



"a Music Unquestionably Italian in Idiom": Nationalism as an Evolutionary Process in the Music of Alfredo Casella

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**“A MUSIC UNQUESTIONABLY ITALIAN IN IDIOM”: NATIONALISM AS AN
EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN THE MUSIC OF ALFREDO CASELLA**

A Thesis Presented

by

CORINNE M. SALADA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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Music Department

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CORINNE M. SALADA

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DEDICATION

To my twin sister, Jocelyn Salada.

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First, I must thank my advisor, Dr. Erinn E. Knyt, for her remarkable guidance and patience throughout my work on this project, and especially for introducing me to Alfredo Casella over a year ago. Without her, this thesis would not be written. I also wish to thank my other committee members, Dr. Ernest May and Dr. Gary Karpinski, for their helpful feedback. I am indebted to my friends Kristen Wallentinsen and Sarah Mauro for their generosity in reading chapters of my thesis and for offering advice in every stage of the writing process. Special thanks go to my wonderful friend Sarah Prunier, whose constant words of encouragement have helped me more than she could possibly know.

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ABSTRACT

“A MUSIC UNQUESTIONABLY ITALIAN IN IDIOM”: NATIONALISM AS AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN THE MUSIC OF ALFREDO CASELLA

MAY 2012

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Little scholarship exists about the extent of musical nationalism in the works of twentieth-century Italian composer Alfredo Casella (1883-1947). Casella’s output, which is divided into three stylistic periods – 1902-1913, 1914-1920, and 1921-1946 – display varying styles and influences, such as an extension of French, German, and Russian romanticism and Schoenbergian atonality. Yet nationalistic expression simultaneously pervades each stylistic period: The first period portrays nationalism through the use of folk material and forms, as does the second, which also uses programmatic elements in an atonal context. The third stylistic period, to which previous scholars have given the most attention, expresses nationalism by alluding to past Italian Baroque and Classical composers and forms. This thesis explores how Casella’s nationalistic tendencies pervade all three stylistic periods and evolved over the course of his career, culminating in his third stylistic period. A close reading of Casella’s own writings – which will explore how his ideologies reflected the political and cultural views in Italy at the time – and score analysis of representative works from each period will reveal in Casella’s works “a music unquestionably Italian in idiom.”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Italian composer Alfredo Casella (1883-1947) made a realization that would instigate a major change in his musical style and artistic vision. After spending nineteen years abroad studying music at the Paris Conservatory and performing across Europe as a pianist, Casella returned to Italy in 1915 with a new compositional goal in mind: to combine the Italian instrumental traditions with an experimental style to create a new national musical idiom. Retrospectively, he remarks about the Parisian music scene:

There was a desire to restore life, vigor, and actuality to a musical tradition which had been spent and slumbering for over a century and a half and to free the national [French] music from subjugation to German influences, which had constituted a grave menace for the French through the Wagnerian epoch. This was a great lesson for a young man like me. By now I had escaped the peril of absorption by the country where I lived [France], and began to see in my turn, if still confusedly, our necessity in Italy of restoring an instrumental tradition which had also been extinct for some time.¹

This time in Casella's life marked a conscious move by the composer towards a more explicit nationalistic expression, an act that would ultimately solidify his position as a pioneer in Italian experimental trends between the two World Wars. But determining the extent of nationalistic expression throughout Casella's career, to this date, has been largely unexplored.

¹ Alfredo Casella, *I Segreti della Giara*, (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1939), trans. by Spencer Norton, *Music in My Time* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1955), 89.

Summary of Previous Scholarship

The English-language secondary sources on Casella, limited in number as well as scope, fall into two categories: (1) Casella's life and compositional styles; and (2) Casella's role in music during the Fascist period. John C.G. Waterhouse, a leading scholar on twentieth-century Italian music, discusses Casella's life and influence on Italian music in the twentieth century. He co-authored the article on Casella in *Grove Music Online* with Virgilio Bernardoni and also included a section on Casella in his chapter in the *Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture*.² The section in the *Cambridge Companion* provides a biographical overview of Casella, while his *Grove* article shares more significant insights on Casella's nationalistic impulses, addressing specific works in each stylistic period that evoke a national sentiment.³

Reginald Smith Brindle's article on Italian music in *Music in the Modern Age* considers Casella's importance within the larger context of a group of composers called the *generazione dell'Ottanta*.⁴ This group included Casella, Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973), Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880-1968), and Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936), all of whom were born in the 1880s and who shared the goal of resurrecting Italian instrumental music in the twentieth-century in reaction to the *verismo* trend in opera. In

² John C.G. Waterhouse and Virgilio Bernardoni, "Casella, Alfredo," in *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05080> (accessed April 10, 2012) and John C. G. Waterhouse, "Since Verdi: Italian serious music 1860-1995," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture*, ed. Zygmunt G. Barański and Rebecca J. West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 311-324.

³ Of Casella's nationalistic works, Waterhouse mentions *Italia* (1909), *Eroica Elegia* (1916), *La Giara* (1924), *Scarlattiana* (1926), and *Concerto Romano* (1926). He does not, however, provide any analyses of these works.

⁴ Reginald Smith Brindle. "Italy," in *Music in the Modern Age*, ed. F.W. Sternfeld (London: Weidenfeld Nicolson, 1973), 283-307.

contrast to Waterhouse's praise of Casella, Brindle's criticism of Casella's nationalistic expression finds fault with the tonal obscurity and the pervasiveness of foreign influences in Casella's music. Brindle describes Casella's career as "a torturous searching for truth with hardly a moment of full fruition."⁵ Brindle, however, appears to overlook the clarity that Casella achieved in his works beginning in the 1920s, and fails to see that Casella's use of foreign stylistic features does not negate Casella's nationalistic impulses.

The discourse specifically on Casella's nationalistic expression pertains primarily to his third stylistic period and its connection to Fascism. The valuable content in the works by Harvey Sachs and Catherine Paul more than make up for a lack in quantity. Harvey Sachs's *Music in Fascist Italy* is the definitive source in this field, and it explores the Fascist regime's influence on music institutions, composers, and performers from 1925-1945.⁶ In sections about Casella, Sachs compiles a vast number of the composer's writings, especially those from Italian journals, newspapers, and archives to create a comprehensive and rich view of Casella's association with Fascist ideologies. Catherine Paul further contributes to the discussion about Casella's role as concert organizer in her article "Ezra Pound, Alfredo Casella, and the Fascist Cultural Nationalism of the Vivaldi Revival".⁷ Paul places Casella's major role in the revival of Vivaldi's music within the context of the Fascist regime's exploitation of Italy's musical heritage. Richard Taruskin found Casella worthy of inclusion in his section on music in totalitarian societies in the

⁵Ibid., 298.

⁶ Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1987).

⁷ Catherine Paul, "Ezra Pound, Alfredo Casella, and the Fascist Cultural Nationalism of the Vivaldi Revival," in *Ezra Pound, Language and Persona*, ed. Massimo Bacigalupo and William Pratt (Genoa, Italy: University of Genoa, 2008), 91-112.

*Oxford History of Western Music.*⁸ Taruskin presents a provocative (though understandably short) section on Casella's fascist allegiances, a view which is informed by Casella's own articles written for *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Italian scholarship also includes several biographies on the composer by Louis Cortese, Fedele d'Amico, and Bruce Barilli, as well as numerous published conference proceedings, such as one published by Mila De Santis for the *Convegno internazionale di studi* held in Siena in 2001.⁹ Mila de Santis also contributes an important chapter about Casella and Fascism, "Casella nel ventennio fascista" to Roberto Ilano's book *Italian Music During the Fascist Period*.¹⁰ The chapter contributes detailed analyses of Casella's musical works from the third period, particularly his Concerto for piano, violin, cello, and orchestra (1935).

Casella's Writings

In addition to being a prolific composer, Casella was also a prolific writer. An important primary source of information regarding Casella is his memoirs *I Segreti della Giara* (1939), later translated by Norman Spencer in 1955 with the title *Music in My Time*.¹¹ The work contains a detailed first-person account of Casella's life from his childhood to the time of publication, in which he discusses his musical training, the

⁸ Richard Taruskin, "Music and Totalitarian Society" in *The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Vol. 4, p. 743-796.

⁹ Mila De Santis, *Alfredo Casella e l'Europa: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Siena, 7-9 giugno 2001* (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 2003).

¹⁰ Mila De Santis, "Casella nel ventennio fascista," in *Italian Music During the Fascist Period*, ed. Roberto Ilano (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 371-400.

¹¹ Alfredo Casella, *I Segreti della Giara*, (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1939), trans. by Spencer Norton, *Music in My Time* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1955).

growth of his compositional style, his activities as a conductor and concert organizer, and his views on nationalism. *Music in My Time* is one of Casella's most important writings because it provides not only a clear chronology of events, but also a foundation for performing a deeper examination of Casella's compositional influences and his nationalistic views.

Casella's articles from 1925 to 1946 in *The Christian Science Monitor* (published in Boston, Massachusetts) demonstrate his involvement in the Italian musical developments of the time.¹² Casella explores a wide range of topics in his articles, from the revival of music by Vivaldi, Scarlatti, and Frescobaldi to articles that either summarize the existing musical traditions in Italy or propose new directions for the Italian style. Probably the most provocative articles are those about the intersections of music and politics, which serve as the only English-language writings in which Casella delves into his support of Fascist doctrine.

As with the secondary sources, most of Casella's writings remain untranslated. These include several articles written in *Ars Nova*, Casella's own journal established in 1917, along with dozens in *Musica d'Oggi*. In addition, Casella's *21+26* is a collection of his polemical articles from 1918-1930 that were originally published in other journals, some of which are translated from their original English or German into Italian.¹³ These articles address the Italian style, impressionism, futurism, and jazz, and also include articles dedicated to composers, such as Ferruccio Busoni, Gabriel Fauré, Claude Debussy, and Giacomo Puccini.

¹² For a list of Casella's *Christian Science Monitor* articles, see the Appendix.

¹³ Alfredo Casella, *21+26*, (Rome: n.p., 1931); Alessandra Carlotta Pellegrini, ed., *21+26*, (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2001).

Nationalism in Casella's Three Stylistic Periods

Numerous scholars, particularly John C.G. Waterhouse and Reginald Smith Brindle, divide Casella's compositional output into three distinct stylistic periods: 1902-1913, 1914-1920, and 1921-1946.¹⁴ In the first, from the beginning of his compositional career through 1913, his music followed the Romantic tradition of his German and Russian predecessors. Casella spent 1914 to 1920 experimenting with atonality and the avant-garde, a period Casella admits was a necessary part of his compositional development in order to move into his final stylistic period. In his third stylistic period from 1921 to the end of his career, Casella expressed nationalism through looking to past Italian Baroque and Classical forms and models.

Casella's works of all three stylistic periods require further scrutiny, particularly in the first and second periods, in order to glean a more complete understanding of Casella's artistic and nationalistic expression. Through an examination of the primary source material, I aim to explore how Casella's nationalistic tendencies pervade his entire career, and more specifically how his nationalistic expression evolved in response to the changing political and cultural climates in Italy during his career.

Chapter 2 will address how Casella's first period demonstrates nationalism through the use of folk songs and dances. Chapter 3 will trace how Casella explores nationalism in an atonal and programmatic context. Chapter 4 will investigate the use of Italy's musical heritage, such as the use of Italian forms and compositional models, as a

¹⁴John C. G. Waterhouse, "Since Verdi: Italian serious music 1860-1995," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture*, ed. Zygmunt G. Barański and Rebecca J. West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 316; Reginald Smith Brindle. "Italy," 286-288.

culmination of this stylistic and nationalistic evolution. The final chapter will attempt to trace Casella's adoption of Fascist ideals in his third period, not just through the revival of Vivaldi's music in his conducting and editing endeavors, but how his concepts of tradition and modernity closely correlates to Benito Mussolini's concept of "a Fascist art" and Fascist doctrine on a larger scale.

This study will include score analysis of representative works of all three of Casella's periods, such as *Italia* (1909), *Barcarola* (1910), *Siciliana e Burlesca* (1913), *Elegia Eroica* (1916), *Partita* (1924-1925), *Scarlattiana* (1926), and *Paganiniana* (1942). Additional methodologies will include an examination of Casella's writings and secondary materials addressed earlier in this chapter, as well as a broader investigation of Italian nationalism and Fascist culture. My thesis will culminate by placing Casella's nationalistic tendencies within the larger cultural and political context of Italian nationalism in order to reveal Casella's output as "a music unquestionably Italian in idiom."¹⁵

¹⁵ Alfredo Casella, 21+26, (Rome: n.p., 1931); Alessandra Carlotta Pellegrini, ed., 21+26, (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2001), 41. English translation from Brindle "Italy," 288.

CHAPTER 2

NATIONALISM AND CASELLA'S FIRST PERIOD (1902-1913)

Casella's first stylistic period (1902-1913) displays an amalgamation of musical styles. Living and studying in Paris at the turn of the century (1896-1915), Casella met composers from all geographic regions, and found the city to be a catalyst for this stylistic exploration. Reflecting on his years in Paris in his memoir *Music in My Time*, Casella describes the influences that he encountered there:

Those years had included great sorrows, moments of real satisfaction, and great artistic joys. That period of study and assimilation was undoubtedly most fruitful. Having arrived in Paris at the age of thirteen, barely familiar with the music of Wagner, I left nineteen years later rich in every European experience, having learned and penetrated all the various aspects of the musical phenomenon from the French music, which I knew thoroughly in its every tendency, to the art of Strauss, of Schoenberg, of Mahler, to the new Hungarian and the new Spanish music. There was no sector of world music unknown to me.¹⁶

While living in Paris, Casella crossed paths with countless influential performers and composers. He witnessed performances of substantial works by Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg, Gustav Mahler, and Claude Debussy and developed close relationships with the latter two, as well as Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Maurice Ravel, and Gabriel Fauré.¹⁷ He also sought these composers' advice about composition, and they

¹⁶ Alfredo Casella, *I Segreti della Giara*, (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1939), trans. by Spencer Norton, *Music in My Time* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1955), 129.

¹⁷ Among the works Casella witnessed performed were: Debussy's Prelude to *The Afternoon of a Faun* (1894), *Pelleas et Melisande* (1902); Stravinsky's *Petroushka* (1910-11), *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1912); Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* (1868-1873), Mahler's Symphony No. 2 in C minor (1888-94), Symphony No. 8 in E-flat major (1906); Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe* (1909), and Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912).

became vital to developing his reputation as a composer.¹⁸ After he graduated from the Paris Conservatoire in 1902 after six years of study, primarily for piano, he focused on composition by studying (and often memorizing) the works of those whose careers flourished during this time.¹⁹

These circumstances paint a picture of a budding composer who neglected his Italian heritage in favor of the French, German, and Russian musical styles that surrounded him. Yet while the Italian style may not be as strongly represented in Casella's early compositions as these foreign influences, Casella does not completely ignore his home country. Casella's nationalistic works reflect an Italian sentiment in two ways: through the use of Italian folk songs and through traditional Italian folk song and dance forms.

Casella's nationalistic tendencies blend with French and German musical characteristics. Casella's piano works of this time in particular exhibit an adherence to the French style through the use of stationary, non-directionalized harmonies that deemphasize a sense of cadence. Examples of the solo piano works include *Pavane* (1902), *Variations on a Chaconne* (1902-1903), *Toccata* (1904), and *Berceuse triste* (1909). His piano works from 1902-1904 exude Fauré's influence – Casella's composition teacher from 1900-1901 - through a focus on lucidity of form and phrasing.

¹⁸ The composers Casella approached for advice and/or studied with years of study: Gabriel Fauré (1900-1901), Maurice Ravel (1900-1901, end date unknown), Mily Balakirev (1907), Igor Stravinsky (1907, 1911), Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1911), Alexander Glazunov (1911), Gustav Mahler (1909).

¹⁹ How Casella studied these works is mostly unclear, though score study is implied; in regards to studying Strauss, he states "I perused carefully the symphonic poems, which I soon learned by memory" (Casella, *Music in My Time*, p. 70) and for Mahler, "I studied all of his symphonies and knew them practically by memory." (Casella, *Music in My Time*, 92).

Casella possibly drew inspiration from Chopin as well, whose works he studied vigorously prior to and during his training at the Paris Conservatoire.

His other works of this period are largely Germanic in style; large orchestral works such as Symphony No. 1 (1905) and Symphony No. 2 (1908-09) represent an extension of Gustav Mahler's and Richard Strauss's style in their magnitude, dramatic language, and orchestration. Casella admits that Strauss's works were formative for his own orchestral writing, stating that learning Strauss's tone poems "made a profound impression on the mind of a young apprentice orchestrator, especially with regard to polyphony and instrumental virtuosity."²⁰ Casella also greatly admired Mahler, to whom he also attributes to his knowledge of orchestration. Casella's symphonies, each over forty minutes in length, feature a large orchestra and rely heavily on the juxtaposition of soli violin and cello sections with wind and brass colors, while displaying a Germanic treatment of thematic material. Casella's admiration of Mahler appears unabashedly in his Symphony No. 2 in C minor, in which he directly quotes the final march theme from Mahler's own Symphony No. 2.²¹

Despite embracing these foreign influences, Casella strove to express a purely Italian sentiment in his music through the quotation of Italian folk songs. Expressing national heritage through folk song was not uncommon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it was not common in Italy. Willi Apel posits one possible reason few works expressing Italian nationalism existed in the nineteenth-century, stating that "Italy has an old musical tradition to draw upon and did not need to resort to the

²⁰ Casella, *Music in My Time*, 70.

²¹ Casella was indebted to Mahler for getting his symphonies published; when Casella was repeatedly turned down by publishing companies, he turned to Mahler for help, who convinced his own publisher Universal Edition to print them.

somewhat extraneous resources of the nationalist movement.”²² When musical nationalism exploded onto the scene in the mid-nineteenth century, opera rather than folk music became Italy’s main contributor to the movement. Richard Taruskin writes that “the exemplary artifact of Italian nationalism was the big choral unison number that conveyed a collective sentiment in tones not drawn from the oral tradition but destined to become part of it”, pointing to ‘Va, pensiero’ from Verdi’s *Nabucco* (1842) as a piece of great importance for Italian nationalism, especially after Italy’s unification in the 1860s.

Two likely sources or models of twentieth-century nationalistic expressions for Casella were the works of Georges Enescu and Gustav Mahler. Casella met Enescu when he first moved to Paris in 1896, and they maintained a close friendship throughout Casella’s career.²³ In *Music in My Time*, Casella mentions the attention given to Enescu’s *Poeme Roumain* (1896), which received its premiere in Cologne.²⁴ Although Casella does not explicitly mention which pieces of Enescu’s he had heard, especially Enescu’s Romanian Rhapsody No.1 (1901) and No. 2 (1902), in his writings, Enescu’s use of Romanian folk songs and idioms may have influenced the Italian composer. Casella’s knowledge of Mahler’s symphonies (as described above) also suggests an influence on

²² Richard Taruskin, “Nationalism” in *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50846> (accessed February 19, 2012).

²³ Casella recalls their friendship: “I still remember very clearly my first meeting with him. [...] We were immediately at ease together, and from that day there began a friendship which still endures” (*Music in My Time*, 51). Enescu also mentored the young composer: “My great intimacy with Enesco for many years was highly beneficial to my musical development. His interpretive advice was liberal, and he gave me useful orientation in the field of composition” (*Music in My Time*, 51.)

²⁴ Casella, *Music in My Time*, 51.

Casella's early nationalistic works, as Mahler included folk melodies and the popular style in his own music, particularly in his Third and Fourth Symphonies.²⁵

Casella had few Italian contemporaries to look to for inspiration; no members of the *generazione dell'Ottanta* wrote nationalistic works during this time. But Casella's efforts are joined by a twentieth-century Italian contemporary, Ferruccio Busoni, with the fourth movement of his Piano Concerto, Op. 39 (1904) titled "All'Italiana (Tarantella)," followed by his second elegy, *All'Italia in modo Napolitano* written in 1907. This work not only borrows from the fourth movement of his Piano Concerto, but also quotes two folk songs, "Canzone del Serpentino" and "Feneste che lucivi".²⁶ Busoni's Elegy and Casella's *Italia* thus represent the most substantial contributions to Italian nationalism.

Use of Folk Songs

Casella's earliest discussion of nationalism relates to his work *Italia* written in 1909.²⁷ Casella describes retrospectively in his memoir that at the time he wrote this piece that he "intended to face for the first time the problem of creating a style at once Italian in spirit and contemporary in its sonorous language."²⁸ To Casella, the use of folk

²⁵ See Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1993). "In [Mahler's] symphonies we find not only the highly developed language of classical music but also the dialects of folk music, and indeed, even the low or simply unschooled language of popular or light music" (*Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 92).

²⁶ Erinn E. Knyt, "Ferruccio Busoni and the Absolute in Music: Form, Nature and Idee," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 137, no. 1, (May 2012), 35- 69.

²⁷ Casella also mentions his Suite in C Major as being another nationalistic work; in regards to the above quote, he continues with "One of these was the *Suite in C Major*, Op. 13, which still shows the influence of Fauré, but which contains also a bouree whose style can be defined indisputably as 'Casellian.'" However, the unavailability of scores and recordings precludes it from further comment in this thesis.

²⁸ Casella, *Music in My Time*, 94.

material was not just an option, but a necessary step in the process of creating an Italian style. “It was natural” Casella wrote,

that when I wished to create a national music I should look for a basis in the national folklore. Many others still do this today, with less ingenuousness than mine. It is a phase of nationalism which always characterizes the dawn of a new school or the first steps of a personality who is trying to create a national style.”²⁹

Between Casella’s two German-influenced symphonies falls *Italia*, an orchestral setting of traditional folk songs from Sicily and Naples. Seven different folk songs appear in the work, most notably “A Marechiare” (To Marechiare) and “Funiculì, Funicula”.³⁰

Table 2-1Table 2-1: List of Folk Songs Found in *Italia* lists the folk songs Casella used along with their appearance in the score.³¹

Table 2-1: List of Folk Songs Found in *Italia*

Folk song from the Vallelunga region	m. 8 – 16; 215-225
“Song of Lament” sung by the <i>sulfatari</i>	m. 40-72; 205-215
Folk song heard during Good Friday processions in the region of Caltanissetta	m. 76-116
Folk song from the Trapani region	m. 132-185
“Funiculì, Funiculà”	mm. 230-296; 443-end
“Marechiare”	mm. 315-327; 334-355

²⁹ Ibid., 95.

³⁰ Marechiare refers to a town in the Campania region in Italy. There is no direct English translation for the title “Funiculi, Funicula”. The title refers to the celebration of the opening of the funicular railroad on Mount Vesuvius in Pompei. The song is often accompanied with the English subtitle “A Merry Life”.

³¹ The titles of the folk songs and their location in the score as listed in the chart is based on the program notes to Alfredo Casella, *Italia*, Op. 11 (Vienna and London: Universal Edition, 1939). Lack of identifying information of the original folk songs except for “A Marechiare” and “Funiculì, Funicula” precludes a discussion of all folk songs in this work.

Casella calls *Italia* a rhapsody, an apt description due to the way he presents the Italian folk songs in an improvisatory and dramatic manner. Divided into two sections (mm. 1-229 and mm. 229-end), the first is mostly through-composed. Casella still establishes coherency in this first section by returning to previous folk quotations much later in that first section, such as with the *Vallelunga* folk song and the “Song of Lament” (see Table 2-1). The most significant return to a previous folk song appears in the second part of the work, which features “*Funiculì, Funiculà*” and “*A Marechiare*” in a broad ABA form.

“*Funiculì, Funiculà*” expresses the most visceral emotions in the work and ushers in a celebratory and dance-like character that contrasts the first section’s slow lamentations on the featured folk song melodies. This folk song becomes central to the A section of the ABA form. Casella quotes the folk song in its entirety and maintains the original structure of the song of *aabb’cc*. Figure 2-1 shows the opening phrase from the original folk song while Figure 2-2 shows Casella’s quotation, played by the viola and cello in unison (cello part is omitted).

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in G major, 8/8 time, featuring a vocal line with lyrics: "Sta - se - - ra, Ni - na mia, io son mon - ta - to". The bottom staff is in C major, 2/4 time, featuring a vocal line with lyrics: "Te lo di - rò?". The score includes dynamic markings such as **f** (fortissimo) and a **CHORUS** instruction.

Figure 2-1: Luigi Denza, *Funiculì, Funiculà*, phrase a, mm. 19-28



Figure 2-2: Alfredo Casella, *Italia*, “Funiculì, Funiculà” quotation, phrase *a*, viola, mm. 235-238

Casella not only changes the key from E♭ major to A major, but sets “Funiculì, Funiculà” in cut time which makes the quotation sound more staccato – and less flowing – than the original. Casella also adjusts the location of the anacrusis to occur half way through the measure rather than as an anacrusis to a complete measure. Casella even duplicates the “chorus” parts of the folk song, which occur in the violins and upper woodwinds. One slight difference is that Casella truncates the end of the chorus response figure in measures 238 and 239; the beginning of the repeated phrase *a* enters almost immediately after the chorus figure, unlike the original which gives almost an entire measure of rest before the repeated phrase (see Figure 2-3). This change creates the sense of one large phrase rather than two separate ones. The same truncation occurs in phrases *b* and *b'* (see Figure 2-4 and Figure 2-5), in which Casella leaves much of the original phrase intact. Another minor change occurs in measures 243 and 247, where Casella either omits the anacrusis or replaces the sixteenth-note anacrusis that appears in phrases *a* and *b* (eighth-note in the original) with a grace note.

Figure 2-3: Quotation of ‘chorus’, *Italia*, “Funiculi, Funicula”, mm. 238-240

Figure 2-4: Denza, “Funiculi, Funicula”, phrase *b* and *b'*, mm. 37-55

Figure 2-5: Casella, *Italia*, “Funiculi, Funicula” quotation, phrase *b* and *b'*, mm. 243-250

The cello takes over the melody alone for phrase *c*, in which the quotation closely matches the original except for an added triplet embellishment in measure 258 (see Figure 2-6 and Figure 2-7). The repetition of phrase *c* includes the woodwinds and brass (measures 259 to 267).

SOLO

p > Le - sti, le - sti, via, mon-tiam su la_____ le - sti, le - sti,

7 *pp cresc.* via, mon-tiam su là, Fu-ni - cu - li, fu-ni - cu - là, fu-ni - cu - li, fu-ni - cu -

12 *ten.* *f* > là, via, mon-tiam su là, fu-ni - cu - li, fu-ni - cu - la.

Figure 2-6: Denza, *Funiculì, Funiculà*, phrase c, mm. 56-71

Figure 2-7: Casella, Italia, “Funiculì, Funiculà” quotation, phrase c, mm. 251-259

The second full statement of the folk song (measures 270-296) becomes much more animated. The violin enters with the folk melody accompanied by an original countermelody by Casella in the woodwinds, accentuating the brilliance of this section (see Figure 2-8). The woodwind countermelody juxtaposes eighth- and sixteenth- note figures against the dotted rhythms in the folk melody quotation. Sixteenth-note flourishes

and trills also contribute to a livelier mood than the initial reserved statement of the folk song in measures 258-267.

Figure 2-8: Casella, *Italia*, “Funiculì, Funiculà” quotation with counterpoint, mm. 270-274

After statements of phrases *b* and *b'* in measures 278-285 and the first phrase *c* from measures 286 to 292, the phrase diverts from a final statement of phrase *c*, instead moving into a *stringendo* section (measures 292-295), followed by a developmental section (measures 296 – 314) that emphasizes an alternation between sixteenth-note passages and a derivation of the “Funiculi, Funicula” folk song, as shown in Figure 2-9.

Figure 2-9: Casella, *Italia*, fragment of “Funiculì, Funiculà” quotation, mm. 301-303

The folk song “A Marechiare” becomes the focus of the B section. Contrary to Casella’s use of “Funiculì, Funiculì”, the composer uses only the verse (measures 12-34 and 84-106) of “A Marechiare”, omitting the choruses (see Figure 2-10). Casella sets the quotation of this folk song in E minor, the dominant minor of the “Funiculì, Funiculì”, folk song. In the quotation of the song, Casella preserves most of the melody, but subtle rhythm alterations occur; Casella includes a grace note in measure 317 and opts for even eighth-notes rather than the dotted-eighth and sixteenth-note pattern in the same measure and measure 322 (see Figure 2-11). Further embellishments include the sixteenth-notes in measure 323 and grace notes in measures 324 and 326. The main difference between the original melody and Casella’s quotation occurs in measures 30 and 31, in which Casella transfers the ending phrase up one octave before continuing with the scalar descent to the tonic.

Quanno spon-ta la luna a Ma-re-chia-re pu - re li spi-sce nce fan-n'a l'am - mo - re -

se re - vo - ta-no l'onne de lu ma - re, pe la pri-ez-za ca- gneno cu

lo - re, quanno spon - ta la luna a Mare - chia - re -

Figure 2-10: Tosti, *A Marechiare*, first verse, mm. 12-35

Musical score for Flute (Fl.) showing three staves of music. Measure 1 starts with a rest followed by eighth-note pairs. Measure 2 begins with a dynamic *f* *mordente*. Measure 3 starts with a dynamic *f*. Measure 4 begins with a dynamic *ff*.

Figure 2-11: Casella, *Italia*, “A Marechiare” quotation, mm. 316-327

Another development-like section arises in measures 328 to 355, characterized by continuous imitation of measures 324 to 327 throughout numerous woodwind and brass voices. Casella also juxtaposes the “A Marechiare” quotation with a second motive, a fragment of an untitled Neapolitan folk song. The polyphonic writing emphasizes the hemiola effect provided by the triplets of the unnamed folk song with the violin and the duple eighth-notes of the “A Marechiare” melody in the cello (see Figure 2-12).

Musical score for Violin 1 (Vln. 1) and Cello (Vc.) showing two staves of music. The Vln. 1 staff has a dynamic *ff* and *sf*. The Vc. staff has a dynamic *ff* and *sf*. Measures 4 and 5 show the hemiola effect with triplets over duple eighth-note patterns.

Figure 2-12: *Italia*, “A Marechiare” quotation and Neapolitan folk song (fragment), mm. 340-344

A long transitional period back to the final A section begins in measure 383, in which the clarinets hint at the “Funiculì, Funiculà” quotation through the characteristic rhythm and descending motive that resembles the beginning of phrase *c* of the original melody (see Figure 2-13).



Figure 2-13: *Italia*, fragment of “Funiculì, Funiculà” phrase *c*, mm. 386-388

The piece continues tumultuously, moving through C major, E♭ minor and A minor from measures 404 to 420. Intensity builds through a chromatic bass line that emerges from the double basses and low brass. This continues until measure 436, when an E pedal supports a dominant prolongation which eventually brings the triumphant return of “Funiculì, Funiculà” in A major with the full orchestra. The final A section never rests, as Casella marks a *sempre stringendo* (always pressing forward) from measure 480 to the end (measure 512). The exuberant ending captures the Italian spirit in a most satisfying manner.

Use of Folk Dance and Song Forms

In addition to the use of folk material, Casella also invokes Italian sentiment through the use of traditional dance and song forms, such as in the Barcarola, Op. 15 (1910) and *Siciliana e Burlesca* (1914), even though he did not specifically mention the traditional songs or dances in his writings. The barcarole, a genre based on the traditional

Italian boat songs often sung by Venetian gondoliers, represents a clear evocation of nationalism through tuneful, folk-like melodies and a consistent rhythmic pulse, which harkens to the rowing movements of a gondolier. Casella wrote two works with barcaroles, the *Barcarola et scherzo* for flute and piano (1902) and the *Barcarola*, Op. 15 (1910); composers such as Chopin and Fauré also wrote barcaroles. Casella's emphasis on characteristically Italian melodic and rhythmic features in his barcarolles provides a more apparent allusion to the traditional Italian genre than Chopin's or Fauré's.

It is possible that Casella's inspiration for writing a barcarole came from his knowledge of Fauré's set of thirteen barcaroles written between 1880 and 1921, but Casella's *Barcarola* presents a more convincing attempt to convey the Italian folk style. Fauré's and Casella's barcaroles rely on a harmonic style that incorporates frequent use of extended chords; these ninth and eleventh chords negate the dominant-tonic polarity, creating a static harmonic effect that is quite opposite the Italian style. However, Fauré and Casella differ in their conception of the barcarole style; Casella's seems to be more melodically driven than Fauré's, embracing the rhythmic and metric idiosyncrasies that allude to the Italian style.

Both Casella's *Barcarola* (1910) and Fauré's Barcarolle No. 9, Op. 101 (1909) share a similar descending melodic line written in a compound meter (Casella's is in 12/8, Fauré's is in 9/8). Casella's is melodically driven, supported by lush chords, while the texture of Fauré's is much sparser and less chordal (see Figure 2-14 and Figure 2-15).

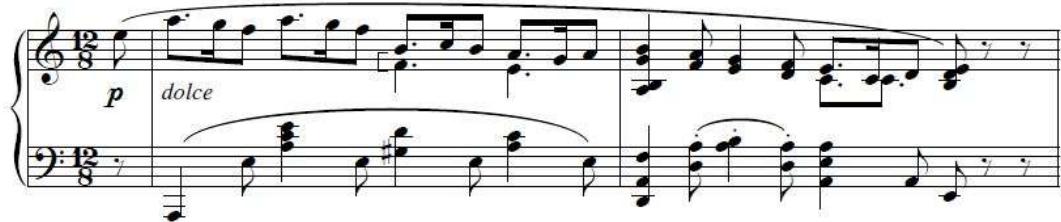


Figure 2-14: Opening measures of Casella’s *Barcarola*, Op. 15

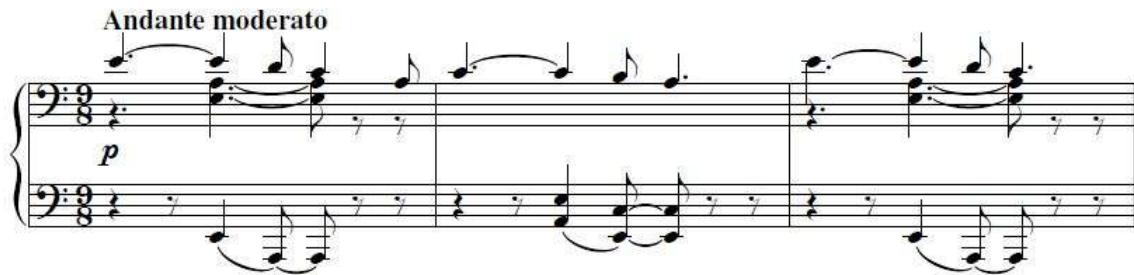


Figure 2-15: Opening measures of Fauré’s Barcarolle No. 9, Op. 101

Casella’s work remains chordal and rhythmically consistent throughout in favor of melodic clarity. Fauré, on the other hand, obscures the oft-repeated melody within complex arpeggiations and scalar passages. The lilting triple pulse gets lost in the linear combination of harmonies, but the rhythmic pulse remains constant in Casella’s work. In addition, the B section of Casella’s *Barcarola* features the familiar sixteenth-triplet figure that emphasizes the minor second; this figure appeared often in the *Vallelunga* and “Song of Lament” folk songs Casella used in *Italia* (see Figure 2-16).

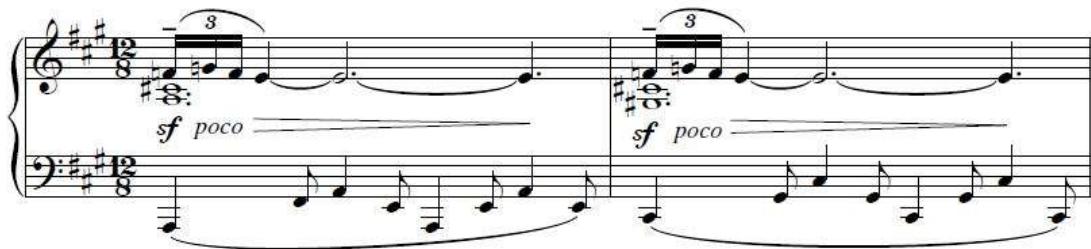


Figure 2-16: Casella’s *Barcarola*, mm. 29-30

Siciliana e Burlesca (1914) also alludes to the Italian style, with its first part, Siciliana, referring to the dance form of the same name that is considered a slow version of the gigue. Scored first for flute and piano (1914) and later for piano trio (1917), it also shares both French and Italian characteristics. Casella reflects on the piece in his memoirs, explaining that the work “still seems interesting to me today for the typically Italian spirit which animates it. There are influences from the south and from Scarlatti in this Siciliana and Burlesca for flute and piano, which was destined for use in the Conservatory competition of 1914.”³²

The Siciliana section is written in an ABA form and opens in 12/8 with a tempo that languishes melancholically. The characteristic use of dotted rhythms, ornamentations, and eighth-note anacrusis to begin the melody are typical of the Sicilian style, yet the nature of the melody expresses a more French influence (see Figure 2-17). Rather than writing a melody with clearly-implied harmonies, Casella opts for a modal melody with the piano in the opening measures that gives way to coloristic chords. After the flute elaborates upon the opening melodies in measures 3 through 14, the section moves away from the simpler melodies in favor of intense chromatic passages that

³² Casella, *Music in My Time*, 117.

characterize the B section (see Figure 2-18). Throughout this section, the piece moves through chromatic harmonic progressions and coloristic chords, and the flute explores the extremes of its range within virtuosic and rubato passages. It is in this section that the work loses the allusion to the Siciliana, melodically, while maintaining it rhythmically. Casella resolves this harmonically volatile section by returning to the A section from measure 49 to the end, restoring the Italian style.

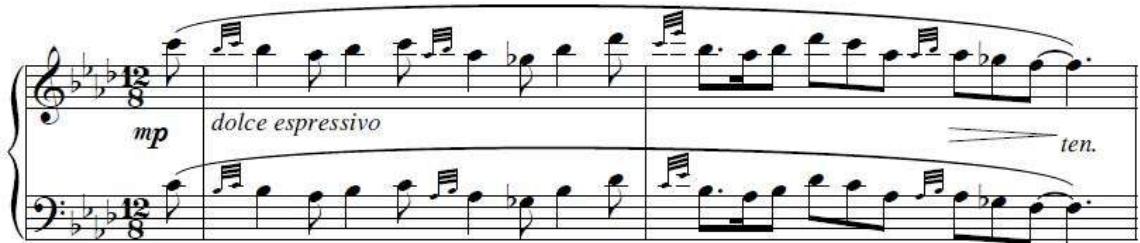


Figure 2-17: Opening melody, Alfredo Casella, *Siciliana e Burlesca*, mm. 1-3.

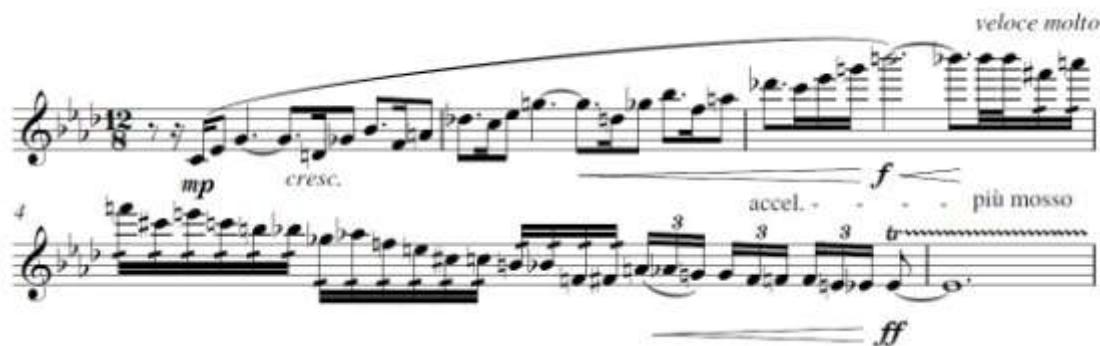


Figure 2-18: *Siciliana e Burlesca*, chromatic passages in flute (piano omitted), mm. 15-18

Italia, Barcarola, and Siciliana e Burlesca all represent the beginning of Casella's search for a national style, an exploration that resulted in works of many different influences and forms. *Italia* is exceptional not only in this period but in his entire output,

as this is one of the few works in which Casella portrays Italy through the quotation of traditional Italian folk songs in an orchestral setting.³³ Instead, Casella turned to the music of past Italian art music composers to express an Italian sentiment. Beginning in 1914, Casella began exploring other contexts for nationalism, absorbing influences that contrast sharply with the previous works. In his second stylistic period Casella would produce his most experimental works yet, embracing atonality as a vehicle for nationalistic expression of a highly programmatic nature.

³³ Casella continued to use traditional Italian dance and song forms throughout his second and third stylistic periods, namely in his Eleven Children's Pieces (1920), *La Giara* (1924), and *Notturno e Tarantella* for cello and piano (1934).

CHAPTER 3

NATIONALISM AND CASELLA'S SECOND PERIOD (1914-1920)

Casella considered the autumn of 1915 to be a pivotal time in his career, and nationalism was at the forefront of his mind when he made this claim. Having been offered a job at the Saint Cecilia Conservatory in Rome, he finally prepared to return to his home country. And it seems this return strengthened his nationalistic impulses:

While preserving my Italian mentality and resisting successfully every attempt to alienate me from my own country, I had observed in the Gallic musical scene a fine demonstration of emancipation from the foreigner and then formation of a firm national musical consciousness. When I returned to Italy, this experience guided my constructive activity. It is not without self-congratulation that I note today how strong and indomitable the nostalgia for my country had remained.³⁴

The manifestation of these ideals, however, differed from his early nationalistic impulses in their tendency away from tonal folk quotations toward darker expressionistic and programmatic depictions of Italian suffering. This new impulse perfectly coincided with a complementary infatuation, atonality.

Casella's works from 1914-1920 represent experiments with atonality that at first may seem like a regression from Casella's nationalistic aims, for Casella clearly found Italian music to be tonal. But despite the experimentation, Casella incorporated nationalistic programs, inspired by the events of World War I. Two such works Casella's from this period include *Pagine di Guerra* (1915, arranged for orchestra in 1918) and

³⁴ Alfredo Casella, *I Segreti della Giara* (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1939), trans. by Spencer Norton, *Music in My Time* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1955), 129.

Elegia Eroica (1916-1918). While paradoxically displaying a German expressionist style, these compositions still represent a clear evocation of nationalistic expression through their programmatic nature.³⁵

Started in the summer of 1916 and finished in the fall of the same year, Casella dedicated the work “to the memory of the sons of Italy fallen for her greatness” during World War I.³⁶ While it is unclear what exact event inspired Casella to write such a work, the time frame Casella documents in *Music in My Time* (summer and fall of 1916) suggests that the piece was a tribute to those who died in either the Asiago offensive in May or June of 1916, a counteroffensive by Austrian forces which left 140,000 Italian casualties, or perhaps the Sixth Battle of the Isonzo from August 6-17, 1916, which Italy did win at the cost of 21,000 deaths.³⁷ Casella considered the work a “vast triptych”, which consisted of three main sections:

In it, an actual funeral march of heroic character was followed by a more intimate and profoundly sorrowful central episode. In the last movement, a “tempest of death,” which the orchestra expressed with the greatest of violence, was followed by a very gentle lullaby, evoking the image of the country as a mother cradling her dead son.³⁸

³⁵ Casella was infatuated with Schoenberg’s compositions at the time, particularly with *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), and he would later spearhead a series of eight performances of that work throughout Italy through the *Corporazione delle Nuove Musiche* in 1925. Casella describes his attraction to the twelve-tone system as follows: “The phenomenon of Schoenberg caused in me serious wavering for several years. Although I remained bound to the tonal sense in the depths of my sensibility, there was a period during which my conviction that the twelve-tone system was the supreme goal of modern evolution tended to increase. This period of doubts and of various experiments lasted from 1914-1918” (*Music in My Time*, 106). Yet with the clarity granted by hindsight, Casella was able to understand that this style served a higher purpose in the progression of his style rather than a breaking away from his artistic aims established, though still nascent, between 1902 and 1914.

³⁶ Alfredo Casella, *Music in My Time*, 140.

³⁷ “In the summer of 1916, I had conceived the notion of a funeral poem which I wished to dedicate ‘to the memory of the sons of Italy fallen for her greatness.’ I finished the composition of this poem in late autumn of the same year” (Alfredo Casella, *Music in My Time*, 140).

³⁸ Ibid., 140-41.

Casella provided no additional text or narrative to accompany the work. With this absence, the programmatic nature is derived from the semiotic devices Casella employs within the work. Through musical encoding, Casella alludes to the sounds of battle and of Italy, as well as chaos, sorrow, and nostalgia. In addition, the progression from atonality to tonality plays a significant role in the overall structure of the piece, dividing the work into three sections: battle, in which atonality is strongest (measures 1-67); death, in which atonality begins to dissipate (measures 69-187); and tribute (measures 188-end), in which tonality ultimately triumphs. Exploring the nature of these codes within this overall structure reveals a narrative of Italian suffering, one reverently told by a composer so deeply affected by the tragedy of war.

Lament Codes

The first mimetic device occurs in the first measure of the work. The four-note descending chromatic figure first appears in the brass, and continually reappears throughout the composition (see Figure 3-1).



Figure 3-1: “Lament” motive in *Elegia Eroica*, first appearance, horns 1 and 3, mm. 1-3

The descending chromatic figure closely relates to the lament bass, which has its origins in the Renaissance and Baroque eras. Historically, the lament bass was often used to

signify weeping or grief, as established in the works such as Johannes Ockeghem's *Fors Seulement*, John Dowland's *Flow My Tears*, Henry Purcell's "When I am Laid in Rest" from *Dido and Aeneas*, and Claudio Monteverdi's *Lamento della Ninfa*, as well as moments of lament in the "Cruxificus" in Bach's B Minor Mass and the coda of the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.³⁹ The fact that Casella was familiar with the last work suggests where he may have gotten the inspiration for the musical encoding.⁴⁰

The lament encoding appears in all three sections of the work, which creates a sense of unity and symbolizes the pervasiveness of sorrow. The majority of the codes, however, occur in the first two sections. Table 3-1 charts the appearance of the lament encoding.

³⁹ "When a person cries, he or she generally makes a noise that slides downward and then leaps to an even higher pitch to begin the slide again. Not surprisingly, something similar happens in musical laments around the world. Those stepwise falling figures suggest not only the sounds that we emit when we are in distress but also the sympathetic drooping of our faces and shoulders. In a broader sense, it implies a spiritual descent, even a voyage to the underworld." [Alex Ross, "Chacona, Lamento," Alex Ross: The Rest is Noise Blog, entry posted November 1st, 2004, <http://www.therestisnoise.com/2004/11/chacona.html> (accessed March 25, 2012)].

⁴⁰ Casella conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in the spring of 1911 (see *Music in My Time*, 103).

Table 3-1: List of “Lament” codes in Elegia Eroica

Appearance of “Lament” motive	Instrument/section	Starting Pitch
mm. 1-7	Horns 1 & 3	A♭
mm. 48-50	Trumpet	A♭
mm. 53-55	Horns 4 & 6	E
m. 119	Violin 1 (divisi)	B and D
mm. 125-127	Woodwinds and horns	B♭
mm. 129-131	Oboe, English Horn	A♭
mm. 163-164	Woodwinds and trombones	D
mm. 208-210	Trumpet, violin	E-flat

Casella varies the lament figure rhythmically throughout the work. The common configuration for the lament code is in common time with each pitch one quarter-note in duration. This lament code appears in later rhythmic patterns, such as in triplets (see Figure 3-2 and Figure 3-3) and syncopated rhythms (see Figure 3-4). It also occurs in different meters such as the last statement of the lament code which appears in the third “tribute” section in 6/8 instead of common time (see Figure 3-5).

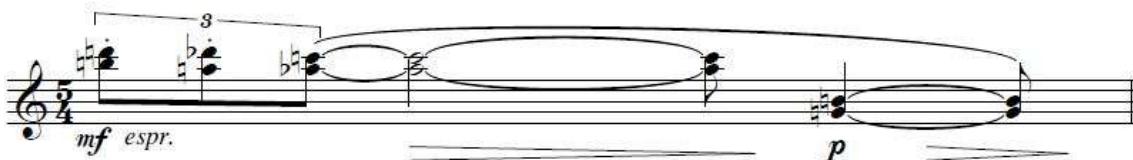


Figure 3-2: Variation of lament code, violin, m. 119

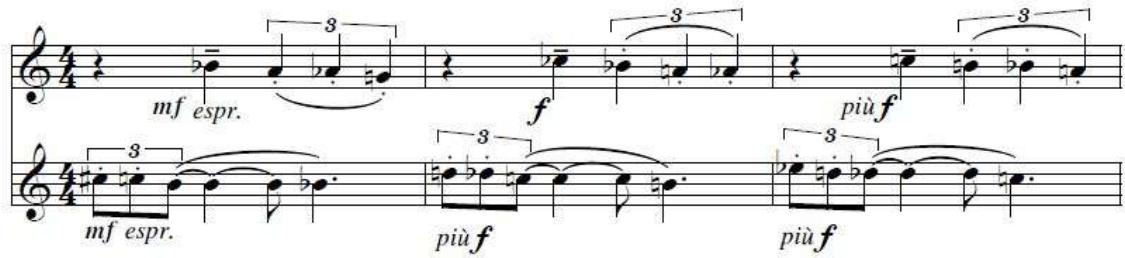


Figure 3-3: Variation of lament code, woodwinds and horns, mm. 125-127



Figure 3-4: Variation of lament code, oboe and English horn, mm. 129-131

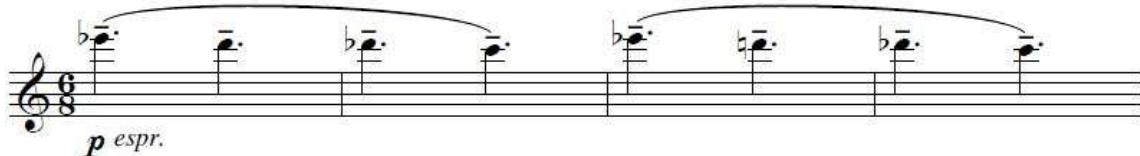


Figure 3-5: Last statement of lament code, violin, mm. 208-211

Military Codes

Casella's use of rhythmic motives in conjunction with the percussion and brass create musical codes that allude to the military. These include march-like timpani figures, brass fanfares, and tam-tam rolls. In the second measure of the work features the

timpani's distinct rhythm, evoking the sound of a military procession that cuts through the dense orchestral texture (see Figure 3-6).



Figure 3-6: Military code in *Elegia Eroica*, first appearance, timpani, mm. 2-4

The timpani also appears in a more thinly-orchestrated section. The consistent rhythmic pulse provided by the timpani accompanies a Stravinskian bassoon soli, creating a regular march-like affect despite the meter changes in each measure (see Figure 3-7). This figure reappears in measure 57 in a similarly exposed fashion.



Figure 3-7: Military code in *Elegia Eroica*, timpani, mm. 29-32

Casella also incorporates snare drum and tam-tam rolls during the most chaotic moments of the piece. In the following example, a tam-tam roll coincides with the first full statement of the lament motive after its initial appearance in the beginning of the work (see Figure 3-8). This roll also is the most striking of the entire work. Casella also uses brass fanfares to represent military codes. The codes exude a militaristic affect rhythmically, through repetitious marcato rhythms on a single note, such as the thirty-second note rhythms the trombones and trumpets (see Figure 3-10). They also appear

melodically, through arpeggiated figures such as horn signals characterized by arpeggiated quartal harmonies in triplets (see Figure 3-10).

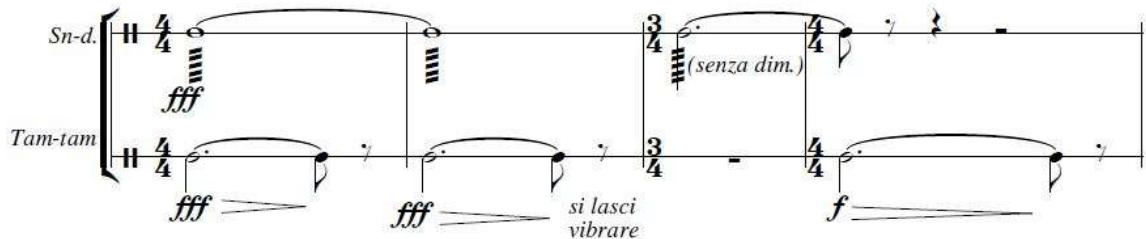


Figure 3-8: Military code in *Elegia Eroica*, snare drum and tam-tam, mm. 49-52



Figure 3-9: Military code in *Elegia Eroica*, trombones and trumpets, mm. 39-42

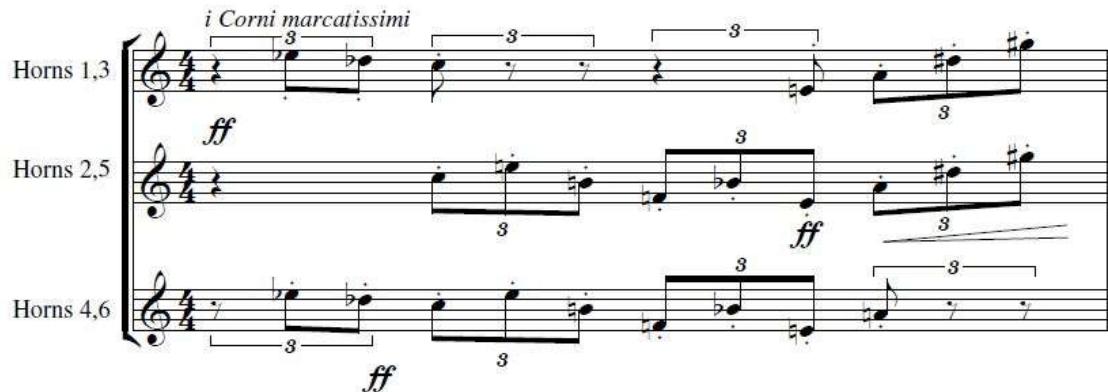


Figure 3-10: Military code in *Elegia Eroica*, horns, mm. 169

Overall, the predominance of percussion and the use of fanfare-like brass motives in the first and second sections, as described above, signify a purposeful allusion to a

militaristic style. In addition, the inclusion of these militaristic motives in sections representing chaos creates the imagery of destruction during the battles of World War I.

Weeping Codes

Casella depicts the act of weeping in his music as well through the typical descending semitone figure. It first appears in the bass clarinet during the second section of the work (see Figure 3-11).



Figure 3-11: Weeping motive in *Elegia Eroica*, bass clarinet, mm. 91-94

Upon the first appearance of the figure, the expressive marking *dolente* appears as well. While it literally means aching, it can also mean sorrowful, mournful, or regretful. After the initial sighing figure, the bass clarinet elaborates on the two-note motive by adding a major second to the motive. The bass clarinet foreshadows the clarinet's solo in measure 98 that further elaborates the sighing motive by incorporating upper and lower neighbors to the initial G-F# motion to create a mournful melody (Figure 3-12).



Figure 3-12: Weeping code in *Elegia Eroica*, clarinet in A, mm. 98-104

Casella expands the semitone motive in measure 113 to include three pitches; not only do these still represent sighing but also resemble the lament figure and occur regularly throughout the middle section. Once the piece moves into its final section (measure 188) the sighing motive is absent until it appears at the end of the work in measure 270. It resurfaces among several different Italianate themes (to be discussed later), in a poignant moment full of nostalgia and hope, as if to remind the listener of the suffering and sorrow Italy had faced from the war once again. The message Casella sends is all too clear due to the expressive marking *quasi lieve singhiozzo*, which means “like slight sobbing” (see Figure 3-13).

Figure 3-13: Weeping code in *Elegia Eroica*, clarinets and bassoons, mm. 262-271

Chaos Codes

The most complex and atonal parts of *Elegia Eroica* are those that represent chaos, appearing in the first and second sections of the work only. Various factors aid in the expression of chaos, which include the use of the hemiola, avoidance of downbeats, contrasting instrument sections, brass timbres, and atonal and chromatic passages. Casella also often employs the full ensemble to evoke chaos by the layering of multiple rhythmic figures or dissonant melodic lines. Piercing brass timbres and violin passages in a high tessitura also contribute to the intensity of these moments. The first evocation of chaos occurs with the entire ensemble, ushered in the brass in measure 13 (see Figure 3-14).

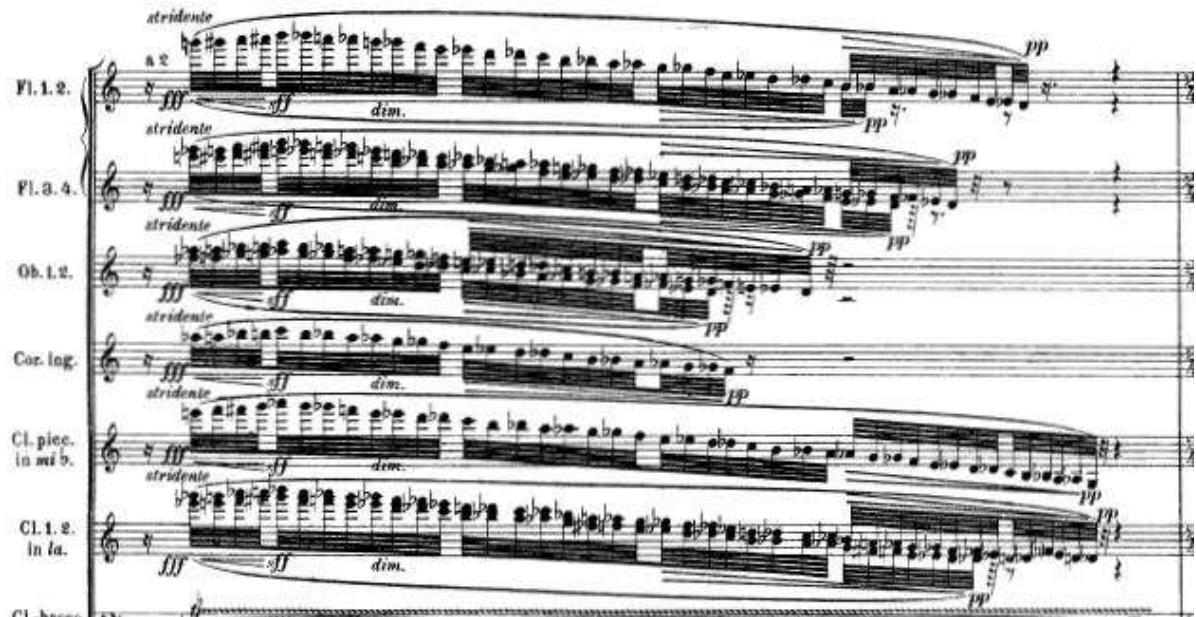


Figure 3-14: Chaos code in *Elegia Eroica*, m. 13

The violin section, or often the entire string section, also represents chaos through the use of an extended range; the presence of angular, dissonant melodies; and unpredictable syncopated rhythmic patterns that combine duple and triple figures. The tonal obscurity and rhythmic instability in these passages creates several unsettling moments (see Figure 3-15 through Figure 3-17).



Figure 3-15: Chaos code in *Elegia Eroica*, mm. 8-9



Figure 3-16: Chaos code in *Elegia Eroica*, mm. 11-12

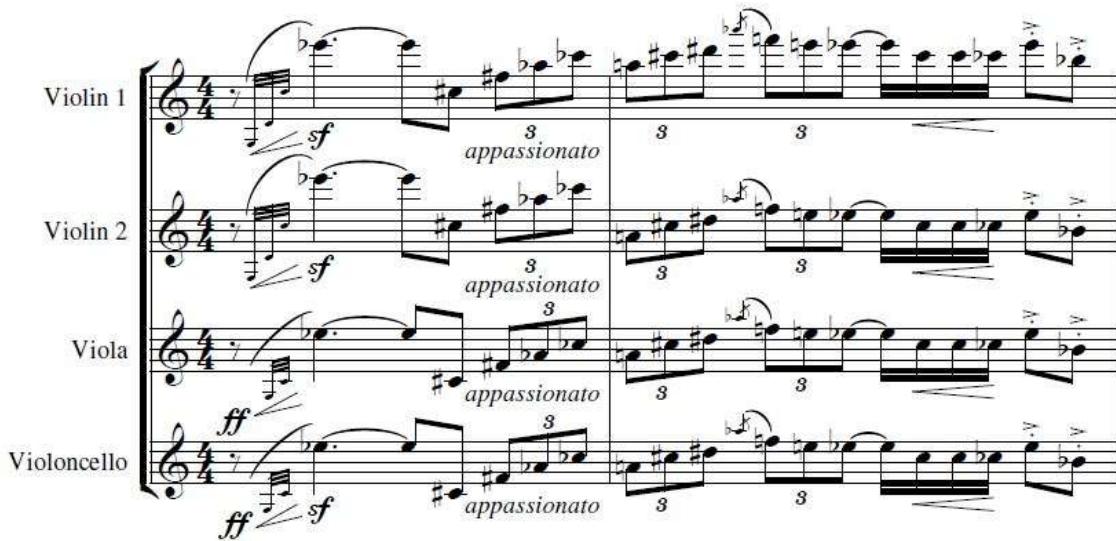


Figure 3-17: Chaos code in *Elegia Eroica*, mm. 160-161

Casella often juxtaposes instrument groups against the string section to add to the representation of chaos. Instead of aiming for a homogenous sound with the entire orchestra, chaos appears in the form of “battles” between instrumental forces. This is done texturally, through the presentation of multiple melodic lines between instrument sections, as well as rhythmically, with Casella’s use of hemiola or other rhythmic juxtapositions.

The use of different instrument sections to portray a “battle” is another compositional technique Casella employs to allude to chaos. The opposing of musical forces often combines previously-mentioned chaos codes with other codes, which will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.

Casella also uses hemiola to create a sense of chaos. The most common hemiolas he employs are three against two eighth-notes or six against four sixteenth-notes. These figures often appear either as part of the melodic statements in the brass or strings (see

Figure 3-18) or as subservient to them (see Figure 3-19). In either capacity, the competing melodic lines and the rhythmic complexities contribute to a portrayal of the chaos of war.



Figure 3-18: Chaos code through hemiola, *Elegia Eroica*, mm. 26-27



Figure 3-19: Chaos code through hemiola, *Elegia Eroica*, mm. 167

Italianate Codes

Casella encodes the final “tribute” section of the piece with Italianate codes. Characteristic meters, rhythms, and ornamentations in conjunction with a return to

tonality provide the aural connection. The codes all appear in 6/8 time, with the occasional moment in 9/8 (see Figure 3-20). Casella replaces the complex rhythmic passages of the first two sections with more simple, consistent figures typical of Italian music; first dotted-quarter notes, followed by the quarter-eighth pattern and other combinations. The bass clarinet appears quite prominently as an accompaniment instrument with the quarter-eighth barcarole rhythm (see Figure 3-21).

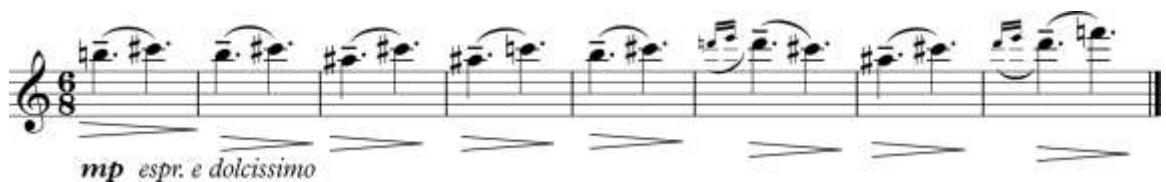


Figure 3-20: First Italianate code in *Elegia Eroica*, clarinet in A, mm. 92-99

Figure 3-21: Italianate code in *Elegia Eroica* bass clarinet and oboes, mm. 205-210

In addition to the change of meter and use of characteristic rhythms, instrumentation and texture change considerably in this section. Casella replaces the heavy orchestral textures

with an emphasis on a single solo instrument or soli section, with minimal accompaniment. This allows for the most clarity for flute and oboe solos. This is not the first time Casella resorted to these instruments to evoke the sound of Italy, as he relied on the oboe and English horn extensively in *Italia* and featured flute in his *Siciliana e Burlesca*. The strings only present an Italianate code once in the section, serving as accompaniment for the woodwinds for the rest of the piece (see Figure 3-22).

The musical score consists of four staves, each labeled 'Violin 1' or 'Violin 2'. The music is in common time (indicated by '8'). The first two staves (Violin 1) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with grace marks, dynamic 'p', and performance instruction 'cantando dolcemente'. The next two staves (Violin 2) also play this pattern, with dynamic 'p' and performance instruction 'cantando dolcemente'. Measures 224-225 show a transition where the violins play eighth-note patterns with grace marks, dynamic 'p', and performance instruction 'morendo'. Measures 226-227 show a final transition where the violins play eighth-note patterns with grace marks, dynamic 'ppp', and performance instruction 'morendo'.

Figure 3-22: Unison statement of Italianate code, *Elegia Eroica*, violins, mm. 224

The aural connection to the Italian style is due in large part to a return to simple, tonal melodies in the final section. The melodies feature small ranges and are generally diatonic with stepwise motion. It is important to note that this section, while tonal, does not incorporate traditional functional harmonies, but rather the avoidance of clear dominant-tonic relationships and use of less definitive cadences similar to harmonies present in Casella's earlier works from 1902-1913. For instance, the following melody in

the oboe part revolves around the G♭ pentatonic scale rather than major or minor modes (see Figure 3-23).

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Oboe, which is playing a melody in G♭ major. The middle staff is for the Bass Clarinet in B♭, which is playing a harmonic line. The bottom staff is for the Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), also providing harmonic support. The music is in common time. Dynamics include *mf*, *sempre molto dolce*, *sempre p*, and *pp*. Measure numbers 3 and 5 are indicated above the staves.

Figure 3-23: Italianate theme in *Elegia Eroica*, bass clarinet and oboe, mm. 213-217

Casella also features a flute solo that revolves around the F Dorian mode (Figure 3-24). Though the uses of modal and pentatonic melodies are not typically associated with the Italian style, the return to simplicity in contrast to the previous two atonal sections still aids the allusion.

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the Flute, which is playing a melodic line in F major. The bottom staff is for the Bassoon, which is providing harmonic support. The music is in common time. Dynamics include *dolcissimo*, *mp*, and *sempre mp*. Measure numbers 5 and 6 are indicated above the staves.

Figure 3-24: Italianate theme in *Elegia Eroica*, flute, mm. 240-247

Not only does Casella encode this section with Italianate themes, but he also includes a direct quotation of a piece with clear Italian association. In the final phrase of the piece, Casella quotes a fragment of the patriot song “Inno di Mameli” (Mameli’s Hymn), also known as “Fratelli d’Italia” (Brothers of Italy), a song that would later become the Italian national anthem after Italy became a republic in 1946 (see Figure 3-25). The lyrics of the song, written in 1847 by Goffredo Mameli and set to music written by Michele Novara two months later, promotes the unification of Italy during the time of the Risorgimento. The original hymn, the opening phrase of which is below, features a spirited march tempo and dotted eighth/sixteenth figures. Casella keeps the hymn in the same key and uses the same rhythms, but sets it in a duple meter in order to maintain the juxtaposition with 6/8 in the string section. Also, Casella’s quotation repeats the setting of the words ‘l’Italia’ from the third complete bar of the original, rather than including the original $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ resolution in the melody. Casella also decreases the tempo of the quotation to resemble an elegy rather than a patriotic song. The ambiguous cluster chords underneath, though not dissonant, also contribute to a lack of resolution. The presence of chords that do not serve any harmonic function – which support a melody with clear harmonic direction – creates an unsettling, ominous mood (see Figure 3-26).



Figure 3-25: *Inno di Mameli*, opening verse, mm. 1-5



Figure 3-26: Quotation of “Inno di Mameli”, *Elegia Eroica*, flutes and oboe, 277-284

Mixing of Codes

The various musical codes are not always self-contained; codes appear in multiple contexts within the work. For example, brass fanfare figures not only signify moments of militaristic allusion, but also occur prior to other passages representing chaos in the work. The fanfare-like figures in measure 13 (Figure 3-27) appear just before the winds enter with their chaos code. The same technique occurs in measure 160, where a horn signal precedes a chaos code in the violins (see Figure 3-28).

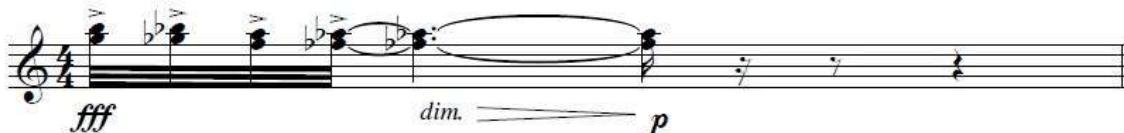


Figure 3-27: Trumpet call in *Elegia Eroica*, m. 13

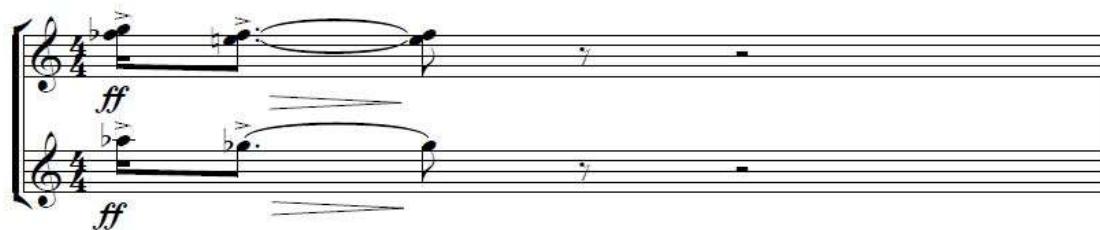


Figure 3-28: Trumpet call in *Elegia Eroica*, m. 160

Casella also positions the violin chaos codes against a statement of the lament code in the brass. Because the lament code emphasizes every beat, while the chaos code avoids it, each part is clearly separated, creating an allusion to battle (see Figure 3-29 and Figure 3-30). A “battle” also arises between the winds and horns with a rhythmic variation of the lament code (see Figure 3-31).



Figure 3-29: “Chaos” in *Elegia Eroica*, mm. 11-12

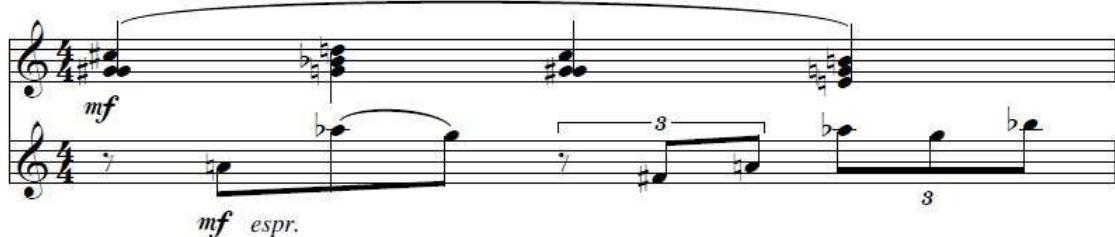


Figure 3-30: “Chaos” in *Elegia Eroica*, mm. 23

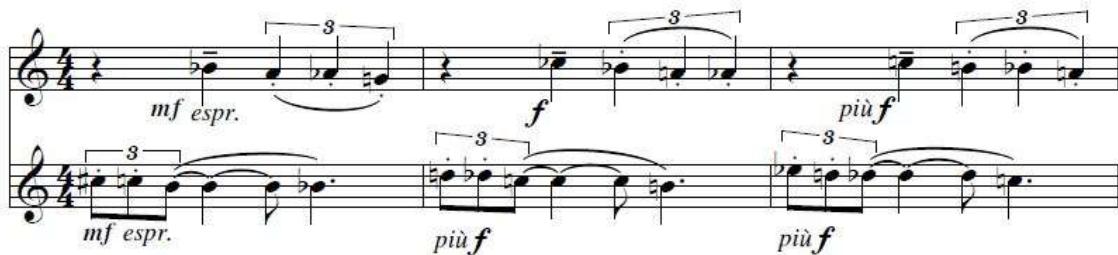


Figure 3-31: Chaos code with allusion to battle, winds and horns, mm. 125-127

Role of Atonality

The progression of *Elegia Eroica* from an atonal setting to a tonal one relates to the composer's view on the role of atonality in Italian music. In his 1924 article "Schoenberg in Italy", Casella retrospectively describes the atonal style as being incongruous with the Italian style; that Italians, having the essential qualities of gaiety, light, logic, and good sense could simply not adopt the negative connotations associated with what Casella determined to be a distinctly Germanic style.⁴¹ Casella summarizes:

Here lies the explanation of that impassable gulf which separates the art of Schoenberg from our souls – his lack of radiance and joy. In his art all is dim, with hopeless despairing density. The tragedy and pessimism of the great German romanticists have degenerated here so that they bear the grimace almost of insanity or of hyper-acute neurasthenia.⁴²

Casella sees this incompatibility of atonality with the Italian disposition to also be a reflection of the Italian people's sound judgment and instinct:

In this ability to associate ourselves with the absolute denial of tonality I see another clear proof of that ancient common sense which is characteristically Latin. The Italian has been defined as "an adventurer with feet of lead." And it is in fact apparent that the basis of all the major manifestations of genius is an iron foundation of logic and good sense.⁴³

Again referring to atonality, he claims that "the abnormal can take no root with us since the musical instinct of our race has restrained us from rushing headlong on a road that promised much but wandered on without revealing any opening."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Alfredo Casella, "Schoenberg in Italy," *Modern Music* Vol. 1, No. 3 (Nov. 1924): 9.

⁴² Ibid., 10.

⁴³ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 9.

Casella portrays the period of 1914 - 1920 as an experiment rather than a wholehearted adoption of an atonal style. Thus it is not surprising that Casella's experimentations ended with only three pieces in an atonal style: his Sonatina Op. 28, *Pagine di Guerra*, and *Elegia Eroica*. Simplicity and tonality eventually took over. However, this position, particularly in characterizing Schoenberg's style as a representation of despair and tragedy, can explain why Casella wrote in this style for works such as *Pagine di Guerra* and *Elegia Eroica* that deal with the subject of war. In addition, the idea of Italians being unable to associate themselves with an "absolute denial of tonality" manifest in the construction of *Elegia Eroica* itself, as the work becomes more tonal as it progresses. This may explain why Casella failed to classify the *Elegia Eroica* in the "Schoenberg in Italy" article as atonal.⁴⁵

The exploration of atonality in a programmatic work of this nature was atypical for the period. While the influence of Schoenberg most clearly stems from the premieres of works such as *Pierrot Lunaire*, the use of atonality to create a programmatic and nationalistic work is rare among Italian composers. Rather, nationalistic expression took on different forms by other European composers, often through theatrical forms rather than purely instrumental ones. At the time Casella premiered *Elegia Eroica*, Igor Stravinsky was in the latter years of his Russian period evoking nationalism through the use of Russian folk tales in his theatrical works such as *Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1910-11), *Rite of Spring* (1913) and *Renard* (1916). Busoni's one-act opera *Arlecchino*

⁴⁵ Casella states: "The writer [Casella] has often been classified as atonal when as a matter of fact he has only once even approached such an effect, in the first movement of the Sonatina for piano (1916)" ("Schoenberg in Italy," 9).

(1916) also relates to the trend of nationalistic theatrical works in its attempt to evoke an Italianate style.

The most significant purely instrumental Italian nationalistic work of the time was Ottorino Respighi's *The Fountains of Rome* (1915-1916), which premiered at the Teatro Augsteo in Rome in March of 1917, the same location where *Elegia Eroica* premiered only two months prior. Though Casella's and Respighi's harmonic language vastly differs in their respective works, they both paid tribute to Italy through programmatic compositional techniques. Main differences between the two works include Casella's use of atonality and Respighi's post-romantic style that features an unrivaled command of orchestral color. The nature of their programs also differs, as Casella's was in response to recent historical events, while Respighi's was influenced by Roman architecture and the pastoral. Despite the later success of Respighi's *Roman Trilogy*, programmatic nationalistic works did not hold a prominent place in the European musical scene in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and Casella moved away from programmatic expressions of nationalism in favor of absolute music in his third stylistic period.

At first glance, Casella's adoption of an atonal style may appear as regression in his nationalistic goals. But when examining his most significant contributions to this second stylistic period, it becomes apparent that the composer's use of an atonal style did have a nationalistic purpose: to help portray the loss and tragedy of Italian life through musical encoding. After this stylistic period, Casella would not experiment with atonality again, but not by any means did he view this period as a failure in his career. As the composer explains in retrospect:

Today when I look back objectively on that period of 1914-1918, I cannot deplore it. Those experiences, from which I was later to draw my conclusions and retain what I could use, were extremely helpful to me. Paradoxical as it may appear to some, they contributed to the definitive formation of my present style of naturalness and simplicity.⁴⁶

Between 1918 and 1922, one witnesses a slow evolution towards the naturalness and simplicity which Casella mentions. What became clear to Casella was the necessity to find his own style unburdened by foreign influences. In reflection, Casella marks the *Eleven Children's Pieces*, written for piano in 1921, as "my final liberation from uncertainty and experimentation and my secure and knowing entry into a creative phase now fully personal and clarified."⁴⁷ The period that follows would become Casella's most prolific, and one inspired by Italy's musical past.

⁴⁶ Alfredo Casella, *Music in My Time*, 137.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 151.

CHAPTER 4

NATIONALISM AND CASELLA'S THIRD PERIOD (1921-1946)

In the beginning of the 1920s, Casella's nationalistic ideals attained a new level of perspicuity and fervor. Casella's writings in both scholarly journals and newspapers, such as *The Music Quarterly*, *Modern Music*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*, provided a public forum in which he promulgated his vision for a new Italian musical style. This clarity was not only a product of the previous two decades of experimentation, but a reaction to the current state of Italian music. In the nineteenth century, opera dominated Italian nationalistic expression, yet by the turn of the century Italy's standing in this tradition began to decline. Neither of the major twentieth-century Italian movements, *verismo* opera by Giacomo Puccini, Ruggero Leoncavallo, and Pietro Mascagni nor the Futurist movement led by Francesco Pratella and Luigi Russolo made national sentiment a main priority. Casella, acutely aware of Italy's uncertain musical future and the increasing internationalism pervading Italy's musical present, sought to use the Italian music of the past as inspiration for a new modern style. For Casella, this specifically involved using Italian Baroque and Classical composers as models: Casella states that "perhaps, whereas other foreign schools approximate rather to Bach or Mozart, ours prefers to shelter under the great shadows of Frescobaldi, Monteverdi, Scarlatti, Vivaldi, or Rossini."⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Alfredo Casella, "Italians and Foreigners at Venice," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 7, 1925.

Casella expressed this desire to revivify Italy's "golden age" of instrumental music through works such as *Partita* (1924-1925), *Concerto Romano* (1926), *Scarlattiana* (1926), *Serenata* (1927), and *Paganiniana* (1941), not for just his country's sake, but to also restore Italy's rightful standing among other European nations.⁴⁹ Though the works of this style span over twenty years, most belong to two methods through which Casella expressed nationalism: the use of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century forms and the use of quotation.

Casella was not the first, nor the only composer to return to a past musical tradition in order to create a new nationalistic style of music. Outside of Italy, the inspiration for this national style, more specifically the connection between past musical traditions and nationalism, found its origins in France, undoubtedly observed by Casella during his almost twenty years in the country. In reaction to the excessiveness and grandiloquence of the Wagnerian romanticism, in the last decade of the nineteenth-century French composers such as Vincent d'Indy, Claude Debussy, and Paul Dukas began searching for new subjects and models for the French style. According to Scott Messing, the French style became mostly lost during the nineteenth century, buried underneath the central position Germanic works had taken in France's musical culture. As France developed a stronger nationalistic viewpoint politically, music followed suit, and composers looked for "inspiration from native, and pre-romantic antecedents."⁵⁰ This

⁴⁹ After such a revival he observes that this "rebirth within a few years has brought the country into the front rank among the musical nations of Europe which can claim a place in the history of art." (Alfredo Casella, Music and the State, *Christian Science Monitor*, March 18, 1939).

⁵⁰ Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1988). 6.

reaction called for a style that returned to the traditions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in order to establish a new French idiom based on the tenets of clarity, simplicity, and elegance. Remarks from d'Indy and Debussy are uncannily similar to Casella's own observations, most particularly in how foreign influences served as a catalyst to this return to tradition. D'Indy believed that "everywhere and always the foreign influence has been beneficial, since it has, by a kind of necessary reactive filiation, almost always given birth to a new manner of national art."⁵¹

The foundations of a French national style are undeniably linked to Casella's own concepts of tradition, and no doubt, served as models for his own reflections and newfound desire to reestablish instrumental music "in order to recapture the lost tradition."⁵² Casella specifically recalls Vincent d'Indy's address at the opening of the Schola Cantorum in 1896 thus: "in his [D'Indy's] address, he spoke, among other things, of the necessity of going back to the Italian art of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to the majestic constructions of Palestrina, and to Gregorian chant."⁵³

Classicism Renewed

Fast forward approximately twenty years, and one finds that the resurrection of the instrumental tradition had finally reached Italy, a mission that would become Casella's primary preoccupation. One of the major shifts in thinking that shaped this Italian instrumental music revival was a return to classicism. As early as 1919, writings

⁵¹ Jacques Morland, "Enquête sur l'influence allemande: VI. Musique," *Mercure de France*, January 1903: 89, as quoted and translated in Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music*, 11.

⁵² Alfredo Casella, *I Segreti della Giara*, (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1939), trans. by Spencer Norton, *Music in My Time* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1955), 84.

⁵³ Casella, *Music in My Time*, 57.

on Italian music begin to suggest that Italian or Latin races were predisposed to the classical ideals of order, clarity, and balance. An anonymous correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor* writes in 1919 that composers began to study past composers such as Monteverdi, Caccini, and Scarlatti because these composers' "chief preoccupations were balance and measure, in accordance with the innate tendencies of the Latin races of proportion."⁵⁴ Casella echoes this sentiment, writing in 1925 that "this universal aspiration toward a new classicism is singularly favorable at this time to the Italian disposition."⁵⁵ Three years later, Casella describes that Italians not only returned to classicism in the 1920s, but that they were its originators. "Classicism is the natural form of Italian thought," said Casella "inherited directly from the Greeks, through Rome. And this modern classicism – far from being an artificial thing [...] – is with us an enforced result of language, tradition, and daily contemplation of nature."⁵⁶

These classical ideals, which Casella describes as innately Italian, manifest in the Italian Baroque and Classical musical forms. A return to Italian Baroque and Classical forms connected the current Italian style to the instrumental past and served the purpose of restoring balance, order, and clarity to Italian music. Casella felt that the use of older forms such as fugue, sonata, variation, and ritornello - which can be traced back to Frescobaldi, Scarlatti, Corelli, and Vivaldi – should be a hallmark of the new Italian style as they served better models than the current foreign trends. "For us Italians," Casella replied, "the so-called return to the golden age of our instrumental music was no more

⁵⁴ Unknown author, "Musical Situation in Italy", *Christian Science Monitor*, January 11, 1919.

⁵⁵ Alfredo Casella, "Italian and Foreigners at Venice, *Christian Science Monitor*, November 7, 1925.

⁵⁶ Alfredo Casella, "Neoclassicism in Music," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 7, 1928, 12.

than a renunciation of the rigid Beethovenian form, of the easy seductions of the symphonic poem, and of the inconsistency of impressionism.”⁵⁷ Casella found a new form of national expression by aligning his compositional methods in regard to form with those of Italian Baroque and Classical origin.

A second method of creating a national style was through quotation. While Casella does not explicitly discuss the ideas of quotation in *Music in My Time*, an anecdote on Bach’s practice of transcribing Vivaldi’s music reveals his attitude towards the works of others. He writes that “it is striking a way a true creator can transform and improve the expression of others by infusing his own breath and intimate discipline into what now becomes a new artistic substance.”⁵⁸ Although Casella is talking about transcription in this case, this idea that a composer could improve upon the works of another may offer insights into why Casella assimilated the music of Domenico Scarlatti and Nicolò Paganini into his own harmonic language, orchestration practices, and understanding of form.⁵⁹ Casella believed that a work of art contains all past traditions in what he considers is the genetic make-up of the work, and thus could never be entirely original.⁶⁰ In regard to originality, Casella relates art to his other passion, science. He states, “the scientific axiom: ‘In Nature nothing is lost, nothing is created,’ holds good for art also; for in art there are no ‘revolutions’ but only a constant development, an incessant

⁵⁷ Casella, *Music in My Time*, 226.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 231.

⁵⁹ This sentiment closely relates to Ferruccio Busoni’s approaches to composing, transcribing, and arranging. For more information on his compositional process, see Erinn E. Knyt, “How I Compose”: Ferruccio Busoni’s Views about Invention, Quotation, and the Compositional Process,” *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Spring 2010), 224–264.

⁶⁰ Alfredo Casella and Otis Kincaid., “What is Art?” *The Musical Quarterly* vol. 8, no. 1 (Jan. 1922), 6.

‘becoming’.”⁶¹ To Casella, if nothing in art can be completely new, then a work of art must evolve from past traditions. This evolution required that the unnecessary or mediocre qualities of an art work grow old and die out and the strong aspects remain and be used again in future works of art.⁶² Casella’s ability to successfully incorporate Scarlatti’s and Paganini’s music into his own style suggests that Casella was trying to prove the musical characteristics attributed to each composer could withstand the test of time and thrive in the present musical environment.

Casella also applied the idea of constant development to the development of music in Italy as a whole. When he was faced with the idea that Italy was in a time of transition, Casella’s response further reflects this sentiment towards revolution. He believed that “each successive moment of our history is nothing but a ‘transition’ – or rather an infinitesimal fraction of an immense, perpetual and imperceptible unfoldment, which for us divides mystery of the past from that of the future.”⁶³ Overall, Casella’s conception of classicism and tradition influenced his national style in regard to the use of form and direct quotation in virtually all of his instrumental works of his third period. The manifestation of these ideals in Casella’s *Partita*, *Scarlattiana*, and *Paganinina* will now be explored further.

⁶¹ Ibid., 2.

⁶² Ibid., 1.

⁶³ Alfredo Casella, “Music and These Years of Transition,” *Christian Science Monitor*, July 18, 1925.

Use of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth- Century Forms

Many of Casella's works use seventeenth and eighteenth century forms such as sonata, binary, ternary, and ritornello forms. While Casella did use binary and ternary forms in works of the previous stylistic periods, such as *Italia* (1909), *Barcarola* (1910), and *Sonatina* (1916), Casella's reliance on previous formal conventions becomes much more pervasive during the 1920s and 1930s. Other changes in regard to form that appear in this stylistic period is a greater sense of proportion between sections, a return to traditional harmonic function, and thematic development. The works that demonstrate this compositional approach most effectively – particularly the use of ritornello, sonata, and passacaglia forms – are Casella's *Scarlattiana* for piano and chamber orchestra and Partita for piano and orchestra.

The first movement of the Casella's Partita exhibits the use of ritornello form within an overall ABA structure. This use of ritornello form, which features the frequent return of one main melodic statement throughout a work, is quite different than other twentieth-century concertos. A majority of piano concertos of the early twentieth-century, such as works by Sergei Rachmaninov, Sergei Prokofiev, and Ferruccio Busoni, exhibit the dominance of the piano throughout the entire work, with the orchestra playing a secondary role. The Partita, however, relies on the alternation between solo and orchestral sections that is a hallmark of the ritornello form, treating each performing force equally. This treatment reflects a return to the form originated by Antonio Vivaldi in his vast number of concerti and concerti grossi. Table 4-1**Error! Reference source not found.** shows how Casella divided these sections between solo and orchestral sections:

Table 4-1: Solo and orchestral sections in Casella's Partita, Movement 1

Orchestra	mm. 1-26	C Major
Solo	mm. 27-37	C Major / modulating
Orchestra	mm. 38-45	D minor
Solo	mm. 46-59	Modulating
Orchestra	mm. 60-86	A major
Orchestra	mm. 210-238	C Major
Solo	mm. 239-248 (end)	C Major

The opening orchestral section (measures 1-26) introduces the main theme in the first violin and returns in the subsequent orchestral sections (measures 38-45 and measures 210-238), either in its original form or as a variation of the original. Casella treats this theme as one extended phrase that consists of mostly uninterrupted patterns of eighth- and sixteenth-notes and rhythmic sequencing; its figurations are also Vivaldian in construction (see Figure 4-1). After the first sixty bars of the work, the orchestra ushers in a B section in measures 60-209 which sharply contrasts the opening ritornello. The orchestra dominates the section and moves through several shorter themes (see measures 68-71, 117-119, and 149-159) rather than themes with a Baroque-like phrase extension that characterizes measures 1-25. After this developmental period, measures 210-234 are an exact quotation of measures 1-25, and Casella adds an additional four measures to lead into the last solo section. An unusual feature occurs at the end of the movement, in which the solo section provides the last statement in the form, rather than the orchestra. Instead of ending with a full statement of the ritornello theme by the strings, Casella chooses to have a more subdued ending with the piano and winds as accompaniment.

Allegro un poco maestoso.

Figure 4-1: Main ritornello theme, Alfredo Casella, Partita, Movement 1, mm. 1-26

Casella's treatment of the solo sections also fit with the Vivaldian ritornello scheme in terms of virtuosity and modulation. When the piano enters in measure 28, Casella strips away the string orchestration to include just the solo piano and oboe. The oboe provides a simple, playful melody derived from the main ritornello theme, while the piano plays a much more virtuosic, animated passage (see Figure 4-2). After a brief statement of the ritornello theme in measures 30 and 31, the solo section continues with both piano and oboe. In the solo sections, the piano's phrases are much shorter than the main ritornello theme, and after the first solo passage, also become much more virtuosic,

relying on sextuplet figures juxtaposed against the duple eighth- and sixteenth-notes in the oboe (see Figure 4-3).



Figure 4-2: First solo passage, Alfredo Casella, Partita, Movement 1, piano, mm. 27-30



Figure 4-3: Second solo passage, Alfredo Casella, Partita, Movement 1, piano, mm. 32-38

Up to this point, the piano solo section remains diatonic and fills in tonic and dominant harmonies underneath the oboe part. The next significant solo section, however, becomes much more dissonant with arpeggiated passages in measures 46 through 50, in which Casella removed any sense of tonal center (see Figure 4-4). This section serves a modulatory purpose similar to that in an Italian ritornello form. In measures 50-52,

Casella introduces a new melody in the piano, rhythmically based on the main ritornello theme, which the oboe takes over in measures 52-58 (see Figure 4-6). However, Casella does not resolve the tension from the modulation until measure 68, eight measures into the B section of the movement, in which the orchestra begins introducing contrasting themes in A major.



Figure 4-4: Third solo passage, Alfredo Casella, Partita, Movement 1, piano, mm. 46-50

Figure 4-5: New theme, Alfredo Casella, Partita, Movement 1, piano, mm. 50-52

After measure 58 the work moves away from clear separation between solo and ensemble sections – a technique also seen in concertos by Vivaldi – as the piano retreats into an accompaniment role for the majority of the section between measures 60 and 209. Casella hints at the first solo section in measure 87 and 95 in exact repetition of measure 27, and other virtuosic passages become integrated within the full orchestral texture. In the last solo section (measures 239-248) the oboe enters with the same theme from measures 27 through 32 and the piano enters three bars later. The same passage from the right hand only of the piano in measures 27-28 appears in measures 243-244, after which the work comes to a subdued close.

Another work that features a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century treatment of form is third movement of *Scarlattiana*. The movement is much more structured than the title “Capriccio” implies. However, what separates this movement from the previous example from the Partita is that Casella now conflates ritornello and sonata form features. Casella maintains the equal balance between solo and ensemble sections as found in a ritornello form, yet the thematic development and the location of modulations at the transitional phrases and development are more closely aligned with sonata form.

After an orchestral ritornello section, the piano enters unaccompanied in measure 27 with the dramatic first theme characterized by block chords and descending sixteenth-notes (see Figure 4-6) which the trumpet answers with string accompaniment in measures 31 to 34 (see Figure 4-7). The subsequent piano entrance features a sequential eighth-note pattern that the orchestra echoes exactly (see Figure 4-8). For the second theme, the piano

plays unaccompanied, yet the orchestra's answer no longer merely duplicates what the piano plays, offering a variation of the theme in triplets (see Figure 4-9 and Figure 4-10).



Figure 4-6: First theme (first phrase), Alfredo Casella, *Scarlattiana*, Movement 3 “Capriccio”, piano, mm. 27-30



Figure 4-7: Answer to first theme, Alfredo Casella, *Scarlattiana*, Movement 3 “Capriccio”, mm. 31-34



Figure 4-8: First theme (second phrase), Alfredo Casella, *Scarlattiana*, Movement 3 “Capriccio”, mm. 34-40



Figure 4-9: Second theme, Alfredo Casella, *Scarlattiana*, Movement 3 “Capriccio”, mm. 71-77

Figure 4-10: Answer to second theme, Alfredo Casella, *Scarlattiana*, Movement 3 “Capriccio”, mm. 78-82

The interaction in the development changes slightly. Measures 98 to 151 features more immediate exchanges of thematic material; rather than the longer phrases of the exposition, the piano and orchestra alternate four measure phrases based on the first theme (see Figure 4-11). After this section, the orchestra takes over the development of the themes in measure 107, and when the piano returns in measure 122, it is the first time without introducing anything thematic; rather, the sixteenth-note passage is merely for effect. A second, unaccompanied flourish from measures 142 to 151 brings the work into the recapitulation in measure 152.

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for 'Horn in F' and the bottom staff is for 'Piano'. The piano staff has a brace under it. Measure 102 ends with a fermata over the piano's eighth-note pattern. Measure 103 begins with a dynamic marking 'f sempre'. The piano continues with its eighth-note patterns, and the horn joins in with eighth-note patterns.

Figure 4-11: Thematic development, Alfredo Casella, *Scarlattiana*, Movement 3 “Capriccio”, mm. 98-103

The recapitulation appears much like the exposition, with the first and second themes in the tonic key of G minor, yet Casella changes the accompaniment. The trumpet interrupts the piano’s statement of the first theme rather than answers it (measures 177 to 182) and denser and more rhythmically active accompaniment figures support the transition and the second theme. Overall, this work demonstrates the influence seventeenth- and eighteenth-century forms had on his conception of the concerto.

The first movement of *Scarlattiana* presents in a sonata form with a slow introduction. The movement adheres to conventional sonata principles such as the use of two contrasting themes as well as tonic-dominant relationships. Table 4-2 shows how Casella constructed the sonata. The movement begins with slow introduction (not diagrammed), followed by the beginning of the sonata form with another introduction, featuring themes that only appear in that section. Except for how Casella treats the opening of the work, the form follows one standard sonata scheme, featuring two themes as well as transition and closing themes. Casella’s use of harmony is also typical, with the first theme in the tonic key of E major and the second in the dominant of B major, in

addition to the standard appearance of the second theme in the tonic in the recapitulation. What is also important to note is how Casella maintains the proportions between the exposition and recapitulation. The first theme in the exposition is sixteen measures while in the recapitulation it is seventeen, and the second theme in both the exposition and recapitulation are both nine measures in length. The exposition, development, and recapitulation are also relatively equal in length as well. This sonata form in particular demonstrates Casella's preoccupation with balance and clarity at this time, as works before this stylistic period rarely featured such a lucid use of form. Table 4-3 is a chart of movements from other works of this time that adhere to a specific seventeenth- or eighteenth-century form.

The second movement of the Partita for Piano and Orchestra, titled "Passacaglia" adheres closely to the seventeenth-century form. It is likely Casella gravitated towards the form based on his knowledge of Girolamo Frescobaldi's music and his contribution in establishing general characteristics of the passacaglia. The typical form of passacaglias after 1627 was a continuous set of variations over the same bass line, and the bass itself may also undergo variations.⁶⁴ In addition, Alexander Silbiger writes that Frescobaldi's *Cento partite sopra passacagli* (1637) demonstrates characteristics such as "a less exuberant, more restrained character, slower tempo, minor rather than major key, smoother, often conjunct, melodic motion and more frequent dissonant suspensions on the downbeat."⁶⁵ Frescobaldi also often incorporated a variety of different styles and

⁶⁴ Alexander Silbiger, "Passacaglia," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/21024> (accessed March 21, 2012).

⁶⁵ Frederick Hammond and Alexander Silbiger, "Frescobaldi, Girolamo Alessandro," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10219> (accessed April 3, 2012).

devices within single volumes of keyboard music, drawing from stylistic procedures used in ricercares, canzonas, and toccatas.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ “Frescobaldi’s fertile musical imagination found nourishment in many additional sources: the expressive discords and chromaticisms of the contemporary madrigal, the declamatory rhythms and affective figures of *seconda pratica* recitative, the brilliant preludes and interludes improvised by virtuoso church organists, the free, ever-changing textures of lute and theorbo playing and the earthy vitality of popular songs and dances... Frescobaldi, however, did not merely emulate the appropriated styles, forms and conventions; he played with them, confronted them, crossed them, recreated them and turned them upside down.” Ibid.

Table 4-2: Sonata diagram, Scarlattiana, Movement 1 “Sinfonia”

Measures	18-31	32-47	48-74	75 -83	83 -101	102-174
Section	<i>Orch. Introduction</i>	<i>Exposition</i>				<i>Development</i>
		Theme 1	Transition	Theme 2	Closing theme(s)	
E Major	I	I	I – V	V	V	
	175-191	192-223	224 -232	233-242	243-257 (end)	
	<i>Recapitulation</i>				<i>Coda</i>	
	Theme 1	Transition	Theme 2	Closing theme(s)		
	I	no modulation	I	I	I	

Table 4-3: List of works with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century forms

Partita, Movement 1	Ritornello
Partita, Movement 2	Chaconne
Scarlattiana, Movement 1	Sonata
Scarlattiana, Movement 3	Sonata
Serenata, Movement 1	Ternary
Serenata, Movement 2	Ternary
Paganiniana, Movement 2	Sonata

Casella's passacaglia and the stylistic features imbued within share similar characteristics to Frescobaldi and the seventeenth-century passacaglia in numerous ways. Casella follows the idea of variations over a consistent bass line, and each variation incorporates the original bass line in some capacity (though it is often obscured) and Casella includes several styles within the variations, such as a siciliana and musette. One distinct feature is also how Casella modifies the bass line through changes in rhythm and register, creating several melodies from this bass line. Thus, the Passacaglia from Casella's Partita features both stylistic and formal connections to Italian baroque music.

The work opens with the passacaglia bass only stated by the cellos and basses. It features a typical triple meter in a slow tempo and in the key of E minor (the parallel minor of the first movement). The bass line generally outlines the tonic, dominant, and subdominant chords, though Casella deemphasizes the cadence from dominant to tonic with added chromaticism in measures 12 and 13 (see Figure 4-12).



Figure 4-12: Passacaglia bass, Passacaglia from Partita for piano and orchestra, mm. 1-14

The first variation introduces the violas in a chordal style, followed by the second variation which features independent lines between the first violin and rest of the string section (see Figure 4-13). This variation is answered by increased rhythmic vitality among all parts in more complex polyphonic style over the bass line which moved an octave higher (see Figure 4-14).

Variazione II.

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Tutte div. *mf*

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass *p*

Figure 4-13: Variation II, Passacaglia from Partita for piano and orchestra, mm. 27-31

Variazione III.

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass *f* sost.

Figure 4-14: Variation III, Passacaglia from Partita for piano and orchestra, mm. 40-43

In variation four, Casella places the bass line in the violin which projects over other melodic lines (see Figure 4-15). Half way through variation five, Casella applies rhythmic diminution of the bass line, creating a two-measure motive (see Figure 4-16) that returns in variation eight (measure 127-128) and variation nine (measure 149-150).



Figure 4-15: Variation IV, Passacaglia from Partita for piano and orchestra, violin, mm. 53-65



Figure 4-16: Variation V, Passacaglia from Partita for piano and orchestra, mm. 82-83

In Variation Ten, Casella introduces a contrasting melody in E major, following the common practice of changing mode within a passacaglia. An interesting part of this variation is when Casella inverts the passacaglia bass and starts on the fifth scale degree, providing a cantabile melody over the dance-like melody in the violins (see Figure 4-17).



Figure 4-17: Variation X, Passacaglia from Partita for piano and orchestra, mm. 215-229

The eleventh variation returns to E minor with the evocation of a subdued Sicilian-influenced melody by the oboe. The expressive melody once again outlines the passacaglia bass within the triple meter, ornamentations, and smooth melodic motion typical of Italian popular folk melodies (see Figure 4-18).



Figure 4-18: Variation X, Passacaglia from Partita for piano and orchestra, mm. 242-253

After a rubato solo section by the piano in measure 275-286, a coda occurs which is actually a return to the first variation. The work closes as it began, with a final statement of the passacaglia bass in the cellos and basses.

Quotation

Casella also composed two significant works based on the quotation of Italian composers, *Scarlattiana* (1926) and *Paganiniana* (1942). *Scarlattiana*, written for piano

and orchestra in five movements, features the keyboard music of Domenico Scarlatti. Casella claims that he used over 80 themes from Scarlatti's 545 keyboard sonatas to create the work and that he strove to blend Scarlatti's style with his own. Casella explains that

I was led towards the solution of these problems by the inner impulse which led me to write the work and by my profound knowledge of the style and harmonic technique of Scarlatti, which includes many elements of modernity. It is perfectly possible to find a harmonious meeting ground between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.⁶⁷

While a twentieth-century treatment of harmonic language such as chromatic inflections and nondiatonic chords permeate certain moments of the work, the use of seventeenth- and eighteenth- century forms and the clarity in both phrasing and harmonic language reflect how Scarlatti's influence dominates the work. By melding the music of a past Italian composer with that of his own, Casella unites tradition with creation, which in turn defines Casella's nationalistic style.

Paganiniana, on the other hand, does not exhibit the same stylistic purity. The orchestral work, written towards the end of his life, also includes quotation, yet within a conflation of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century styles. While the use of a nineteenth century performer and composer as the source of quotation is rare for Casella, *Paganiniana* does not negate Casella's earlier style, but rather fits within Casella's understanding of tradition. Casella reconciles with the role of romanticism in the Italian style in the following passage:

⁶⁷ Casella, *Music in My Time*, 173.

And in music, the models are sought principally – as I have said before – in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But musicians are now becoming reconciled to the nineteenth century, as – in spite of romanticism, which has naturally removed that period further from our sensibilities than others more distant as regards time – it would be absurd to suppose that the eternal qualities of the race are not also to be found in that time.

Thus, Casella turned to Paganini, romantic virtuoso violinist and composer to be the inspiration for the four-movement work. And, unlike Casella's compositional approach to *Scarlattiana*, which serves like a patchwork of Scarlatti themes and motives, Casella incorporated entire phrases (such as in Movements 1 and 4) and even reproduced entire solo parts (such as Movements 2 and 3) of Paganini's into the work, making them immediately identifiable.

Each of the four movements in *Paganiniana* includes quotations from at least one work of Paganini's. Table 4-4 lists the sources of the quotations for each movement:

Table 4-4: Sources for Paganini quotations in Casella's *Paganiniana*

<i>Paganiniana</i>	Sources of Paganini quotations
Movement 1	Caprice No. 5, 12, 16, 19
Movement 2	Guitar quartet Op. 5, No. 6
Movement 3	<i>La Primavera</i> for solo violin and orchestra
Movement 4	Tarantella for solo violin and guitar

The first movement features the most sources for Paganini quotations as well as demonstrates how he weaves in his own ideas amongst those Paganini quotations. Table 4-5 lists the order in which Casella presents each theme and places where he includes his own material.

Table 4-5: List of Paganini Quotations and Casella's Original Themes, Movement 1

Theme by Casella/Paganini	Appearance
Casella (Introduction)	m. 1-7
Paganini Caprice No. 5	m. 8-11
Casella	m. 12-30
Paganini Caprice No. 5 (inversion)	m. 31-33
Casella	m. 34-42
Paganini Caprice No. 12	m. 43-50
Paganini Caprice No. 12 (imitation)	m. 51-54
Casella	m. 55-58
Paganini Caprice No. 16	m. 59-62
Casella	m. 63-67
Paganini Caprice No. 16	m. 68-71
Casella	m. 72-77
Paganini Caprice No. 12	m. 78-81
Paganini Caprice No. 12 (imitation)	m. 82-83
Casella	m. 84-97
Paganini Caprice No. 5 (inversion)	m. 98-103
Casella	m. 104-107
Paganini Caprice No. 19	m. 108-109
Casella	m. 110-125
Paganini Caprice No. 16	m. 126-132
Casella	m. 133-138
Casella (return of introduction)	m. 139-145
Paganini Caprice No. 12	m. 146-end

Casella often takes only the first several measures of the themes from each Caprice, transforming Paganini's themes to make them his own. Casella creates a four-measure phrase from Paganini's extended arpeggios (see Figure 4-19 and Figure 4-20), a theme that is answered in the winds and lower string sections.



Figure 4-19: Paganini, Caprice No. 5, Agitato, mm. 1-4



Figure 4-20: Casella, *Paganiniana*, Movement 1, mm. 8-11 (violin 1)

In Figure 4-21 and Figure 4-22, Casella takes the first and third sixteenth-notes of each beat from Paganini's theme in Caprice No. 12, accentuating the playfulness of the theme that provides a contrast to the frenzied opening theme based on Caprice No. 5.



Figure 4-21: Paganini, Caprice No. 12, Allegro, mm. 1-3



Figure 4-22: Casella, *Paganiniana*, Movement 1, mm. 43-46 (oboe)

Casella chooses to use only the first two measures of Caprice No. 16, changing the key from the original (see Figure 4-23 and Figure 4-24). This quotation serves not only as a motive, but also as material for transitional passages to other themes, leading to densely-orchestrated passages as Casella layers this sixteenth-note figure and derivations of it throughout the entire orchestra.

Figure 4-23: Paganini, Caprice No. 16, Presto, mm. 1-4



Figure 4-24: Casella, *Paganiniana*, Movement 1, mm. 59-60 (violin 1)

The final quotation, the opening of the “Minore” section of Caprice No. 19’s “Lento”, is assembled in a similar manner to the previous three; Casella quotes the first measure exactly before deviating from Paganini’s theme (see Figure 4-25 and Figure 4-26).



Figure 4-25: Paganini, Caprice No. 19, Lento, “minore” section, mm. 1-4



Figure 4-26: Casella, *Paganiniana*, Movement 1, mm. 108-109 (violin 1)

Casella was not alone in his quest to resurrect the Italian instrumental music tradition. Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973), another member of the *generazione dell'Ottanta*, was a substantial contributor to Italian instrumental music. Malipiero’s prolific output, though divided into numerous stylistic periods existing over almost seventy years, does resemble Casella’s in some ways, such as the predominance of classical genres and forms through his symphonies, concertos, and chamber works, as well as “-iana” works of his own that pay homage to past Italian composers such as in *Cimarosiana* (1921), *Vivaldiana* (1952), and *Gabrieliana* (1971). But Malipiero’s conception of nationalism differs from Casella’s in its other models, as Malipiero, when looking to the past, often directed his efforts to immortalizing earlier periods from the Middle Ages and stopping at the eighteenth century, whereas Casella’s vision extended

through the eighteenth century and even into the nineteenth.⁶⁸ And while Casella's own style was mostly synonymous with a national style, Malipiero's style as a whole seems to represent himself as an individual rather than Italy as a nation. John C.G. Waterhouse describes Malipiero as one of the most original Italian composers of the time, stating that "idiosyncratically personal factors played a proportionately greater part in moulding his stylistic development than Pizzetti and Casella."⁶⁹ While similar compositional approaches exist between the two, Casella was the more outspoken composer on the necessity of a national style.

Through stylistic allusion, adherence to classical forms, and quotation, Casella achieved in creating a style unburdened by foreign influences and unequivocally Italian. But while the past played a huge role in the formation of this style, the present had an equally significant part as well. The impetus for this style correlates with the political ideologies of the time, a relationship that will now be discussed further.

⁶⁸ John C.G. Waterhouse, *Gian Francesco Malipiero (1883-1973): The Life, Times, and Music of a Wayward Genius* (Amsterdam: Harward Academic Publishers, 1999), 143.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 89.

CHAPTER 5

CASELLA'S NATIONALISTIC TENDENCIES IN RELATION TO ITALIAN CULTURE AND POLITICS

Casella's manner of expressing nationalism through music evolved throughout his compositional career. The first stylistic period (1902-1914) exhibited nationalism through folk songs and folk genres and evoked the popular Italian style. The second (1914-1920) – Casella's most experimental period – displayed nationalism programmatically, particularly through the use of musical encoding. Casella's last and most prolific period (1920-1946) looked to Italian Baroque and Classical forms and composers to express a national sentiment. This third stylistic period has elicited the most extensive scholarship, including Harvey Sachs's *Music in Fascist Italy*, Catherine Paul's article "Ezra Pound, Alfredo Casella, and the Fascist Cultural Nationalism of the Vivaldi Revival" and Mila De Santis's article "Casella nel ventennio fascista" because it is intimately linked to politics. Fasicist ideals and leadership from 1925 through 1945 played a major role in shaping both Casella's nationalistic ideologies that informed his compositional style, editorial projects, and position as a concert organizer.

Unlike the totalitarian regimes in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, which imposed strict censorships on modern music, the Fascist regime under Benito Mussolini supported the arts and comparatively speaking, permitted much creative freedom among Italian artists. Mussolini, described by biographer Raffaello de Rensis as an amateur violinist and classical music aficionado, rarely banned musical works, and musicians and

composers continued their activities under generally autonomous conditions.⁷⁰ Mussolini, however, did promote nationalistic artistic expression. He articulated his philosophy about artistic freedom thus:

One cannot govern by ignoring art and artists. Art is an essential manifestation of the human spirit. [...] Far be it for me to encourage anything that might resemble an opinion on the state of art. Art falls within the individual. The state has only one duty: not to sabotage it, to make humane conditions for artists, to encourage an artistic and national point of view. I want to declare that the Government with which I have the honor to preside is a sincere friend of art and artists.⁷¹

Casella was one of the artists to benefit from the artistic freedom. In the composer's writings from 1925-1941, most particularly those that appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*, Casella commends the Fascist Party's support of artistic endeavors:

If we consider the music policy of the fascist regime (in all that goes beyond the simple bounds of organization and that might be interpreted as the taking by the State of an esthetic position for or against any particular tendency) one must recognize that, up to the present at least, the policy of the regime has been that of encouraging music in every way and promoting its scope, and also that of permitting to musicians full creative liberty.⁷²

It is true that such statements must be understood in a historical context. Artistic support aside, few artists spoke out against the fascist government in Italy at the time, as

⁷⁰ One of the few pieces he censored was Gian Francesco Malipiero's opera *La favola del figlio cambiato* ("The fable of the changeling son") due not to its musical style but its sexual content in which the second act takes place in brothel (see Richard Taruskin, "Music and Totalitarian Society," in *The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), vol. 4, p. 744).

⁷¹ "Non si può governare ignorando l'arte e gli artisti. L'arte è una manifestazione essenziale dello spirito umano. [...] Dichiaro che è lungi da me l'idea di incoraggiare qualche cosa che possa assomigliare all'arte di stato. L'arte rientra nella sfera dell'individuo. Lo stato ha un solo dovere: quello di non sabotarla, di far condizioni umane agli artisti, di incoraggiarli dal punti di vista artistico e nazionale. Ci tengo a dichiarare che il Governo che ho l'onore di presiedere è un amico sincere dell'arte e degli artisti." (My translation). Benito Mussolini, "Alla mostra del Novecento" *Popolo d'Italia*, March 27, 1923. Quoted in Mila De Santis, "Casella nel ventennio fascista," in *Italian Music During the Fascist Period*, ed. Robert Ilano, Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 376.

⁷² Alfredo Casella, "Music and the State in Italy," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 18, 1939, 6.

becoming a member of the Fascist Party helped ensure one's livelihood. By 1931, loyalty oaths to the party were required in order to maintain a position at any university, which included the music institutions at which many Italian composers (such as Malipiero and Pizzetti) were employed. According to Harvey Sachs, this meant that "the party now began to enroll a vast number of Italians who were apathetic or even silently hostile to the regime" along with those who were true supporters of Fascist doctrine.⁷³

Yet based on Casella's writings and several accounts from other artists who knew Casella, it appears that the composer truly believed in the regime's ideologies. This is all too clearly seen in the similarities between Mussolini's and Casella's views on tradition. In an address to the students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Perugia in early October of 1926, Mussolini said:

Today, when all the conditions most looked forward to by the great Italians – unity first and foremost – have been realized, a great art can be developed in our land, an art that compromises within itself all of life's manifestations and at the same time shapes them, an art that must be traditional and at the same time modern, that must look towards the past at the same time towards the future. We must not remain mediators. We must not simply exploit our cultural heritage; we must create a new heritage to set alongside the ancient one, we must create a new art, an art of our times: a Fascist art.⁷⁴

Casella's artistic vision seems to originate from these very words. Openly declaring fascist allegiances in 1926, his own writings reflected not only support for this Fascist rhetoric in regard to tradition, but also sought to reveal the parallels between the current musical environment and the political one. Casella said in 1932 that "the fusion of

⁷³ Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1987), 41.

⁷⁴ As translated in Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1987), 41 and Catherine Paul, "Ezra Pound, Alfredo Casella, and the Fascist Cultural Nationalism of the Vivaldi Revival," in *Ezra Pound, Language and Persona*, ed. Massimo Bacigalupo and William Pratt (Genoa, Italy: University of Genoa, 2008), 100.

tradition and modernity is the greatest characteristic of Fascist doctrine, and that which constitutes its profound originality and shapes its entire constructive virtues”, and he believed that great art should have the same qualities.⁷⁵ Art and politics were essentially two sides of the same coin in regard to this dichotomy, so interdependent that one could not easily separate them.⁷⁶ As early as 1925, he explains:

But there seems to me to be a close affinity between the beneficial if sometimes chimerical objectives of “Mussolinisme,” and the goal of intellectual restoration sought by Italians of the present day.⁷⁷

By 1940, Casella becomes even more convinced of this parallelism, especially in music:

During the past 15 years, the Italian movement in music has reflected exactly the political climate of the nation, which is a dynamic and essentially modern renewal of tradition. Italian music is today entirely independent of other European music, and presents characteristics which distinguish it from all others.⁷⁸

Intersections between political ideals and artistic trends can be seen in a number of ways, including the rejection of foreign influences in favor of a zealous national sentiment, in concert programming, and in editing projects. Casella attributed the changing musical tastes in Italy, particularly movement away from Russian and French influences to an Italianate artistic style, to the emergence of this Fascist doctrine. “The end of the task of

⁷⁵ “La fusion fra tradizione e modernità è la più alta caratteristica della dottrina fascista, e quella che ne fa la profonda originalità e ne informa tutta la virtù costruttrice.” (My translation.) Alfredo Casella, “Fascismo e musica” *Educazione fascista* 10 (November 1932): 868-869. Quoted in Fiamma Nicolodi, *Musica e Musicisti nel Ventennio Fascista* (Fiesole: Discanto, 1984), 253.

⁷⁶ “But to me it seems necessarily difficult to dissociate the elements which make up the existence of a country; one is ultimately forced to admit the complete interdependence of all events, both intellectual and material, which each day add their quota to the immense, incessant growth of our history. [...] It seems more logical to presume that art and politics are but different aspects of the same system or society in resurrected Italy.” Alfredo Casella, “Music and Politics in Italy,” *Christian Science Monitor*, September 19, 1925, 8.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Alfredo Casella, “Italian Symphonic Renaissance,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 4, 1940, 12.

assimilation coincided with the advent of Fascism,” wrote Casella in his 1939 article “Problemi e posizione attuale della musica italiana”.⁷⁹ Casella further described the way the political regime aided the reemergence of a strictly Italianate style:

In the last fifteen years, the powerful, renewing breeze that Fascism has imprinted upon the whole life of the nation has even penetrated art, freeing it of all foreign subjection and giving new currency to our past, which had been forgotten for so many decades. The new sense of national dignity, faith in our own strength, boldness, and finally, love of danger have transformed artistic life, too, and have made real what for more than thirty years has been purely aspiration and an attempt.⁸⁰

Another intersection can be observed in concert life. Casella’s efforts as an organizer and editor in the 1930s further reflected his support of the regime. While composers and their works were not repressed under the Fascist government, Mussolini’s regime did subject music to the same bureaucratic restructuring that occurred in all other areas of Italian life. A myriad of music unions, committees, organizations, and corporations of provincial and national titles formed within a convoluted and constantly-changing superstructure. In 1935, the Ministry of Popular Culture was formed and attained governing authority over all the existing organizations, which included the General Governing Board of the Theater led by Nicola di Pirra. The most significant change was witnessed in regard to the opera houses across Italy, which were subsidized by the State and subsequently put under its complete control. This same board awarded symphonic and chamber music financial support as well. Casella held intimate knowledge of the inner workings of this system as one of the founding members of the

⁷⁹ Alfredo Casella, “Problemi e posizione attuale della musica italiana,” *Le arti* Vol. 1, No. 3 (Feb. 1939): 256-264 as quoted in Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 139.

⁸⁰ Alfredo Casella, “Tendenze e situazione della musica contemporanea in Italia,” *Il libro italiano nel mondo*, II-5-6 (1941): 99-105 as quoted in Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 138.

Corporazione delle Nuove Musiche (or CDN), along with Malipiero and Gabriele d'Annunzio. The organization served to unite the young musicians of Italy in forming a new Italian style, and put on concerts of new music by Italian composers as well as those from abroad. The new Italian music by composers such as Malipiero and Pizzetti also embraced traditional forms and models, thus further spreading Fascist ideals of tradition.

And while societies like this did not have any overtly political purpose, other festivals during the 1930s, such as the *Festival internazionale di musica* held in Venice and the *Maggio Musicale* in Florence, served as “an example of how performing arts were flourishing under fascism.”⁸¹ Beginning in 1934, after two previously successful festivals, Mussolini began to personally approve plans for the Venice festival and provided monetary support. Casella held the vice-president position of the inaugural International Music Festival in 1930, which featured a wide range of Italian premieres of works by foreign composers, such as Bartok, Milhaud, Bloch, Kodaly, and Hindemith, but also rarely performed works by Casella, Pizzetti, Malipiero, and Respighi. Casella also performed as a soloist, as did Hindemith on viola. In 1932, Casella was commissioned by the Ministry of Popular Culture to write *La favola di Orfeo* for that year’s festival. Based on the original lyrical drama *Orfeo* by fifteenth-century poet Angelo Poliziano, the work’s appearance in the Festival alongside contemporary works by composers such as Poulenc, Ibert, Hindemith, and Gershwin demonstrate a combination of the traditional and modern that Mussolini (and Casella) so admired.⁸²

⁸¹ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 92.

⁸² Similarly, Casella’s *Il deserto tentato*, Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex*, and Berg’s Violin Concerto all appeared on the 1937 *Maggio Musicale* festival with a revival of Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea* (Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 93).

Perhaps the festivals most representative of Mussolini's call to resurrect Italy's past artistic heritage were Siena's *Settimane musicale* (musical weeks), which devoted a week each year at Siena's *Accademia Musicale Chigiana* to the revival and performance of past Italian composers' works. The first, led by Casella in 1939, featured the music of Antonio Vivaldi, which was, as expected, financed in part by the Ministry of Popular Culture. Catherine Paul explains that the revival of Vivaldi's music demonstrated clear nationalistic motivation, and demonstrated a looking to Italy's past in order to "bring new energy to Italy's cultural scene."⁸³ Reviving Vivaldi's music reflected the Fascist ideals of "exploiting heritage" and the combination of the traditional and modern, not only in the attention paid to the Italian baroque master, but in the programming of the works and the treatment of them in terms of transcription.

Casella, the musical director of what became called "Vivaldi Week", oversaw the programming of various instrumental, sacred choral works, and the first performance of Vivaldi's *L'Olympiade*. He also transcribed and edited Vivaldi's *Gloria* RV 589, which premiered at the festival and was unpublished and little known at the time. Paul explains that Casella's transcriptions of Vivaldi's vocal works in particular demonstrate a negotiation between tradition and modernity, as he struggled with being true to the original work while wanting to revive it with a modern audience in mind. She stresses that "Casella insisted on presenting Vivaldi's music as faithfully as possible, to get a real sense of eighteenth-century musical norms and tastes" but in some cases, Casella "restored" the music "by adding elements he believed should be present."⁸⁴ Furthermore,

⁸³ Paul, 93.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 93; 99.

while modern transcriptions that “blunt the spirit of older music” were frowned upon, due to the improvisatory possibilities inherent in Vivaldi’s music, performers were encouraged to take artistic licenses “in the spirit of the twentieth century and of the new fascist era.”⁸⁵ Overall, Casella’s part in recreating Vivaldi’s works within a modern performance context answered Mussolini’s call for a Fascist art that integrates that which is both traditional and modern.

In light of Casella’s writings, one finds that the composer’s views on tradition, modernity, and foreign influence meld into one political and artistic belief system. It is no mistake that these in turn reinforced nationalistic impulses and made them more evident in the works of his third stylistic period through the use of traditional Italian models and forms to create a new Italian style. In addition to these types of works, Casella wrote one dedicatory work to Mussolini, a dramatic work in one act titled *Il deserto tentato* (loosely translates to “The Untamed Desert”) based on Italy’s war with and subsequent occupation of Ethiopia in 1935. Casella describes the work as

a mystery of predominately religious and martial character, evoking the abstract voices of virgin Nature, anxious to be fertilized by human civilization; there would be the arrival of a group of aviators, who descend from the sky into the horrible desert like modern Argonauts; their struggle against the dark forces of barbarism and the snares of nature, and finally peace after the transformation of the colossal surroundings by gigantic human edifices.⁸⁶

Although the work did not receive favorable reviews, it does demonstrate the lengths to which Casella went to show his enthusiasm for the Fascist movement.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Paul, 99; 103

⁸⁶ Casella, *Music in My Time*, 214.

⁸⁷ For more information regarding the work’s reception, see Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 137.

Both his writings and his compositions garnered him the unofficial position as “the Mussolini of Italian music.”⁸⁸ However, Massimo Mila, music historian and part of the anti-Fascist movement, describes in an interview his impression of Casella: “Until the time of the racial laws, Casella was a fascist – not an evil one, but full of enthusiasm. But I saw him later, during the war, in 1940 or ’41, and he was undergoing a complete change. He was beginning to understand.”⁸⁹

In the last years of his life, Casella retreated from his nationalistic views. He writes in 1939, “I believe today that the question of whether a given work of art has ‘national character’ has largely been eliminated....None of us today worries about being ‘national’ when he writes music.”⁹⁰ His final works from the 1940s, removed of all national sentiment, exhibit a quasi-dodecaphonic style, as well as newfound universal spirituality through works such as *Tre Canti Sacri* (1943) and his last work, *Missa solemnis ‘Pro pace’* (1944) written in response to the war.

This change in style and attitude towards the end of his life should not negate the remarkable impact Casella’s music had on twentieth-century musical culture. The composer’s love for his country found a voice in each of his stylistic periods, and his music was pivotal in establishing an Italian instrumental genre that had for so long been dormant. This exploration into Casella’s expressions of nationalism suggests many new avenues for future research. An amazing amount of Casella’s writings, such as his

⁸⁸ Erik Levi, “The Reception of Contemporary Italian Music in Britain during the Fascist Era,” in *Italian Music During the Fascist Period*, ed. Robert Iliano, Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 16.

⁸⁹ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 53. While Mila suggests that Casella’s political views changed between 1940 and 1941, it is important to note that Casella still expressed Fascist sympathies in his articles published in the same time span.

⁹⁰ Casella, *Music in My Time*, 231.

autobiography *21+26* and numerous articles in Italian journals need to be translated and made more widely available to the scholarly community. Casella's works that were not included in this thesis, especially those from the 1930s, deserve attention in terms of analysis and their connection to Casella's artistic beliefs. In addition, an examination of these works could investigate the possibility of a further delineation between Casella's works of the 1920s and those of the 1930s and early 1940s. Increased scholarly attention will not only further explicate the different sides of Casella's nationalistic expression, but will also provide a deeper understanding of the role of nationalism in twentieth-century Italian modernism. Such an understanding will confirm once more that Casella's life work truly is "a music unquestionably Italian in idiom."⁹¹

⁹¹ Alfredo Casella, *21+26*, (Rome: n.p., 1931); Alessandra Carlotta Pellegrini, ed., *21+26*, (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2001), 41. English translation from Reginald Smith Brindle "Italy," 288.

APPENDIX

LIST OF CASELLA'S ARTICLES IN *THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR* (1925-1946)

Article Title	Date
The New Musical Italy	Jan. 17, 1925; p. 7
Igor Stravinsky in Rome	May 23, 1925; p. 7
The Roman Musical Season	June 6, 1925; p. 11
Corporazione Delle Nuove Musiche	June 20, 1925; p. 10
Music and These Years of Transition	Jul. 18, 1925; p. 12
The Italian "Three"	Aug. 29, 1925; p. 12
The Teaching of Music in Italy	Sept. 12, 1925; p. 8
Music and Politics in Italy	Sept. 19, 1925; p. 8
Italians and Foreigners at Venice	Nov. 7, 1925; p. 10
The Return of Discipline	Dec. 19, 1925; p. 10
Wagner and Verdi	Dec. 26, 1925; p. 6
The Influence of Bach	Jan. 30, 1926; p. 8
The Fragility of Music	Feb. 13, 1926; p. 8
Toscanini and the Interpretation of Music	Feb. 20, 1926; p. 8
Melody and Intellectuality	Apr. 24, 1926; p. 9
Modernism in Music	Apr. 29, 1926; p. 8
Painting and Music in Italy	May 1, 1926; p. 8
Puccini's Last Opera	May 29, 1926; p. 10
1900	Dec. 11, 1926; p. 10
The "Crisis" in the Lyric Theater	Dec. 24, 1926; p. 10

Alfredo Casella on Modern Music	Jan. 13, 1927; p. 6
Of the Popular Element in Music	Mar. 5, 1927; p. 14
Neoclassicism in Italy	Jan. 7, 1928; p. 12
Rossini	Mar. 10, 1928; p. 8
About "Returns"	Oct. 13, 1928; p. 12
Ildebrando Pizzetti	Oct. 27, 1928; p. 10
Antonio Vivaldi	Dec. 8, 1928; p. 10
On Artist "Protection"	Jan. 5, 1929; p. 6
An Operatic Roman Holiday	Mar. 9, 1929; p. 10
Neo-Classicism to Neo-Romanticism	Apr. 20, 1929; p 10
The Italian Artistic Syndicates	Jan. 18, 1930; p. 13
The Musical Life of Naples	Apr. 12, 1930; p. 7
Casella's 'Donna Serpente'	Apr. 16, 1932; p. 12
Girolamo Frescobaldi	Feb. 24, 1936; p. 10
Music and the State in Italy	Mar. 11, 1939; p. 5
Music and the State of Italy	Mar. 18, 1939; p. 6
Music in Italy	May 6, 1939; p. 6
Siena Honors Vivaldi	Dec. 2, 1939; p. 7
Siena Honors Vivaldi	Dec. 16, 1939; p. 15
Busoni's 'Arlecchino'	Mar. 16, 1940; pg. 6
Italian Symphonic Renaissance	May 4, 1940; pg. 12
Scarlatti Opera Revived	Oct. 19, 1940; p. 13
New Revival of Activity Found Throughout Country	Dec. 21, 1946; p. 8

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