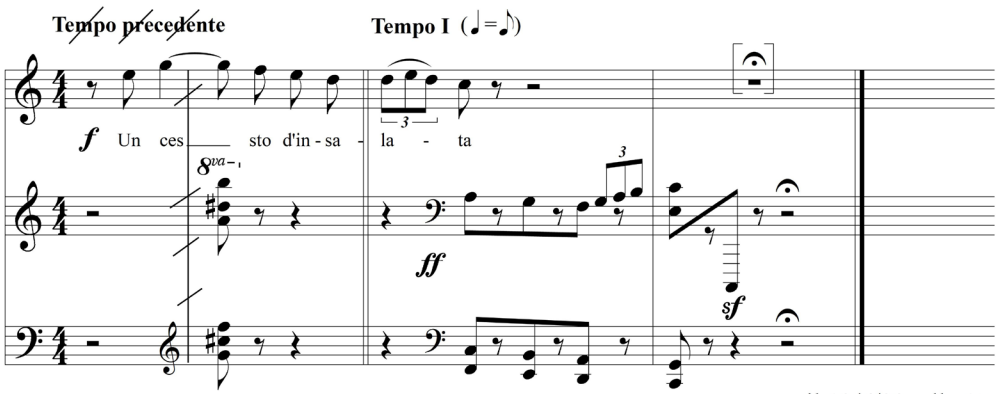


EXAMPLE 1b. Quaderno 4 (1913–14), transcription of the third song and sketch for the final chord of *Notte di maggio*, f. 1*v*. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella.



XIV [secolo]'.[20] These are the *Tre canzoni trecentesche*, op. 36, on texts by Cino da Pistoia and anonymous, which the composer would regard as the keystone of his 'new style' achieved 'only in 1923 – that is, at the age of forty'.[21] A step change is stressed, the novelty of a turning point that, on closer inspection, seems more like a rediscovery of something that was already there. The sketchbooks unhinge the narrative of the three styles, or at least allow us to identify intersections over wide distances. In this regard, observe the close of the third *canzone trecentesca*, namely a stylization of a perfect cadence, with the voice rising to G^5 and reaching the tonic C^5 in a conjunct motion immediately imitated in the lower register by the piano (**EXAMPLE 2**). Casella accentuates the resolution on the major triad in a parodistic manner, presenting it precipitously, complete with an acrobatic leap on C^1; however, this model had already been provided to him by the third 'canzone veneziana' in the same key drafted ten years earlier: the tonic is similarly reached with the tetrachord F^5-E^5-D^5-C^5, having the penultimate note as an appoggiatura (see the second staff of **EXAMPLE 1b**). Certainly, it is striking to see how the 'gallant' melody in C major is coincidentally found next to a sketch of the mysterious cluster that closes *Notte di maggio*, a B chord in which Casella experimented with fusions of major and minor modes, incorporating 'extraneous pitches' such as E♯ and G♮ with additional refracting effects given by the harmonic sounds of the violins – in a letter to Stravinsky, he was pleased with this polytonal chord, describing it as 'quelque peau "Sacre"'.[22] The styling cues of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries coexist juxtaposed on the same page, laying the groundwork for a friction that would only be resolved in the 1920s, when Casella attempts the way of synthesis, subsuming the new harmonies within the realm of classical

EXAMPLE 2. Quaderno 7 (1921–23), draft for the final bars of the third piece of *Tre canzoni trecentesche*, f. 20*r*. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella.



forms (in **example 2**, the expected dominant chord is e.g. replaced by an aggregate on G^4 that extends the entire whole-tone collection vertically).

The dialectic between old and new was polarized into a seemingly deadlocked antithesis during the war years. Casella had repudiated tonal syntax and its genres (suites, sonatas, symphonies, concertos), opting for freer articulations descending from the symphonic poem and based on tactile combinations of sonorities. The sketchbook of 1914–16 displays the ground-breaking face of the composer, who at the edges of the pentagram theorizes the post-tonal horizon jotting down some notes on modern harmony. The logic is that of progress, an irreversible evolution:

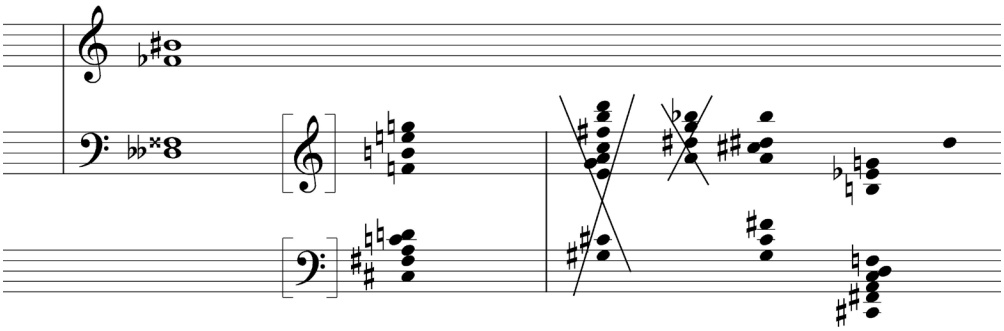
> Basic idea – the decadence of counterpoint. The chord considered individually and no longer ☰
> Dissonances were first introduced melodically and became 'vertical'. [...]
> The transformation of harmony parallels that of vocal music into instrumental and the transformation of the tonal sense into atonal.
> ('death' of the perfect chord) harmony was born with nature. Rest can never exist.
> [...] today's harmony is based on the chromatic scale, rather than on diatonicism, having gone through a polymodal period.[23]

The declared chromatic-atonal outcome, historically marked by the *de profundis* for the perfect chord, reveals itself nevertheless as a 'leap with a safety net'. It is as if, in the background, the call of a suppressed past remains, which will eventually claim its rights. Among the pages of Casella's sketchbooks there are curious entries in which the C major triad appears disfigured with accidentals that deny its diatonicity. We found it alongside the trials of the spectral polychords floating in bars 15–18 of *Mort, ta servante est à ma porte*, second number of the cycle on Tagore's poems *L'adieu à la vie*, op. 26 (**example 3a**).

Is it perhaps a cipher? And again in *Quaderno 6*, the perfect triad of C major resurfaces together with its scale, made unrecognizable by chromatic alterations (**example 3b**). In this case, the negated markings of tonality are found next to the sketches for the dissonant climax of horns in the tone poem *Elegia eroica*, op. 29 (section n. 34, Sempre incalzando, *fff stridente*; see **figure 3**), a moment that Casella would describe as 'a "tempest of death", which the orchestra expressed with the greatest violence'.[24]

The C major is mysteriously dropped onto the same page as these expressionistic exploits, acting almost like an exorcism: while it seems annihilated on one level, it is simultaneously preserved under a deceptive guise, biding its time until the storm passes and its inherent qualities can shine once again.

EXAMPLE 3a. Quaderno 4 (1913–14), C major triad enharmonically camouflaged and sketches for *L'adieu à la vie*, II, mm. 15–18, f. 44*v*. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella.



EXAMPLE 3b. Quaderno 6 (1916–17), C major triad and scale enharmonically camouflaged, f. 6*v*. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella.

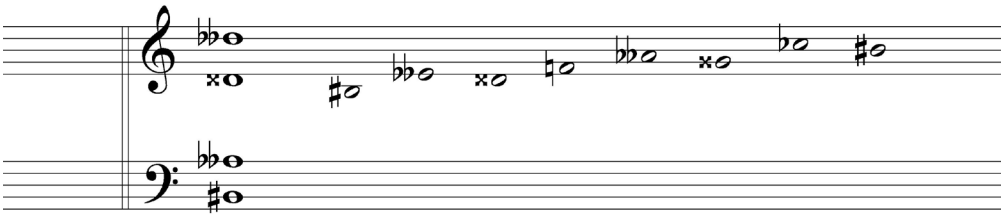
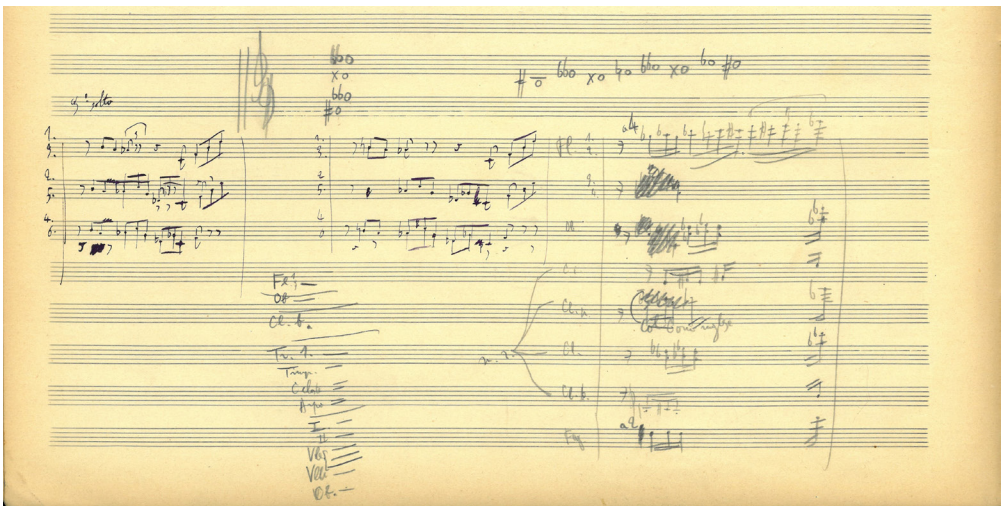


FIGURE 3. Quaderno 6 (1916–17), the entries in 'C major' next to sketches for *Elegia eroica*, f. 6*v*. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella.



THE CLASSICIST 'REVOLUTION'

'Music, as long as it exists, will always take its departure
from the major triad and return to it'
(Paul Hindemith, *Unterweisung im Tonsatz*, 1937)

The critical enhancement of these enigmatic C major sketches might seem to be a detail of little importance, yet we cannot help but notice in Casella's choices a studied symbolism of tonality, presented under the sign of an unveiling. After the first compositions of 1920, which present C as the tonal center still crossed by polytonal streaks (see the extreme numbers of the *Pezzi infantili* and the *Cinque pezzi* for string quartet, op. 34), C major will emerge as the main key in almost all works of the five-year period 1923–27. It is found in the *Concerto* for two violins, viola and cello, op. 40, the *Partita*, op. 42, the *Second Sonata* for cello and piano, op. 45, the *Serenata* for five instruments, op. 46, and the finales of the ballet *La giara*, op. 41 and *Scarlattiana*, op. 44, thus becoming the emblem of the 'classical' as a festive rediscovery of tonal hierarchies – in all these pieces, the tempo and character indications of the last movements manifest in the rhythmic exuberance of rondos, gigues or tarantellas, creating a playful back-and-forth between dominant and tonic that ultimately culminates in the affirmation of the latter (moreover, 1924 saw the publication of the composer's long-planned treatise on harmony, whose subtitle evoked the 'perfect cadence' as the enduring symbol of musical evolution).[25]

To understand the ideological implications of this turn, an additional link remains to be grasped. Before connoting C major as *the* key of his neoclassical forms, Casella had foreshadowed it in the last number of *Pagine di guerra*, added in 1917 when he decided to orchestrate his piano suite, op. 25. The third of the chord is still missing, as the 'resolution' is in progress, suspended on the waves: the new piece, titled *Nell'Adriatico: Corazzate italiane in crociera*, is anchored on a pedal of open fifths, C–G, transposed in glissando across the octaves of the strings and harps. The sonic phantasmagoria expands, incorporating chromaticism and pentatonic thirty-second-note runs in direction of the final dynamic peak, which regains the grounding harmony. Casella conceived it as an 'apotheosis of strength and light, glorification of the seafaring power of resurrected Italy'.[26] This is the semantic field we find again in the expression markings of the *Concerto* for string quartet, specifically in the coda of both the first and last movements: 'Vittoriosamente' (I. *Sinfonia*, n. 22, see EXAMPLE 4) and 'Luminosamente' (IV. *Canzone*, n. 35, see FIGURE 4). Casella intended these two sections to mirror each other, closing the work in a cycle. They begin with a complex chord that stacks the pitches of the Lydian mode C–D–E–F♯–G–A–B by fifths, and progresses

with bold, assertive gestures toward the final cadence on the C major triad. The martial imagery of Italian battleships gliding over turbulent waters, ultimately mastering them, is transposed into the 'dramaturgy' of Casella's *Concerto* and his contemporary works that draw on Baroque and Classical forms. The chaos of war serves as a means to restore a new order, which is, in essence, the modern reclamation of a forgotten tradition.

Here, revolution takes on the astronomical sense of *revolutio* (or the tragic historical one of 'catastrophe'), representing a complete turn around the axis: a movement that reverses and resolves, as the bearer of a countervailing force. In his writings from the 1920s, Casella sought to rehabilitate reactionary thinking, restoring to it 'one of its best meanings': '"reaction" does not necessarily mean regression towards barbarism, but very often means "restoration of equilibrium" after a cataclysm'.[27] The cultural-political context had changed, and many argued that the emergence of a 'classical era' was a necessary outcome of modernity, a consequence of dynamic destabilization. In this regard, the alignment between Casella's vision and that expressed by Benito Mussolini in his post-war speeches is striking. Just consider the following excerpt:

> After the wave of revolution comes the wave of reaction [...]. The process of restoration on the right can already be seen in its tangible displays. The orgy of indiscipline has ceased, the enthusiasm for social and democratic myths is over. Life is returning to the individual. A classical resumption is underway. [...] The revolution is in this reaction.[28]

EXAMPLE 4. Casella, *Concerto* for string quartet, op. 34, I. Sinfonia, bb. 175–178.

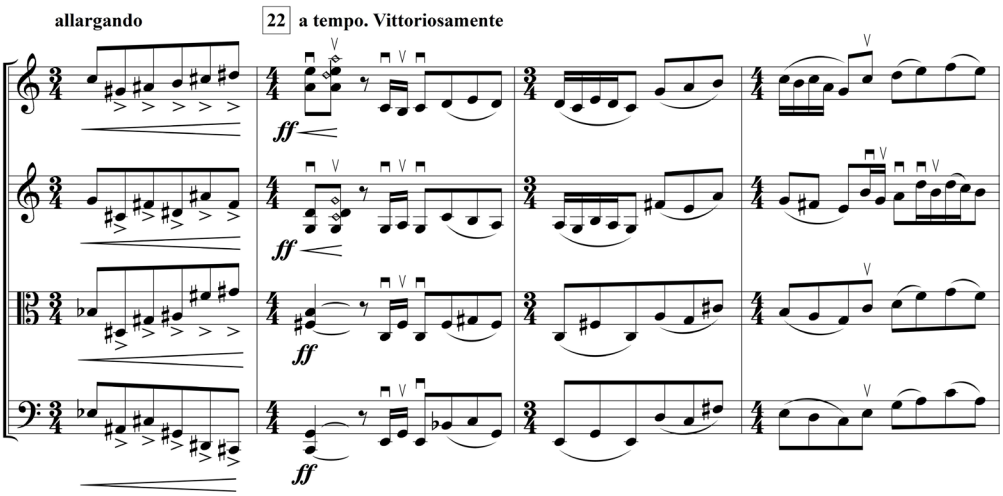
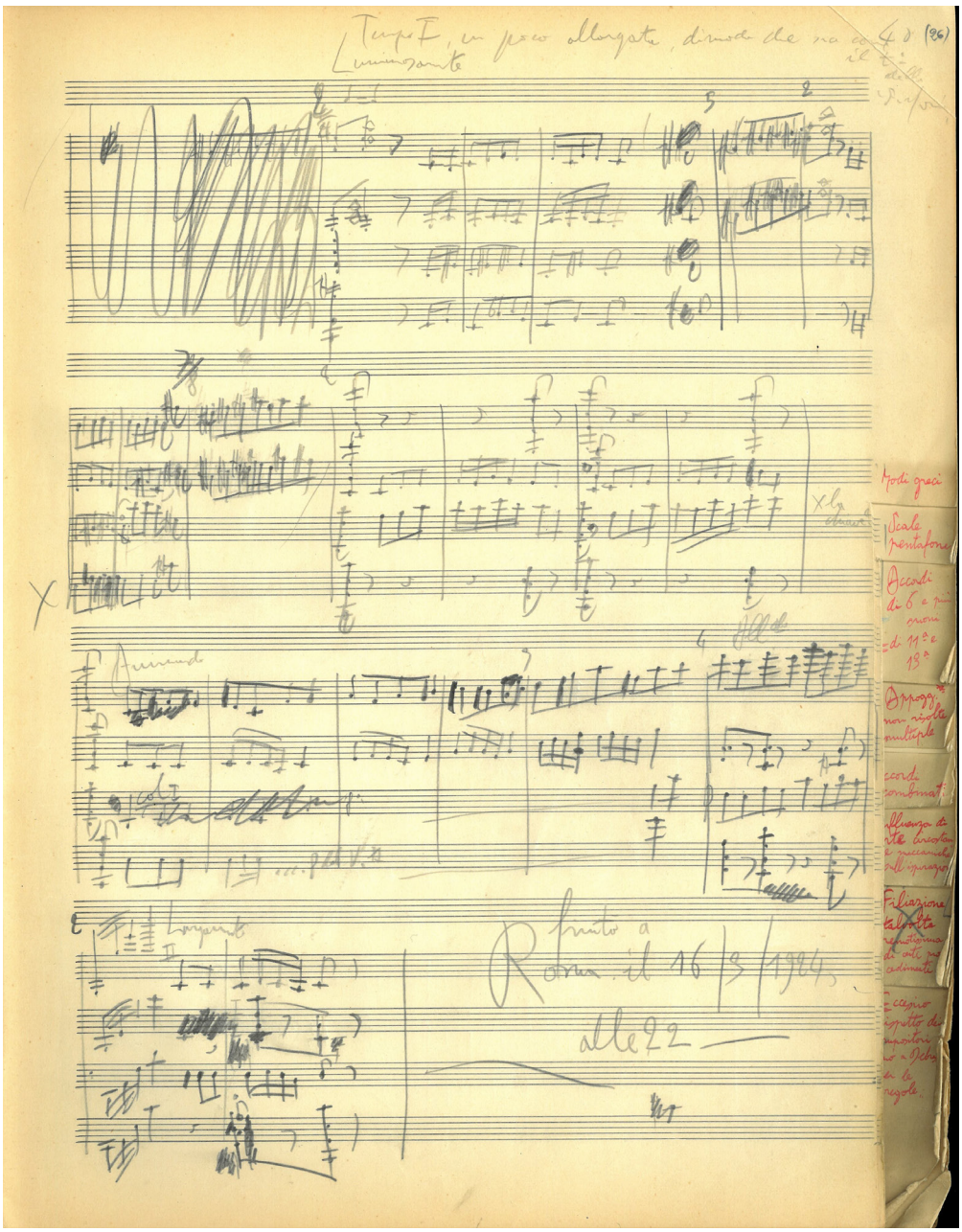


FIGURE 4. **Quaderno 8 (1923–24), *Concerto* for string quartet, op. 34, IV. Canzone, continuity draft for the last bars ('Luminosamente. Tempo I, un poco allargato di modo che sia come il t[emp]o della "Sinfonia""), f. 26*r*. On the right margin, Casella listed the sections corresponding to the topics of his projected harmony book ('Greek modes', 'pentatonic scales', 'chords with 6 or more tones = 11th and 13th chords', etc.). Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella.**



The Fascist label fell on Casella's positions and with his writings he contributed to welding the relationship between musical languages and regime's demands.[29] In a seminal essay, Mila De Santis questions whether this 'eager enthusiasm' stemmed from 'clever tactics or genuine political faith', answering: 'probably the one and the other'.[30] The key to the problem actually lies in the composer's formative years which significantly shaped his future mindset. The 'classical' as a synthetic ideal had already been developed during the 1910s through models of thought derived from the visual arts and musical criticism. Casella was merely applying a Fascist veneer to a program he had long advocated and that now seemed within his grasp.[31]

The process of 'classicizing' was realized according to a dialectical scheme that implies the necessity of antithesis (openness to the other-than-self), but seems to fatally tend towards a negating synthesis (the return to oneself as appropriation, triumph over external agents). The stages of artmaking for Casella correspond to a journey of self-awareness: a construction of identity that is both personal and national. To his colleague Ildebrando Pizzetti, who, in 1913, claimed autarchic isolation by refusing to recognize any influence of transalpine models, he replied that 'supreme geniuses such as Bach, Haendel or Mozart did not believe that they were humiliating themselves by copying or studying compositions of their Italian or French contemporaries in order to assimilate those qualities that they felt their art lacked'.[32] This 'dialogic-metabolic' perspective reached Casella through the writings of Giannotto Bastianelli, an idealist, music critic and leading figure of the so-called 'Generation of the 1880s', who spoke of a 'heroic' attitude in the constitution of the new Italian music: no nostalgia or entrenchment, but 'a vigorous assimilating and modifying acceptance' of contemporary European styles.[33] The painter, poet and art critic Ardengo Soffici said the same in his 1909 article on Impressionism, recommending 'not slavish imitation [...] but exploitation and surpassing'.[34] Casella was particularly captivated by such description of Italian spirit as the ability to add that *quid* which is lacking elsewhere, to 'improve' the foreign by enveloping it in an aura of 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur'. True artists would 'eternalize' the seeds of novelty in a movement that unfolds in three phases: *international* momentum, *national* reappropriation, and *universalist* ambition. The display of a strong identity translates on a technical-aesthetic level into the conviction of having overcome the exploratory phase of engaging with the other: the 'harmonious synthesis' is the *subsumption of* and consequent *distancing from* all possible influences. In 1918, after quoting Soffici's passage on the demiurgic properties of the Italian genius, Casella predicted the emergence of a post-war, somehow classicist music as follows:

> The distinctly modern, 'newly' Italian character of that young music [...] and other still in the making leads me to believe – with ever more convinced faith – that our musicality is evolving towards a kind of classicism, which will summarize in harmonious eurythmy all the latest Italian and foreign innovations and will differ as much from French impressionism as from Straussian decadence, from Strawinsky's primitiveness, from Schoenberg's cold scientism, from Iberian sensuality, from the daring fantasy of the last Hungarians.[35]

The adjectives used to describe the tendencies of contemporary European music take on negative connotations; they are seen as excesses that need to be refined. In summing up the achievements of foreign musicians, their work is perfected and ultimately liquidated. The 'difference' of Italian art – classical *par excellence* – is perceived as an open space: it will be 'neither this nor that' (tacitly implying: it will be 'better than this and that'). This is where the process of identity construction reveals its reactionary side. After assimilating everything, the desire arises to break free and be solely oneself, while identifying one's own particularity as a form of totality. In this sense we can read the metaphor of 'crystallization', which Casella uses to define his own transit to the mature style, and which, in the treatise on harmony becomes a key to the interpretation of the phylogenesis of musical material (the composer explained that, like 'spiritual concepts', the 'concepts of sound technique are formed through a slow process of crystallization, akin to that which frees chemical bodies from all their impurities and heterogeneity of origin').[36] 'The classic' is thus the realm of 'catharsis' unlike Romanticism and its avant-garde offshoots, which are based on the 'turbid and impure expression of immediate and disordered sentiment, recalcitrant to purification': so Casella would write in 1933, quoting with some additions a passage from Benedetto Croce's *Aesthetica in nuce* in support of the validity of his own decade-long travail, driven by a search for 'equilibrium'.[37]

THE RESCUE OF CHAMBER MUSIC BETWEEN STYLE AND POLITICS

To concretely verify the ideological postulates described above, it is useful to take a look at the *Cinque pezzi* for two violins, viola and cello, op. 34, which Casella finished composing in France, in L'Aubraie, in August 1920. In his autobiography, with a retrospective view that betrays a Bloomian anxiety of influence, the composer assigns that work a pivotal significance: it 'marks the end of a turbulent period […] characterized by assimilations', now certifying that he 'was totally independent of both Stravinskyism and Schoenbergism'.[38] This identity urge to exorcise any heritage is belied by the genesis of the work and its sonic reality.

The idea of 'Tre pezzi per quartetto d'archi' is already noted in *Quaderno 6* of 1916–17 (back flyleaf *verso*) next to the never completed project of 'cinque preludi per pianoforte' with the titles: 'I. Ingenuo – II. Sentimentale – III. Grottesco – IV. Nostalgico – V. Eroico'. In the adjoining back cover, Casella enumerates the movements of *Pupazzetti*, op. 27, also a piano suite of 'five pieces', composed in 1915 and orchestrated right in 1920, which on closer inspection forms the model for op. 34 in the alternation of movements 'à la manière de', with a berceuse in the second position, a nocturne in the fourth and a hilarious folk dance in the finale. The links with the previous season are all still there; indeed, it is as if in the *Cinque pezzi* for string quartet the composer wanted to channel all the European tendencies listed in the aforementioned 1918 article, so as to create that 'eurythmic compendium' from which a modern 'classicism' would spring. The main stylistic references of Casella's op. 34 can be summarized as follows:

I. *Preludio*, Allegro vivace e barbaro – The allusion to Bartók is evident from the tempo marking, manifesting in the viola and cello ostinatos and in the soaring melodies with folk-like acciaccaturas. Casella revisits the percussive gestures he had already explored in the second of his *Nove pezzi* for piano, op. 24 (1914), titled *In modo barbaro*, and the main rhythmic motif of the last piece *In modo rustico*, dedicated to Gian Francesco Malipiero, which descends directly from Bartók's *Romanian Dance*, op. 8a no. 1.[39]

II. *Ninna-nanna*, Tempo di berceuse – Casella here resorts to one of his most recurrent stylistic features, 'the dreamy movement in 6/8 that, from the old *Barcarola* [1910] onwards, gave life to his innumerable and exquisite *Berceuses* and *Sicilianas*'.[40] The lullaby is to be performed with mute from start to finish. Notably, it echoes the final *berceuse* of the *Elegia eroica*, with its polymodal layers and identical expressive markings (*tranquillo*, Con infinita dolcezza).

III. *Valse ridicule*, Tempo di valzer grazioso – A parodistic element is expressed here, mocking the customs of nineteenth-century salon music (see the second violin at mm. 7–10 and 15–18, *con slancio romantico*). Casella was clearly inspired by the *Waltz* from Stravinsky's *Trois pièces faciles* for piano duet, dedicated to Erik Satie: the 'tone-deaf' harmonies of the legato arpeggios and staccato figurations are evidence of this; the incipit on the notes E^5-A^5-E^5-G^5 is quoted an octave above by the first violin in mm. 27–28. Similar expedients had already been used by Casella in the *Valse*, second of his *Trois pièces pour pianola* (1918, released on rolls by the Aeolian Company of London in 1921), in which there is also a distorted quotation from Giuseppe Verdi's *Trovatore* ('Sconto col sangue mio').

IV. *Notturno*, Lento. Grave. Funebre – Although the 'night music' is a constant in Casella's work of the 1910s, the title here may perhaps refer to D'Annunzio's *Notturno*, a somber meditation written by the poet after a plane crash that left him paralyzed and almost dying. In the thematic profile of the incipit (*pp sotto voce, come salmodiando*)

> we can perceive a frozen echo of the initial motif from Maurice Ravel's *Trio*, op. 67, which Casella premiered in Paris in January 1915, in wartime. The chordal texture and performance techniques clearly evoke Stravinsky, namely the third and most hieratic of his *Three Pieces* for string quartet (1914). The homophonic and modal sections, in the manner of a chorale, alternate with more concertante and chromatic passages (see m. 17 ff., *con espressione intense, amara*), which are based on highly expressive trichords, similar to those employed by Anton Webern in the slow movements of his *Fünf Sätze* for string quartet, op. 5.
>
> V. *Fox-trot*, Tempo giusto – Casella merges two sources that already exhibit elements of continuity: Debussy's *Golliwogg's cake-walk* (Allegro giusto), the last number of the *Children's Corner* suite – consider the initial syncopated motto and, more notably, the ostinato accompaniment that underpins the violin melody, regularizing the rhythms from Debussy's mm. 6–9 – and, once again, Stravinsky. The piece is in fact 'clearly modeled on the *Ragtime for Eleven Instruments*, explicitly so in its introductory gesture, yet in place of Stravinsky's montage, […] Casella composes a straightforward ternary form with double coda, often metrically square'.[41]

This last observation by Ben Earle is important as it signals the key to a stylistic-compositional difference. One finds, it is true, in the *Cinque pezzi* for string quartet that coexistence of disparate elements, such as folk dances or music-hall pieces, which marked the 'new path' (the 'so-called neoclassicism of a sort' that Stravinsky felt he had initiated in 1915, precisely when he showed an enthusiastic Casella his *Polka* for piano four hands);[42] but the Italian composer regiments those stimuli into clearly recognizable structures – see the alternation of Tutti and Soli in the first piece, according to an ABAB'A rondo pattern, the ternary form with Trio of the *Valse ridicule*, or the arch form of the *Notturno*, ABACAB'A, as far more articulated than the hallucinated repetitions of the last of Stravinsky's *Three Pieces* for string quartet. The musician Luigi Perrachio highlighted this aspect positively in his review of the *Cinque pezzi*, op. 34:

> It is the Casella we know: there are some terrible harmonies! But there are also designs. And, curiously enough, Casella's designs are all square, outlined, ordinary: *traditional*! [...] it is not only the designs that continuously reveal a Casella born and raised among those classics from whom he neither knows nor is able to fully liberate himself: the architecture, the form, also betray him. [...] And even the phrasing is rhythmic, measured, closed, almost geometric: just like in the classics. Compare a period by Casella with one by Debussy and then tell me if he is not closer to the classics than the moderns.[43]

Perrachio notes an imbalance between the vertical and horizontal axes, between a 'brand-new harmony' that 'sticks' to forms and rhythms that are not

new, but rather flaunt a certain academicism. Casella was aware of what many of his compatriots perceived as a problem and sought to emphasize his synthetic effort, which would soon lead him to a simplification of harmonic language and a more balanced integration of compositional parameters. The line of demarcation is embodied in a strategy evident in the writings of that period: the rediscovery of a purified singing tone, together with the exaltation of *a single* tradition (the Italian one) that gradually blunts and supplants the biting and disenchanted vein of late 1910s Stravinskyism, populated by soulless dancing puppets. Casella links this change to the beneficial influence not of composers but of native sun:

> There is no fog in our landscapes, no mystery in the distance, but always a fine and implacably precise sharpness of outline, an essentially classical light already close to that which illuminates the Hellenic Parthenon.[44]

> One must not forget […] that Italy is the natural land of classicism. Has she not the fortune of that incomparable light which glorifies and 'classicizes' even the humble object it touches?[45]

The rhetorical question asserts as an incontrovertible fact the myth of the Italian landscape, heir to Magna Graecia, which possesses the very power to 'classicize', that is, to magnify, removing all ugliness. Casella recounts having had this revelation on 'a trip to Tuscany in 1922, during which the nature and art of that land convinced [him] forever of the incompatibility of certain exotic modern expressions with our soul'.[46] The crossing of modernity thus reaches its final stage: a synthesis marked by the rediscovery of roots and the closing of accounts, in which the wheat is separated from the chaff, and what once captivated now appears as deviation, an error of perspective. Between the lines of this conclusion, we can discern a model that shapes the process of the composer's self-representation and has not yet been sufficiently focused on, namely the D'Annunzio of *Alcyone* (1903), the third volume of *Laudi del cielo, del mare, della terra e degli eroi*. That collection presents 'the most pulpy and mature fruit' of the poet's art, the 'recomposing of the lacerations of the mobile fabric of mannerism', as Luciano Anceschi defined it.[47] D'Annunzio rediscovered himself after spending 'days in a deep stillness, lying in a boat in the sun' at 'the mouth of the Arno'.[48] The first poem of *Alcyone*, entitled *La tregua*, indicated the end of fatigue and the time of the harvest; in a kind of panic baptism, the 'fighter' asked to be 'cleansed of all human stench in icy springs' and to rejoice in bliss as the 'naked Summer' burns in the sky.[49] The second poem, *Il fanciullo*, celebrated the 'flower of the divine innocent art', in the description of a young musician, Apollonian *alter ego*, playing the whistle in the garden of a faun along the Affrico stream. It is here that the luminous Tuscan landscape

evoked by D'Annunzio (and, reflexively, by Casella) is imbued with Greekness.[50] The poet jointly exalts the splendor of Florence and Athens, an approach that, on a stylistic level, is expressed through the use of Dantean vocabulary and a classicizing versification modeled on Greek-Latin meters, according to the lessons of Carducci's *Odi barbare*.

The heralds of the Italian musical 'renewal' compacted around these suggestions: from *Alcyone* Casella drew *La sera fiesolana* (1923), during a period of close contact with D'Annunzio, which would lead to the birth of the *Corporazione delle Nuove Musiche*; meanwhile, in the same year, Gian Francesco Malipiero set to music the *Ditirambo III*, included as the final piece in his collection *Le stagioni italiche*, for soprano and piano. An early follower of D'Annunzio and far less inclined towards Stravinskyian plagiarism, Malipiero became for Casella a sort of touchstone, the one who intuited and implemented before others an autonomous path to classicism. An emblematic work is his *First String Quartet*, titled *Rispetti e strambotti*, completed in Rome, in April 1920 – Malipiero would describe it as 'a point of arrival' in terms of 'form, expression, sound, color'; nearing the age of forty, he felt he had 'entered into a new world'.[51] The secret of the style lies in the poetics, both restorative and palingenetic, discussed above: Malipiero surprisingly builds his quartet in a single movement divided into twenty 'strophes' of alternating character, inspired by the folk meters of the fourteenth-century.

The unprecedented formal structure aligned with the myth of pastoral nature, i.e. with an exploration of the 'sonic resources' of the instruments (vibrations of open-fifth chords, struck or plucked in ostinato), which Malipiero hoped would allow us to 'escape the atmospheres of chamber music to breathe the air of the streets and countryside'.[52] The endeavor proved successful, realizing the dream of an 'autochthon' classicism capable of asserting itself beyond national borders. In August 1920, with his *Quartet 'Rispetti e strambotti'*, Malipiero indeed won first prize (reward of 1,000 dollars) at the chamber music competition established in Massachusetts by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge.

The jury, which included Ernest Bloch, Felix Borowski and Ugo Ara, chose the Venetian composer's work out of 136 scores submitted from around the world, describing its merits as follows: 'It is free, modern, and still melodic; rhapsodic, but still ordinate, with masterly writing for the instruments, and full of contrast'.[53] In the magazine *Musical America*, for which Casella was the Rome correspondent, the award to Malipiero was reported in an article titled 'Modern Italy Takes the First Place'. That achievement became a symbolic trophy for all of the composers of the Generation of 1880s, who 'have forged to the front in the last five years'

despite the misunderstanding of many – 'Time changes. [...] The group stands vindicated in its purpose today'.[54]

With the war over, warlike revanchism guided the reading of events and even persisted in the names and metaphors chosen by Italian musicians for their projects. Before it became a "Corporazione", the group founded and led by Casella in the winter of 1922 was called "Fascio Italiano di Coltura Musicale Moderna", and included Count Enrico di San Martino, Giuditta Sartori, Vittorio Rieti, Piero Mastrocinque and Mario Labroca. The term "Fascio" was anything but neutral. In it, echoes the name of recent cultural aggregations, such as the "Fascio di educazione nazionale" founded by Giovanni Gentile and Ernesto Codignola in 1919, but also the more 'political' name of grassroots groups, such as the "Fasci di azione rivoluzionaria" or the "Fasci di combattimento" founded by Mussolini, also in 1919 (the March on Rome had just happened and, shortly afterwards, D'Annunzio would describe the 'legionaries' of the Fiume League as 'the bundle [*fascio*] of pure energies').[55] In an unpublished letter from January 1923, Guido M. Gatti declined Casella's invitation to join the committee of the "Fascio", criticizing the choice of that 'inopportune – because opportunistic – title', which betrayed a militant and 'biased' view of artistic activity.[56]

Casella eventually replaced the 'fascist-tinged' term, redefining his organization as an "Associazione", yet the political context irresistibly permeated the programmatic lines of its statute, presenting itself as the driving force behind cultural processes. Casella described 'a country' that 'seems today to be rising to new life. In response to the call of a young dictator, those Italian energies, which had seemed forever paralyzed by the paucity and incompetence of statesmen, are now awakening'. And immediately after this preamble, which exalts the decisiveness of a bold youth, comes a glance toward the past, to the 'marvelous art of Palestrina, Frescobaldi, Monteverdi, Scarlatti, and Rossini', the only possible source for a musical renaissance.[57] Once again, a dual soul – both revolutionary and restorative – emerges, which would find its operative arm in the "Corporazione delle Nuove Musiche" (C.D.N.M., *Concentus Decimae Nuncius Musae*), explicitly linked to the charisma of D'Annunzio. It was indeed 'the Commander', by then retired to the hermitage of his Vittoriale in Gardone Riviera, who chose this name in September 1923, drawing from the articles of the so-called "Carta del Carnaro", the constitution of Fiume, where music was offered to the people by the 'Tenth Corporation', composed of master craftsmen, dedicated to the 'ideal transfigurations of work and daily life'.[58]

The D'Annunzian mystic overlaps, not without some strain, with the pragmatic urgencies of Casella and Malipiero, providing an ennobling endorsement that

transforms the former guerrillas into 'laureate poets'. The title chosen for the monthly bulletin of their "Corporazione" – *La Prora* – is emblematic in the readjustment of meaning to which it is subjected. Its origin lies in a motto by D'Annunzio, found in the tragedy *La nave* (1909): 'Arm the prow and set sail toward the World', a prophecy that the tribune Marcus Gràtico announces to the sailors, 'young and free', and that is fulfilled at the end, after violent struggles, when the ship is built and the hero can safely embark to conquer new lands.[59] Malipiero quotes the fateful motto at the end of a letter to Casella, in which he apologizes for not being able to provide him with an article for the new journal *La Prora*, but nonetheless wishes every success to the venture.[60] There is thus a continuity of imagery between certain turn-of-the-century irredentism and the 1920s, but the musicians play the role of peacemakers. The civilizing mission must now appear as 'sedimented', set on the right track. The 'prow' becomes a symbol of stability, not of adventures on stormy seas, as Casella explains in his address to readers in February 1924:

> ...an avant-garde journal – some will say, knowing who creates and directs this new review. [...] If 'avant-garde' means a more or less successful 'experiment' – then we sincerely do not believe that this journal will be 'avant-gardist'. Indeed, to certain extremist minds, it may even seem conservative. For it does not intend to move toward the future without 'certainties'. […] It, therefore, does not intend to appear as the organ of a mere handful of little boys eager for 'reclame', but rather aims to be regarded as the cutting and combative 'prow' of a solid, well-constructed ship: the new Italian music.[61]

These are the images of a conquered utopia, of a 'well-governed' revolution, which conceal the forty-one-year-old composer's anxiety for his own reputation. Casella does not want his new profile to be confused with that of a reckless boy. Yet, as recently as 1919, he proudly presented himself in the journal *Musical America* as an 'Italian modernist', proclaiming that 'music's future belongs to the extremists'.[62] The combative minority, once established, rises up as a system and shapes a majority, broadening consensus, mending the rift between old and new. In the announcements of the first issue of *La Prora*, it is noted that Casella 'will remain in Rome for several months' and 'is working on a new *Quartet*, of which he has already written the first three movements'.[63] This is the *Concerto* for string quartet, op. 40, which we have already discussed for its programmatic presentation of C major in *fortissimo*, as a symbol of light and victory. It will serve as an *exemplum* of the newest Italian music, which in the following issue of the journal is described as the ship of certainties: based on 'firmly constructed and architected organic forms', determined to 'maintain the tonal *centres*'.[64] The

analytical diagram that Casella annexed to the score is useful to get a glimpse of the structural and ideal models of his *Concerto*:

> I. *Sinfonia* (it must be noted that in Italy the term 'Sinfonia' was – and still is – the equivalent for 'Prelude': Sonata form, augmented by a scheme which is characteristic for Bach's Suites: the principal section is an integral part of the closing portion. […]
>
> II. *Siciliana* (Song form with three repetitions and two intermediate sections). […]
>
> III. *Minuet, Recitative and Aria*: This movement represents not a combination of three pieces but a modern variant of the old, traditional 'A–B–A' form. The Recitative replaces the Trio, and the Aria is merely a new guise for the tender, graceful Minuet. […]
>
> IV. *Canzone* (this title is to be understood in the sense associated with it in the 16th and 17th centuries and which signifies an equivalent to the term 'Sonata': Rondo form with two repetitions and two intermediate sections. […].[65]

The preference for the rondo and the ritornello form, typical of eighteenth century concertos, had already emerged in some of the *Cinque pezzi* for string quartet from 1920, but now any reference to contemporaneity has vanished: Bartók and Stravinsky are replaced (at least according to the composer's own words) by Bach and Frescobaldi. The exegetes closest to Casella viewed this phase favorably. Castelnuovo-Tedesco defined op. 40 as 'one of the first examples of Italian quartet', in which the long-held aspiration for a 'form [...] powerfully organic and essentially contrapuntal, characterized by an *interweaving of lines* rather than a mere *splash of colour*' was finally realized.[66] Massimo Mila emphasized the break from certain parodistic (read: Stravinskyian) clichés heading for an elevation of style: 'the encounter with ancient Italian forms [...] frees Casella's new style from the subordination to ironic humor, which had lent something exceptional, provisional, to his creations'.[67] If the composer experienced a 'liberation', whether real or perceived, we cannot overlook that his *Concerto* for string quartet speaks a language of coercion, manifesting the 'violence' of the objective style. The handling of the material in the first movement indeed seems to justify an Adornian reading, as the first theme – acting as a *vigorous* refrain – opposes any attempt at more intimate expression, stressing out the dynamics and dragging the lyricism into a relentless march. The sonata form, in a concertante reinterpretation as a dialectic between Tutti and Soli, becomes the dramatization of a conflict. Casella brings forth subjective voices and emotions in turmoil (see b. 40, Calmando, *espressivo*; b. 132, Più mosso. Animatissimo e concitato; bb. 139–150, Allargando molto, *appassionatamente*... moltissimo stringendo di nuovo precipitando... Agitatissimo... Calmando), only to then repress them, annihilating the contrasts within the

uniformity of the victorious motto (*sempre molto forte*). 'The sacrifice of the self, expected of every individual by the new form of organization, attracts as a residue of the primeval past'. 'Every moment of soothing comfort, of the harmonious, of the displacement of horror in art […] triumphs in Stravinsky's scornful and cutting tone as the herald of the Iron Age': so said Adorno in his much-criticized essay,[68] which, however, fits well with Alfredo Casella's neoclassicism – drastically conciliatory and aligned to power. In the outer movements of the *Concerto* op. 40, we can visualize the already described 'prow' of the ship, 'cutting and combative', sweeping away all remnants of Romanticism, harnessing the impulses of the self within a totalizing structure.

This new work for string quartet – it is worth remembering – was the counterpart to *Pierrot lunaire* during the famous 1924 Italian tour, promoted by the "Corporazione delle Nuove Musiche". Casella performed a meritorious act by making known to an ignorant public what he himself did not hesitate to call a masterpiece; at the same time, however, he framed it within the context of 'surpassing'. To place his own *Concerto* with its energetic cadences in C major on the same evening as Schoenberg's atonal piece would only have added further proof of the '[enviable] independence that today assures the new Italians a place apart among the young European and American schools'.[69] The international openings of the composer-organizer coexist with the specter of a hegemony tending towards autarchy. The signs of an open and enduring controversy begin to take shape, one that would flare up especially with the infamous article on *Scarlattiana* (1929), in which Casella theorized the connection between neoclassical tendency and Fascism: wishing for 'the definitive liquidation of the atonal intermezzo', he launched into a daring comparison between 'the rebirth of older musical form-principles' and 'modern political developments which, for the benefit of the abstract state authority, limit many individual liberties that the previous century seemed to have secured eternally for humanity'.[70] From what we have reconstructed so far, this outcome was not just a fall in style or an ill-calculated excess, but the consequence of a thought with a *longue durée*, nourished by readings, projects and visions.

Notes

1 In his article 'Contributo ad un nuovo stile musicale nostro', Casella spoke of 'a new classicism' as the gist of the twentieth century, the moment when art, finally freed from Romantic and Impressionist legacies, was 'raised to the value of an absolutely objective and dynamic thought' (*La Prora*, I/2, 1924, pp. 33–38: 36). To describe the turning point of the 1920s, aimed at 'an increased concern of a constructive and plastic sense', the codified terms seemed misleading to him: 'For my part, I distrust everything with the prefix "Neo", as history does not repeat itself, and classicism […] seems to me absurdly Utopian in these days of radio and aviation' (Alfredo Casella, 'Music and These Years of Transition', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 18 July 1925, p. 12).

2 Alfredo Casella, 'Proemio', in: *21+26* (1931), a cura di Alessandra C. Pellegrini, Firenze: Olschki, 2001, pp. 1–10: 4.

3 Alfredo Casella, 'Casella veduto da …sé stesso', *Musica d'oggi*, XII/12, 1930, pp. 495–500: 500.

4 Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, review of Casella's *11 pezzi infantili*, *Il Pianoforte*, II/12, 1921, pp. 376–377.

5 Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, 'Alfredo Casella e il suo "terzo stile"', *Il Pianoforte*, VI/8–9, 1925, pp. 241–247.

6 Massimo Mila, 'Itinerario stilistico (1901–1942)', in: *Alfredo Casella*, a cura di Fedele d'Amico e Guido M. Gatti, Milano: Ricordi, 1958, pp. 31–55: 36–37; originally publ. in *La rassegna musicale*, XVI/5–6, 1943, pp. 132–147.

7 'nothing convinces us of any usefulness of the concept of "nationalism" for Casella's musical and cultural formation'; 'the problem of an Italian nature of his music did not even cross his mind' (Guido Salvetti, 'Premessa', in: *Alfredo Casella negli anni di apprendistato a Parigi*, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Venezia, 13–15 maggio 1992), a cura di Giovanni Morelli, Firenze: Olschki, 1994, pp. vii–xiv: ix–x).

8 See Joachim Noller, 'Le conseguenze di Parigi. Una critica storica (e non ideologica) di Casella', in: *Alfredo Casella negli anni di apprendistato a Parigi*, pp. 17–23, and Francesco Parrino, 'Alfredo Casella and "The *Montjoie!* Affair"', *Repercussions*, X/1, 2007, pp. 96–123; the latter examines the role of the journal directed by the right-wing intellectual Ricciotto Canudo, in which Cubism was associated with the 'harmonic simultaneity' of Stravinsky's ballets and the avant-garde was seen as a necessary transit towards a recovery of 'pure art' and the values of 'tradition'.

9 Douglas Johnson, 'Deconstructing Beethoven's Sketchbooks', in: *Haydn, Mozart, & Beethoven. Studies in the Music of the Classical Period; Essays in Honour of Alan Tyson*, ed. by Sieghard Brandenburg, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, pp. 225–235: 229, 234.

10 For an account of his activities in both societies for early music and a complete perusal of the concert programs, see *Alfredo Casella. Gli anni di Parigi. Dai documenti*, a cura di Roberto Calabretto, Firenze: Olschki, 1997, pp. 89–119.

11 The mixture of Mahlerian elements and classical forms is a trait that already characterized the *Suite en Ut majeur* for orchestra, op. 13, which Casella dedicated in 1910 to the composer and organist Jean Huré. The Overture opens with a clear reference to the beginning of Mahler's First Symphony and inserts a theme from the aforementioned Montéclaire's *Ballet Divertissement*. This is followed by a somber Sarabande and finally a Bourrée, which gives its positive impetus with a unison motto in C major, destined for further appearances in Casella's works. A Parisian critic effectively captured the 'amphibious' nature of this style: 'Cette *Suite en Ut* est curieuse. On en pourrait dire que des éléments tour à tour archaïques et ultra-modernes y luttent sans

cesse. Je ne sais lesquels l'emportent. Mais ce dont je suis certain, c'est l'agrément musical qu'ils engendrent' (Louis Vuillemin, 'La Semaine musicale', *Comœdia*, 10 March 1913, p. 5; quoted in Calabretto, *Alfredo Casella*, p. 167).

12 See Alfredo Casella, *Le couvent sur l'eau* (*Il convento veneziano*), Comédie chorégraphique sur un argument de J. L. Vaudoyer, Fragments symphoniques pour orchestre, Milano: Ricordi, 1919, pp. 62–63.

13 See Gabriele D'Annunzio, *La Canzone di Garibaldi*, Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1909, p. 63 (Casella had this edition in his library, which bears his signature and the date '1913'; I thank the late Fiamma Nicolodi for providing me with a copy of the title page).

14 Gabriele D'Annunzio, *A Roma*, in: Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Versi d'amore e di gloria*, a cura di Annamaria Andreoli e Niva Lorenzini, vol. II, Milano: Mondadori, 1984, pp. 278–284.

15 Alfredo Casella, 'Nell'ora di Roma', *La riforma musicale*, III/22–23, 1915, p. 1.

16 'Do ben vu ghavé / Beleza e zoventù; / Co i va no i torna più, / Nina mia cara…' (Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Il Fuoco* (1898), in: *Prose di romanzi*, a cura di Niva Lorenzini, vol. II, Milano: Mondadori, 1989, pp. 197–518: 276; other excerpts from the song are quoted on pp. 277–280).

17 See Anna Rita Colajanni and Mila De Santis, '"Deux chansons anciennes" e tre "chansons" inedite di Casella per un concorso russo', in: *Alfredo Casella negli anni di apprendistato a Parigi*, pp. 25–54.

18 The two collections, both for voice, piano and guitar, are respectively: *Quarantacinque Canzonette Veneziane*, 1833, owned by the composer and collector Hermann Kestner (1810–1890) and *Canzoncine Veneziane scelte*, ca. 1850–1880, owned by the composer and choirmaster Friedrich Brand (1815–1882).

19 See Paolo Rolli, *Poetici componimenti*, vol. II, Venezia: Tevernin, 1753, pp. 147–148. The song, entitled *Beltà civetta*, appeared in the collection *Poeti erotici del secolo XVIII*, a cura di Giosuè Carducci, Firenze: Barbèra, 1868, pp. 71–73. The words annotated by Casella for the third stanza present variants with respect to the original, which instead reads: 'Son questi i frutti / Di chi vorria / Il cor di tutti / Né sa goder'.

20 See *Quaderno 7* (1921–23), f. 13*v*. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella. The three poems set to music (I. *Giovane bella, luce del mio core*, II. *Fuor de la bella gaiba*, III. *Amante sono, vaghiccia, di voi*) can be found in the collection *Cantilene e ballate, strambotti e madrigali nei secoli XIII e XIV*, a cura di Giosuè Carducci, Pisa: Nistri, 1871, pp. 47, 75, 84.

21 Casella, 'Proemio', p. 7.

22 Letter from Alfredo Casella to Igor Stravinsky, Vouvray, 19 August 1913 (Basel, Paul Sacher Stiftung), reproduced in facsimile in: Francesco Fontanelli, *Casella, Parigi e la guerra. Inquietudini moderniste da "Notte di maggio" a "Elegia eroica"*, Bologna: Albisani, 2015 (De Sono. Tesi, 4), p. 155.

23 Alfredo Casella, *Quaderno 5* (1914–16), back flyleaf *recto*. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella.

24 Alfredo Casella, *I segreti della giara* (1941), Milano: il Saggiatore, 2016, p. 113; *Music in My Time. The Memoirs of Alfredo Casella*, trans. and ed. by Spencer Norton, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955, pp. 140–141. This jarring dynamic peak, in which echoes of *Jeu du rapt* from *Sacre* and *Peripetie* from Schönberg's Op. 16 can be heard, is considered by Ben Earle as the starting point of 'Italian musical modernism' (*Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 4, 26–27). For a comprehensive analysis of *Elegia eroica*, see Fontanelli, *Casella, Parigi e la guerra*, pp. 204–248.

25 Alfredo Casella, *L'evoluzione della musica moderna. A traverso la storia della Cadenza perfetta* (*The Evolution of Music. Throughout the History of the Perfect Cadence*), London: Chester, 1924. The preface is dated 'Rome, August 1919'.

26 This is noted in the program for the concert on January 12, 1919, at the Teatro Augusteo in Rome, where the orchestral version of *Pagine di guerra* was premiered. See also the preface to the score in Alfredo Casella, *Pagine di guerra*, cinque "films" musicali per grande orchestra, London: Chester, 1921, p. 2.

27 Alfredo Casella, 'La reazione italiana', in: *21+26*, p. 41; first ed. 'Die "Reaktion" in Italien', *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, VII/7, 1925, pp. 380–382. On the '"reactionary" effort' as 'renaissance' and 'salvation of an ideal', see Alfredo Casella, 'Young Italy and Its Rôle', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 March 1925, p. 7.

28 Benito Mussolini, 'Da che parte va il mondo?', in: *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini*, a cura di Edoardo e Duilio Susmel, vol. XVIII, Firenze: La Fenice, 1956, pp. 66–72: 68, 71; first ed. *Gerarchia*, I/2, 1922, pp. 49–54.

29 See in particular Alfredo Casella, 'Music and Politics in Italy', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 19 September 1925, p. 8, and Alfredo Casella, 'The Return of Discipline', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 19 December 1925, p. 10.

30 Mila De Santis, 'Casella nel ventennio fascista', in: *Italian Music during the Fascist Period*, a cura di Roberto Illiano, Turnhout: Brepols, 2004, pp. 371–399: 375.

31 For an overview of the constants in Casella's aesthetics and his cultural referents, see Anna Quaranta, 'Neoclassicismo musicale. Termini del dibattito italiano ed europeo', in: *Alfredo Casella e l'Europa*, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Siena, 7–9 giugno 2001), a cura di Mila De Santis, Firenze: Olschki, 2003, pp. 93–142: 104–111, 132–136, and Maria Grazia Messina, 'Tra pittura e musica. Da *Ars nova* a *Valori plastici* e ritorno', in: *Alfredo Casella e l'Europa*, pp. 249–274. Further perspectives on these topics can be found in Francesco Fontanelli, 'Dal cubismo al classicismo. Radici pittoriche dell'itinerario di Casella', in: *Alfredo Casella interprete del suo tempo*, a cura di Carla Di Lena e Luisa Prayer, Lucca: LIM, 2021, pp. 15–44.

32 Alfredo Casella, 'Risposta al Maestro Ildebrando Pizzetti', *Il Marzocco*, XVIII/44, 2 novembre 1913, pp. 5–6: 5.

33 See Giannotto Bastianelli, *La crisi musicale europea* (1912), con un 'Invito alla lettura' di Gianandrea Gavazzeni, Firenze: Vallecchi, 1976, p. 11.

34 Ardengo Soffici, *L'impressionismo e la pittura italiana* (1909), in: *Opere*, vol. I, Firenze: Vallecchi, 1959, pp. 3–29: 26, 29.

35 Alfredo Casella, 'La nuova musicalità italiana', *Ars nova*, II/2, gennaio 1918, pp. 2–4: 4.

36 See respectively Casella, 'Proemio', p. 8 and Casella, *L'evoluzione della musica moderna*, p. 5. The term 'crystallization' had already been employed by Malipiero for Stravinsky's compositions after *Sacre*, with particular reference to *Renard* (see Gian Francesco Malipiero, 'Musiche nuove', *Ars nova*, III/1, 1918, pp. 14–15: 15).

37 See Alfredo Casella, 'Musica italiana di ieri e di oggi', *L'Italia letteraria*, V, 26 March 1933, pp. 1–4: 1 and Benedetto Croce, 'Aesthetica in nuce' (1928), in: Croce, *Philosophy, Poetry, History. An Anthology of Essays*, translated and introducted by Cecil Sprigge, London: Oxford University Press, 1966, pp. 215–247: 236.

38 'the *Five Pieces* represent the last remnant of the influence of Stravinsky and the total disappearance of any atonal preoccupation' (Casella, *I segreti della giara*, p. 121; *Music in My Time*, p. 151).

39 See the first violin in mm. 10–14, 19 ff. (reference is made to the score of *Cinque pezzi*, Vienna: Universal, 1921). The earlier Bartókian quotations in the *Nove pezzi* are examined in detail in Nicolò Palazzetti, 'From Paris to Rome. Alfredo Casella and Béla Bartók in the Early Twentieth Century', *Archival Notes*, 3, 2018, pp. 1–22: 4–10.

40 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, 'Alfredo Casella e il suo "terzo stile"', p. 243.

41 Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy*, p. 24. Casella was familiar with Stravinsky's arrangement of *Ragtime* for solo piano, which he also performed in concert. In turn, he transcribed his own *Fox-trot* for piano duet (Vienna: Universal, 1922). It should also be noted that the last of his *Trois pièces pour pianola* of 1918 is a *Ragtime*.

42 See Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Tradition. A Biography of the Works Through "Mavra"*, vol. II, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996, p. 1447.

43 Luigi Perrachio, 'Recensioni: Alfredo Casella, *Cinque pezzi* per quartetto d'archi', *Il Pianoforte*, III/8–9, 1922, p. 227.

44 Alfredo Casella, 'Debussy et la jeune école italienne', *La Revue musicale*, I/2, 1920, pp. 213–215: 215.

45 Casella, 'The Return to Discipline', p. 10.

46 Casella, 'Proemio', pp. 6–7. Through his 'Tuscan observations', he would say that he 'learned […] a certain classical transparency' (Casella, *I segreti della giara*, p. 126; *Music in My Time*, pp. 157–158).

47 See Luciano Anceschi, 'Introduzione', in: D'Annunzio, *Versi d'amore e di gloria*, vol. I, pp. ix–cxi: lxxix.

48 Letter from Gabriele D'Annunzio to Giuseppe Treves, 7 July 1899, in: Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Lettere ai Treves*, a cura di Giovanni Oliva, Milano: Garzanti, 1999, pp. 546–547: 546.

49 Gabriele D'Annunzio, *La tregua*, in: D'Annunzio, *Versi d'amore e di gloria*, vol. II, pp. 413–415: 413, 415.

50 'Torna con me nell'Ellade scolpita / ove la pietra è figlia della luce / e sostanza dell'aere il pensiere. / […] Vedremo nei Propìlei le porte / del Giorno aperte, nell'intercolunnio / tutto il cielo dell'Attica gioire' (Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Il fanciullo*, in: D'Annunzio, *Versi d'amore e di gloria*, vol. II, pp. 416–426: 421–422).

51 Letter from Gian Francesco Malipiero to Guido M. Gatti, 28 December 1941, in: Gian Francesco Malipiero, *Il carteggio con Guido M. Gatti, 1914–1972*, a cura di Cecilia Palandri, Firenze: Olschki, 1997, pp. 373–377: 375.

52 Malipiero's note to his String Quartet n. 1 'Rispetti e strambotti', in: *L'opera di Gian Francesco Malipiero. Saggi di scrittori italiani e stranieri*, con una introduzione di Guido M. Gatti, seguiti dal catalogo delle opere con annotazioni dell'autore e da ricordi e pensieri dello stesso, Treviso: Canova, 1952, pp. 243–244: 243. For an in-depth look at Malipiero's work in the context of his quartet production, see Daniele Di Virgilio's recent volume *I quartetti d'archi di Malipiero. Storia, poetica e percorsi d'analisi*, Lucca: LIM, 2023 (De Sono. Tesi, 12), pp. 49–118.

53 'Francesco Malipiero Wins Berkshire Prize', *Musical Courier*, LXXXI/9, 26 August 1920, p. 5.

54 'Modern Italy takes the first place', *Musical America*, XXXII/19, 4 September 1920, p. 16; reproduced in Italian: 'L'Italia moderna prende il primo posto', *Musica d'oggi*, II/10, October 1920, pp. 280–281. See also an article from the previous year, in which victorious horizons for the group of Italian composers were already envisaged: 'Italia redenta', *Musical Courier*, LXXVIII/5, 30 January 1919, pp. 22–23.

55 Gabriele D'Annunzio, 'Con me' (30 marzo 1920), in: Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Scritti giornalistici, 1889–1938*, a cura e con un'introduzione di Annamaria Andreoli, vol. II, Milano: Mondadori, 2003, pp. 1063–1070: 1070.

56 Letter from Guido M. Gatti to Alfredo Casella, 5 January 1923, Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella, L. 3056.

57 See Alfredo Casella, *Associazione Italiana di coltura musicale moderna*, statuto provvisorio (Rome, February 1923), f. 1*v*, Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella, S. 110. The text is partially transcribed in De Santis, 'Casella nel ventennio fascista', pp. 371–372.

58 Gabriele D'Annunzio, 'Articolo XIX', in: *La Carta del Carnaro nei testi di Alceste De Ambris e di Gabriele D'Annunzio*, Bologna: il Mulino, 1973, pp. 45–47: 47. Articles LXIV–LXV, concerning music (pp. 73–74), were quoted in the first issue of the C.D.N.M. bulletin; see 'Della musica', *La Prora*, I/1, February 1924, p. 5. For a study on the lexicon and hidden meanings of such aesthetics, see Patrizia Paradisi, 'Guerra e poesia. "Energeia", la decima musa di D'Annunzio', *il Nome nel testo*, XVIII, 2016, pp. 125–152.

59 See Gabriele D'Annunzio, 'La nave', in: Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Tragedie, sogni e misteri*, a cura di Annamaria Andreoli, con la collaborazione di Giorgio Zanetti, vol. II, Milano: Mondadori, 2013, pp. 167–366: 220, 364–366.

60 'Coraggio e auguri. "Arma la prora e salpa verso il Mondo"' (letter from Gian Francesco Malipiero to Alfredo Casella, 8 January 1924, Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Fondo Alfredo Casella, L. 3616).

61 'Ai nostri primi lettori', *La Prora*, I/1, February 1924, pp. 1–2.

62 '"We already know that in art, as in politics, the future belongs to the extreme parties"' (Yvonne A. Lumley, 'Music's Future Belongs to the Extremists, Declares Alfredo Casella', *Musical America*, XXIX/ 23, 5 April 1919, p. 15).

63 'Attività musicale', *La Prora*, I/1, February 1924, pp. 28–29.

64 Casella, 'Contributo ad un nuovo stile musicale nostro', p. 37.

65 Alfredo Casella, *Concerto* per due violini, viola e violoncello, Vienna: Universal, 1924 (Synopsis of form).

66 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, 'Alfredo Casella e il suo "terzo stile"', pp. 245–246.

67 Mila, 'Itinerario stilistico (1901–1942)', p. 47.

68 Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 117.

69 Casella, 'Arnold Schönberg ed il "Pierrot lunaire"', p. 5.

70 'Scarlattiana. Alfredo Casella über sein neues Stück', *Anbruch*, XI/1, January 1929, pp. 26–28: 26; engl, trans. in: Theodore Ziolkowski, *Classicism of the Twenties. Art, Music & Literature*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015, p. 184. The outraged reactions of Adorno, Ernst Křenek, and Alois Hába were swift. A detailed analysis of this controversy can be found in Susanne Starke, *Vom "dubbio tonale" zur "chiarificazione definitiva". Der Weg des Komponisten Alfredo Casella*, Kassel: Gustav Bosse, 2000, pp. 103–169 (chap. 4, 'Die Anbruch-Kontroverse – Schlüssel zum Verständnis der Musik und der Schriften Alfredo Casellas'). For Berg's very detailed commentary on Casella's article, see 'Replica ad Alfredo Casella a proposito di *Scarlattiana*', in: Alban Berg, *Suite lirica. Scritti musicali e letterari*, a cura di Anna Maria Morazzoni, prefazione di Michele Girardi, Milano: il Saggiatore, 2020, pp. 321–332.