

50 **Al té** [At tea], no. 3 of *Tre poésie di Heine*, op. 40, composed 1926.

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968) was an extremely prolific Italian-Jewish composer most famous for his film music. This song is from the first of his three brief Heine song cycles.

Sung in Italian, translator unknown; English translation by Louis Untermeyer, *Poems of Heinrich Heine* (New York, 1917).

Other settings of this poem: 8

Al tavol da tèse ne stavano
E molto parlavan d'amor,
"Estetici" eran gli uomini,
Le dame di tenero cuor.

'Twas teatime—the mildly esthetic
Ensemble took 'Love' as their theme;
The mood of the guests was 'poetic';
They gushed like a lyrical stream.

"L'amore vuol esser platonico"
Un secco giurista osservò,
La moglie ha un sorisetto ironico
E pure sospira un: "oh!"

"True love must be always platonic,"
A hardened old councilor cried.
With a laugh that was almost ironic
His wife looked upward and sighed.

La bocca spalanca il canonico:
"L'amore non sia brutal!
Ché allor rovina le fibre"
La vergin sospira: "Fa mal?"

A canon spoke, "We must resist 'em,
These pleasures that rouse and harass,
Or else they will ruin the system."
And a pretty young thing lisped, "Alas."

Ed una contessa dolente:
"L'amore è vera passione!"
E porge teneramente
La tazza al vicino baron.

The countess, drooping and yearning,
Said, "Love must sweep on like the sea!"
As, elegantly turning,
She handed the baron his tea.

Restava un cantuccio a quel tavolo,
Tu sola mancavi o tesoro;
Avresti sì bene, o mia piccola,
Narrato anche tu del tuo amor.

Still, it was not quite complete, dear—
Your place stood empty above.
And oh, it would have been sweet, dear,
To hear *you* prattle of love.

original:

Sie saßen und tranken am Teetisch,
Und sprachen von Liebe viel.
Die Herren, die waren ästhetisch,
Die Damen von zartem Gefühl.

"Die Liebe muß sein platonisch",
Der dürre Hofrat sprach.
Die Hofrätin lächelt ironisch,
Und dennoch seufzet sie: "Ach!"

Der Domherr öffnet den Mund weit:
"Die Liebe sei nicht zu roh,
Sie schadet sonst der Gesundheit."
Das Fräulein lispelt: "Wieso?"

Die Gräfin spricht wehmütig:
"Die Liebe ist eine Passion!"
Und präsentiert gütig,
Die Tasse dem Herren Baron.

Am Tische war noch ein Plätzchen,
Mein Liebchen, da hast du gefehlt.
Du hättest so hübsch, mein Schätzchen,
Von deiner Liebe erzählt.