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The Case for Casella:

Towards new methods of understanding and performing the Italian Modernist pianist-composer

Part 1: Thesis and Bibliography

By Ellen Falconer

This thesis is submitted to the Royal College of Music for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis explores the piano music of Alfredo Casella. While there is much literature pertaining to Casella's position in Fascist Italy, much of it fails to utilise archival sources. Similarly, the literature offers little stylistic analysis of Casella's music, or discussion as to how performers might approach, interpret and perform his works. This thesis offers a tripartite insight into Casella. Part 1 reviews Casella's biography and compositional process: Chapter 1 repositions the pianist-composer within Fascist Italy, reviewing archival sources including diaries, letters and personal artefacts and emphasising Casella's importance as a pianist. Chapter 2 utilises sketchbooks and scores to outline his three-step compositional process. Part 2 of the thesis offers a theoretical interrogation of the pianist-composer. Chapter 3 gives a comparative and descriptive stylistic analysis of Casella's piano works, based on LaRue and Keller models for analysis. Tactility, and tactile means of stylistic analysis is also discussed. Casella's compositional style borrows tonality, form and structure, and style of other composers. Casella's writings on music, and specifically interpretation and performance, are used to form a method for interpreting his works in Chapter 4. In the pianist-composer's own words, interpretation is a form of construction, building on historical and contextual understanding, score analysis, and the performer's own response to the work being performed. Part 3 of the thesis comprises case studies, applying the stylistic and interpretative approaches outlined in part 2 to five works: *Toccata* Op. 6 (1904), *Sonatina* Op. 28 (1916), *Undici pezzi infantili* Op. 32 (1920), *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* Op. 59 (1936) and *Sei Studi* Op. 70 (1942-44). These are supplemented with recordings (found in the appendices). This thesis argues the case for Casella as an original and innovative composer whose works offer many interpretive opportunities for performers.

Acknowledgements

I must express my gratitude to the Royal Musical Association and the Delmas Foundation, who both funded parts of this research. Thanks to Universal Edition for reproductions of *Undici pezzi infantili* manuscript. The Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice have been hugely supportive, funding and hosting me as a visiting scholar, and have generously permitted use of reproductions of Casella's scores and sketchbooks throughout this thesis. Special mentions must go to Francisco Rocca, who let me explore every single box, folder and document in the Fondo Casella, and to Francesco Fontanelli who helped decipher parts of Casella's handwriting. Thanks to the Royal College of Music research community. I want to especially recognise the fantastic RCM library staff: Jo Lappin, Peter Linnitt, Federica Nardacci and Monika Pietras all helped me find books, resources and music that I never would have found on my own, continuously made things available for me throughout the pandemic, sorted inter-library loans, and allowed me to come into the library outside of borrowing and opening hours. Special thanks to Federica, who helped with translations. Librarians and archivists are the unsung heroes making research possible.

Huge thanks to my incredible supervisory team: Christina Guillaumier, Danny Driver and Ben Earle! I am so grateful to Christina – my directing supervisor – for getting me to the end of this. All three have challenged, stimulated and motivated me tremendously over the last three and a half years. It has been such a pleasure working with them, and I am ever grateful for their support.

Then there are my beloved friends and family. Tremendous thanks to Walter and Caroline Gubert. So much of this thesis was written in their flat during Covid-19. Their generosity and friendship is such a treasure. I also would never have survived London without my expat family, the Lui's, especially my ex-pat mum, Suzy. Thank you all my wonderful friends both here in the UK, in Australia, and everywhere in between. Huge thanks to everyone and anyone who fed me, plied me with wine, let me shout about music at them, made me laugh, and loved me through this, especially Yuki. Thank you Larry for introducing me to *la generazione dell'ottanta*. Massive thanks to my dear old man friend Anthony, who makes sure I never take myself too seriously. David, you let me shout and rant a lot, listened to lots of bad practice during lockdown, and made sure I ate and slept – thank you.

Lastly, thanks to both my families in Australia. I have missed them tremendously. I would especially like to thank my parents, Michael and Jane. I love them very much.

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Introduction

When I first began this project, I knew very little about Alfredo Casella. I did not know that he had been such a prolific performer, as well as composer and teacher. Nor did I know that he had grown-up (both literally and metaphorically) alongside Ravel, Enescu, and Stravinsky for much of his life, or that he was responsible for bringing Modernism to Italy, and introducing the nation to so much Twentieth Century music. I discovered him through the music of Ottorino Respighi and Gian Francesco Malipiero. Casella was an unknown character, not widely discussed, and seldom performed. Yet, from what I had read, he seemed important – more so than either Malipiero or Respighi – to the development of Italian Modernism in the first half of the Twentieth Century.

My central research question is: how can we understand Alfredo Casella's piano music? To find the answer to this question, I first needed to answer several other questions: who was Alfredo Casella, how did he compose, in what style did he compose, and what were his views on performance and interpretation? Simply, these questions were answered by learning and analysing all his piano works, investigating Casella's historical and musical context, and any archives he left behind. However, being a PhD thesis, only five piano works have been selected to be discussed so as to demonstrate how I answered these four questions. Importantly, however, this thesis does not offer the *only* means of understanding Casella's music. It is *one* method to understand and interpret his piano works, but not the only way.

The result of these research questions was four-fold. Firstly, there is evidently a need to revise Casella's biography. As Chapter 1 demonstrates, Casella's being portrayed merely as a composer is unjust, given his prominence as a concert pianist, and the many musical festivals and cultural institutions he supported during his life. He was a pianist first, performer-pedagogue second, and cultural ambassador third. Secondly, Chapter 2 presents a detailed comparative examination of Casella's compositional materials and archives: drafts, sketches, completed manuscripts and published first editions. It is the first study of its kind regarding Casella. Thirdly, Chapter 3 presents an original method for stylistic analysis, outlining and describing the concept of tactile style, and how this is a means of categorising and understanding style through feeling and gesture when playing. I posit that if we can analyse style through the written and the heard (the score and listening), then we can also analyse and categorise style through the tactile, and gestural experiences, of playing. Finally, Chapter 4 presents an original framework for pianistic interpretation. Centred around an unpublished article by Casella on interpretation, this chapter discusses his means of constructing an

interpretation, using a never before discussed archival source. Casella's method of constructing an interpretation is then applied to the case studies that comprise the final third of this thesis.

There are many comprehensive and biographical resources in English on both Respighi and Malipiero, Casella's more famous peers.[1] Italian-language scholarship on music in the early Twentieth Century, and music during Fascism, focusses on these two composers equally alongside others, but more generally discusses music of this period from the perspective of politics, and sometimes offers a generalised biography or discussion of an individual's compositional style. They are more historical analyses, rather than investigations into the music of specific composers. Rarely do they touch on how performers might go interpret or perform the music from this period. Most notable from these general texts are the collected works by Fiamma Nicolodi, who delves extensively into the history of twentieth-century Italian music.[2] In English-language, we are greeted with scant resources. Various scholars, such as Waterhouse, Earle and Sachs have written invaluable texts that all mention Casella, and detail music during Fascist Italy. Yet they do not offer detailed analyses beyond a single work, nor do they offer a performance-focused discussion of Casella's music. Just as scholarship specifically pertaining to Casella is scant, so too are recordings of his works. There are a limited number of recordings of his complete piano oeuvre, and several movements from larger pieces appear in various collections.[3] However, the majority of these recordings sound the same: his pieces are played extremely quickly, with little many of the various interpretive possibilities evident in the scores brought out or accentuated.

Thus I was presented with what initially seemed like a vacuum surrounding Casella: limited sources, limited recordings, and all claiming that he was a Fascist and that his music was not particularly aesthetically rich. So I began investigating in the most authentic manner accessible to me: through playing his music, and reading the scores. As this thesis demonstrates, Casella's music and character is complex, curious, and worthy of performance. He should not be reduced

[1] Respighi's biography has been translated in English, and there are various biographical sources as well.
Elsa Respighi, *Ottorino Respighi* (London: Ricordi, 1962).
Lee G Barrow, *Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2004).
Michael Webb, *Ottorino Respighi: His Life and Times* (Kibworth Harcourt: Troubador Press, 2019).
Leading Italian scholar John CG Waterhouse focussed much of his research on Gian Francesco Malipiero. Not only was much of his doctoral research on Malipiero, but he published extensively on the composer, culminating in his book *Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973): The Life and Times of a Wayward Genius* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013).

[2] Fiamma Nicolodi has written extensively on music from this period, and presents as 'the gate-keeper' of scholarship surrounding this music, and Casella. She also inspired and influenced a new generation of scholars in the 1990s, including Mila de Santis, who helped catalogue Casella's archives housed at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini.
Fiamma Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista* (Fiesole: Discanto, 1984).
Fiamma Nicolodi, *Musica Italiana del primo Novecento* (Florence: Leo S Olschki, 1980).
Fiamma Niolodi, *Gusti e tendenze del Novecento musicale in Italia* (Florence: Sansoni, 1982).
Mila De Santis (ed.), *Alfredo Casella e l'Europa* (Fienze: Leo S Olschki, 2003).

[3] See Appendix 2: Casella piano works discography.

to being described as 'a fascist – not an evil one, but full of enthusiasm.'[4] Nor should his music be denoted as simply neoclassical.[5] There is so much more to him – as both a musician and a man – that that. Casella was an Italian Modernist, and our views of him should not be limited to ones relating to mis-informed political readings, or poor displays of his music.

Structure of the thesis

This research approaches Casella from two angles – a source-based one, and a theoretical one – and then applies this in a practical means to five of his piano works. This is reflected in the three-part structure of the thesis. The first two thirds of the thesis outline the literature and methodologies used to create an understanding of Casella. Part 1 investigates archival and biographical sources, while Part 2 presents theoretical frameworks for understanding Casella's compositional style, and how to interpret his piano works. Performance informs the theoretical understanding of Casella, and the various discussions and frameworks presented throughout each of these chapters. Part 3 applies these theoretical and source based understandings to five case studies, each of which demonstrate the variety, and simultaneous unity, of style and performance possibilities throughout Casella's compositional oeuvre.

Part 1, Chapter 1 outlines Casella's biography, and presents a definition of Italian Modernism. It does not attempt to cover every aspect of Casella's life, or detail all his musical compositions and activities, which is beyond the scope of a PhD thesis. It highlights the major events and experiences of Casella's life, and the need for a new, revised and complete biography of the composer to be written. This chapter draws on all Casella's archival sources – something not done in biographical sources.[6] Various assertions have been made about Casella and his political leanings (whether he was or was not a Fascist), and differently present his importance as a composer and cultural diplomat. This biography does not attempt to correct those assertions, saying if or why various authors are or are not correct. Different people have different understandings on what it means to be fascist, and what importance an individual plays within a society. However, it does attempt to present a more informed view of Casella, incorporating elements of his private correspondence into our biographical understanding of

[4] Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (New York: WW Norton & Co, 1988), 53.
[5] John CG Waterhouse and Virgilio Bernardoni, "Casella, Alfredo," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001, accessed 27th May 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.05080.
[6] The only major biographical source that incorporates Casella's archives – letters, diaries, unpublished writings – is the catalogue of the Fondo Casella. There have been various other publications since then that present Casella's writings and various other findings from the archives, such as those articles published by the Fondazione's journal *Archival Sources,* but no revised biography has been forthcoming.
Palazzetti, Nicolò. "From Paris to Rome. Alfredo Casella and Béla Bartók in the Early Twentieth Century." *Archival Notes*, No. 3 (2018), 1-22. (Venice: Fondazione Giorgio Cini).

him. Importantly, I do not believe that Casella was a fascist, but more an opportunist, or a mercenary, if one is to be crass. Whether Casella was or was not a Fascist is not important to this thesis, and, more importantly, irrelevant to how we might interpret and perform Casella's piano works. A work is more than just the man who wrote it.

The second chapter (Chapter 2, Part 1) is the product of archival work. It outlines Casella's compositional process. While Casella's archives reveal many interesting facets of his life beyond the scope of this thesis, they highlight two important features of Casella's composing: he did not compose at the piano, and works took many months and revisions to complete. Casella comes from the tradition of the late nineteenth-century pianist-composer, at the tail of the 'Golden Age of Pianism'.[7] Having studied with Diémer, Cortot, and Fauré, and being an established pianist before turning to composition, one would assume the instrument is at hand when composing. Yet the archival sources would show someone who composed at a desk, rather than the instrument.

Part 2 interrogates theoretical understandings of stylistic analysis and performance interpretation. Chapter 3 explores various aspects of understanding and elucidating style, and presents a means of analysing Casella's compositional style. Various methods of stylistic analysis are discussed. Jan LaRue's framework is combined with various others, and performance-related considerations to construct an analytical framework for Casella's works.[8] Issues of tactility are interwoven in this discuss: if we can hear and read style, it makes sense that the performer would experience that through touch and gesture when playing as well. Given that it is a central view of this thesis that it is ultimately the performer who realises stylistic analysis through the act of performance, tactility is key to this discussion of style. Thus, to make the best kind of analytical framework, the analysis should be done to with the performer, and all of their sensual experiences, as the target audience of analysis.

Chapter 4 investigates interpretation through performance. One of the most exciting discoveries I made whilst working through Casella's archives was an unpublished draft for an article on pianistic interpretation.[9] In this article, Casella outlines his views on how to construct an interpretation, and what considerations a performer must take to make a convincing, or good, interpretation. Most importantly, Casella states that while there is only essence, or character, to

[7] Kenneth Hamilton, *After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press. 2008), 12, 14.
[8] Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis,* second edition, edited by Marian Green LaRue (Sterling Heights: Harmonie Park Press, 2011).
[9] Alfredo Casella, *Minuta di articolo sull'interpretazione*, Box 25, Folder A, ASc [Interpretazione], Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice. See Appendix 3.

a work – a work only has one meaning – there can be as many interpretations of a work as there are performers and listeners. He thus highlights the importance of the performer and the listener in understanding and interpreting music. There are moments that feed into the wider discussion of Italian aesthetics during the 1930s. Casella's understanding of interpretation, as well as my own interpretive process as a pianist, are outlined. This has been used to construct an interpretation of Casella's works, whose essences are not obvious or strikingly clear from the score alone.

The final section of the thesis, Part 3, comprises case studies, investigating the compositional process, stylistic analysis and a possible interpretation. The works chosen are:

1. *Toccata* Op. 6 (1904)
2. *Sonatina* Op. 28 (1916)
3. *Undici pezzi infantili* Op. 32 (1920)
4. *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* Op. 59 (1936), and
5. *Sei Studi* Op. 70 (1944).

Choosing the Case Studies

My first point of entry into researching Casella was by playing his works: understanding of the scores through playing, undertaking the negotiations that happen when we read, perform, and interpret a score, and the subsequent sounds made. I began at the beginning of his oeuvre, with *Pavane,* Op. 1, and slowly moved my way through Casella's pieces. Concomitantly, I began listening: finding as many possible recordings, and liner and programme notes on Casella's music, and seeing which works had been performed or written about most. Only a limited number of works have been written about in an academic context, most notably *Nove pezzi* Op. 24 (1914).[10]

As my reading expanded, another widely held belief became apparent: that Casella had three compositional periods, or styles – the *tre maniere* – which stopped evolving in 1920; and, secondly, the people writing about Casella's music were not performers. Given that I am first and foremost a pianist, I knew I could easily address this issue of non-performers writing about

[10] Both Ben Earle and Francesco Fontanelli discuss *Nove Pezzi* in their works on Italian Modernism, and both particularly look at the *in modo funebre*, dedicated to Stravinsky.
Ben Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
Francesco Fontanelli, *Casella, Parigi e la geurra. Inquietudini moderniste da Notte di Maggio e Elegia Eroica* (Bologna: Albisani Editore, 2015).

Casella's piano works by including performance and interpretation as part of my research. Yet the issue of Casella's compositional style needed addressing. To tackle this, I chose works both not commonly recorded or performed, and spanning Casella's life.

1902-1916 was Casella's most prolific period for piano compositions. It seemed necessary to choose a work from early on in his compositional career. The *Toccata* – Casella's third work for piano – was chosen because it is his first attempt at a long-form piece, and was much more structurally, harmonically, and technically complex than his first two compositions for piano. The *Sonatina* was a more obvious choice for the inter-war period. As stated above, *Nove pezzi* has been written about elsewhere, and to add a further score analysis repeating the words of my colleagues fails to offer a new contribution to scholarship.[11] Casella's other major work, *A notte alta* Op. 30 (1917), has similarly been discussed much (although in programme notes and reviews, rather than academic texts). Thus, it seemed sensible to include Casella's other large-form work for piano – *Sonatina Op. 28* – from the World War 1 period that had not been written or performed much. Two works I could not avoid: the *Undici pezzi infantili*, which are heralded as being a major turning point in Casella's career, and signal his maturity as a composer, and the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata*, which is Casella's most fascist composition, and longest work for piano.[12] *Sei studi* was his last work for piano, and his penultimate composition, which made them also suitable to include, showing a mature and settled compositional style at the end of an illustrious career.

But there was more to this decision that just what others had written about or played. There was also the tactile and technical considerations of each work, and the sound-world of Casella that each evoked. The five works listed above best encapsulate Casella's style from various perspectives. They all offer variations and exemplifications on what Casella's sound is: his tonalities, his use of structure, expression, and gestures. They also offer examples into what his style is in an embodied, tactile sense. With all Casella's piano works, but especially with these five selected, I, and arguably every performer, can feel that it is his music under our hands. There is something unique in the tactile experience of playing Casella.

[11] However, both Earle and Fontanelli's works could be added to with a discussion on performance and interpretation.

[12] Casella claimed himself that the *Undici pezzi infantili* were a change in his compositional career. This was also supported by his critics, such as Guido Gatti claiming that he had reached an affirmation of style and maturity during this period.
Alfredo Casella, *Muic in My Time,* trans. and ed. Spencer Norton (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 151.
Guido M. Gatti. "Some Italian Composers of To-Day. VI. Alfredo Casella (Continued)." *The Musical Times* 62, no. 941 (1921), accessed 29th May 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/908816, 470, 471.
The *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* is deemed a fascist composition given that it was written for the 1936 Venice Festival internazionale di musica contemperanea, and amidst Casella's various other fascist compositions.
Alfredo Casella, *I segreti della giara,* ed. Cesare De Marchi (Milan: il Saggiatore, 2016), 168, 169.

The Importance of Performance

Throughout this thesis you will notice an important argument continually arising: all roads lead to performance. Performance is crucial to this thesis. It has informed every element of research: compositional process, stylistic analysis, interpretation, and even which works were chosen for the case studies. Whether it be compositional process, stylistic analysis, or building an interpretation, these three things can only be fully realised through performance. Any form of analysis means little without performing and hearing a work, and fully understanding how it is constructed (both literally, aurally and performatively). I posit that music does not fully exist without performance. Thus, all research, analysis, and investigation has been undertaken with a view to enhance performance.

I should also note that the performances submitted as part of this thesis are not as I originally intended them to be in two ways. Given the Covid-19 pandemic, I (like everyone) was forced to change various aspects of my life and consequently my PhD. Initially, I had intended to submit video recordings of concerts. I had planned to do two recitals in June and December 2020, programming Casella's works alongside other works that influenced them, and which are mentioned throughout this thesis. This was not to happen, so I submitted audio-only recordings. Also due to Covid was the change in my practice. After six months of not playing on a grand piano, or in a room bigger than a shoebox, I was confronted with a return to playing on a concert grand piano in a big room lined with wooden panels. While all pianists know how to deal with the demands of quickly adapting their performance to the liveness of the instrument and space they are performing with, I also had to deal with the added challenge of recording, rather than playing live. There is a different energy, a different method of preparation and practising, and a higher endurance required for performing live, for recording and rerecording. Due to these constraints, the recordings submitted alongside this thesis form part of the appendices, and are supplementary to the thesis. There is further potential to re-record or perform these works live as part of further research into performing Casella. The links to each recording are embedded in each case study. Links to the recordings can also be found **here**.

Boundaries and limitations

This thesis is by no means a tell-all exposé on Casella. That is far beyond the scope of a PhD. As stated previously, the focus of this thesis is to offer a new methods for performers – primarily pianists – to understand, interpret, and perform Casella's music today.

There are various limitations to this research, some more obvious than others. I was limited as to which archives I could access, and was not able to view and use various scores pertaining to works discussed in the case studies. For example, when researching *Toccata* Op. 6 (1904), I received no communication back from Ricordi & Co publishers about receiving a digital reproduction of their manuscripts, and was unable to visit their archives in person due to Covid-19. Having access to the score would likely have further informed my research and hypotheses as to the evolution of the work and its compositional process.

Every stylistic analysis has limitations. When analysing Casella, I chose an analytical framework that posits the performance of the work as the final actualisation of stylistic analysis. Thus I excluded various other methods of analysis, limiting my outcomes. Had I undertaken a Schenkerian analysis, or been influenced more by the frameworks of Narmour or Lang instead of LaRue, I would have a vastly different discussion and understanding of Casella's style. It would make analysing all Casella's piano works in the same way difficult, and not help to enhance performance. This is true of any different analytic framework I could have chosen. Different frameworks and methods would subsequently lead to different results, depending on the focus of the analysis.

Similarly, had I delved further into Adorno, Hegelianism, Gentile, Croce, and various other aesthetics philosophers, I likely would have had a different understanding of Casella's idea of how to interpret a work (albeit, removed from playing). I used Casella's views on interpretation and my own performance practice to frame my discussion on interpretation, thus my discussion of interpretation is limited. I do not delve into the arguments of whether a work has one or many meanings, but instead take Casella's view – that a work has a single essence, or character – as the basis for how to understand a work. My experience and knowledge as a pianist and my own process and method for constructing an interpretation have also limited the discussion on interpretation and performance.

There are various set boundaries to my research. I purposely chose not to include Casella's four-hand piano works, or his works for piano and orchestra. Logistically, organising performances of these works would have been extremely difficult (in hindsight, near impossible, given the pandemic). Not only this, it would have radically altered the scope of the thesis. It would have made the stylistic analysis broader in scope, and potentially the sole focus of the research, instead of performance. Investigating Casella's piano four-hand compositions would have required not only a duo-partner with ample time and patience to work with, but investigating his chamber and duo compositions to understand his treatment of voices in multi-part writing. Similarly, looking at his works for piano and orchestra would have required

analysing his orchestration style and methods. This would have pulled the focus away from performance and interpretation and more towards compositional process. As a performer, I wanted to keep the focus on Casella's piano works. Thus, I set the boundaries as to what I investigated and analysed.

This leads into the question as to whether other art forms should be considered when discussing Casella's works, and whether dance, art or architecture played an influencing role on his compositional style. Casella composed several works for stage, including his ballet *La Giara* Op. 41 (1924) and opera *La donna serpente* Op. 50 (1931). Casella was involved in the premieres of both these works, and likely would have had input into the choreography and staging therein.[13] However, a discussion into other art forms such as dance is beyond the scope of this thesis, as it broadens the scope beyond Casella's piano music, and into a discussion of him as a director and conductor, as well as creative director. Similarly, to look at dance and theatre during the fascist period without reference to Casella's own stage works would be an incomplete discussion.

Similarly, one might look to visual art and architecture to question the influence of fascism on Casella's work. There are two issues within this line of questioning. Firstly, as has been stated above, this thesis is not a discussion of fascism. To look into the regime's influence on art pulls the discussion away from how we might interpret Casella's works today, and is a thesis topic in itself. Secondly, if we look to the relationship between art or architecture and music, we are faced with an extensive discussion on aesthetics which is beyond the scope of this thesis. Chapter 4 delves into this discussion, looking at aesthetics and interpretation, and the philosophies of Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile, the prominent aestheticians of Casella's time and the fascist regime. Visual art, like music, was largely exempt from political censorship, as is discussed in Chapter 1, except where it was made for political or propaganda purposes. Architecture, however, was a largely state-sanctioned art form. While one might be tempted to draw parallels between music and architecture, especially when looking at Casella's fascist composition, *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op. 59, this is a discussion much more broad than the capabilities of this thesis. While scholars have tried to draw comparisons between the aesthetic values and neoclassical trends of fascist architecture and the music of composers, the topic is largely untouched other than singular references, and well beyond the scope of this research.[14]

[13] Casella was present for the premiere of *La Giara* in Paris in 1920, and directed and conducted the premiere of *La donna serpente* in Rome in 1932.
Casella, *I segreti della giara*, 137, 148.

[14] Earle likens to Casella's music to architect Piacentini in his book on Dallapiccola, yet it is done as a comparison of both craftsmen attempting to create monumental neo-baroque works in their relevant fields, and nothing further. Earle himself, in conversation, notes the difficulty of attempting to reconcile fascist architecture and music, given the broad and differing aesthetic and political considerations for each field of art. There is also little overlap in the scholarship on music and

I hope that this thesis gives you a greater understanding of Casella than when you started reading. I know this thesis will raise many further questions about Casella. That is a good thing. More discussions, more analyses, and especially more interpretations and performances of Casella's music can offer further understandings as to who he was and what his music is. This research is an entry-point into Casella, and aims to offer one means of understanding his music, and how to interpret it.

architecture in Fascist Italy. Other than Dallapiccola using Piacentini's name as a slur against Casella music, which Earle makes reference to, the two art forms are usually discussed individually.

Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola,* 93.

George P Arms, "Italian Fascist Architecture: Theory and Image," *Art Journal* Vol. 21, No. 1 (Autumn, 1961), 7-12, accessed 19th April 2022, https://doi.org/10.2307/774290, 7.

Guido Salvetti and Hugh Ward-Perkins, "Political Ideologies and Musical Poetics in 20th-Century Italy," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia,* Vol. 35 No. 1 (2000), 135-157.

Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "Why are so many Fascist Monuments Still standing in Italy?" *Culture Desk, The New Yorker*, October 5th 2017, accessed 1st December 2021, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/why-are-so-many-fascist-monuments-still-standing-in-italy.

Nicki Mafi, "Fascist Architecture through the Ages," *Architectural Digest*, 14th November 2016, accessed 1st December 2021, https://www.architecturaldigest.com/gallery/fascist-architecture-through-ages.

Billiani and Pennacchietti, "Fascism and Architecture," in *Architecture and the Novel under the Italian Fascist Regime* (London: Pallgrave Macmillan, 2019), 61-95, accessed 1st December 2021, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19428-4_4, 63.

Mark Antliff, "Fascism, Modernism, and Modernity," *The Art Bulletin* Vol. 84 No 1 (March 2002), 148-168, accessed 1st December 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3177257, 165.

Part 1: Source-Based Studies

Chapter 1: Casella's Biography

Before delving into his music, we should endeavour to understand who Alfredo Casella was. The pianist-composer's biography needs revising: he should be thought of as a pianist-composer, not just a composer or teacher. Casella's prominence as a performer, and training at the piano has largely been forgotten. Current biographical sources are scant or outdated, and fail to offer a complete overview of his compositional oeuvre or utilise archival sources.[15] No sources seem to offer a comprehensive or balanced view of him as a musician who shaped Italian Modernism. To reassess and reinvigorate Casella as a multifaceted musician, and subsequently better understand and interpret his music, it is necessary to provide a brief portrait of the man, and the world he lived in.

Italian Modernism, and some other definitions

In this thesis, Italian Modernism is defined as the period between 1900-1945 in Italian music, art and culture.[16] Various scholars argue that Italian Modernism began in 1915, with the nation's entry into the First World War, and when Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* premiered in

[15] The most detailed biographies of Casella's are, respectively, that written by John CG Waterhouse and Bernardoni (Oxford Music Online), which was last updated in 2001, and that by Ariella Lanfranchi (*Treccani*) from 1978. These biographies are encyclopaedic entries, that details the 'facts' of his life, and suggest Casella's involvement in various musical organisations and events, but do not offer much analytical insight into the composer, the style of his works, or his position in Fascist Italy. Other sources on Casella's life – such as Harvey Sachs' and Ben Earle's texts on Fascist Italy – provide even more limited biographical accounts of Casella, where he is merely a character among many.
Waterhouse and Bernardoni, "Alfredo Casella."
Ariella Lanfranchi, "Casella, Alfredo" *Treccani, Dictionario biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 21 (1978), accessed 31st May 2021, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alfredo-casella_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/.

[16] These two definitions of Italian Modernism and Modernism comes from an extensive literature of sources discussing Italian history, Italian music of the twentieth century and *la generazione dell'ottanta,* and musical modernism. The definition for Italian Modernism relies heavily on the following sources:
Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, 14, 16.
Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy since 1976* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 338, 374.
Richard Taruskin, *Nations, States, and Peoples* in *The Oxford History of Western Music, Volume 3: The Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 194.
Casella, *Muic in My Time*, and his various other writings.
The definition of musical modernism, draws on the following sources, as well as those listed above:
Leon Botstein, "Modernism," (*Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001, accessed 21st January 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40625).
Alastair Williams, *New Music and the Claims of Modernity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1997), 3.
Daniel Albright, *Modernism and Music: an Anthology of Sources* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1, 3, 6, 23.
Dana Gooley et al. "Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Nationalism, 1848-1914," (*Journal of the American Musicological Society,* Vol. 66, No. 2 (Summer, 2013), 523-549, accessed 2nd May 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jams.2013.66.2.523), 531.

Milan.[17] For Casella, Modernism began earlier, in 1900 with the beginning of his own career.[18] It thus seems that this earlier date, when Casella and his Italian contemporaries began their careers in earnest, and labelled themselves as anti-romantic, is a more appropriate date. In music, Italian Modernism revolved around and was championed by *la generazione dell'ottanta*: Respighi, Malipiero, Casella, Pizzetti, Cui, and various other composers who trained and came to prominence before the Fascist regime and we born in the 1880s. Like other European forms of Modernism (or subgenres therein), it was built on the idea of rejecting nineteenth century Romanticism, being radical and new in thought, style, and substance. In music, as in all art forms except for architecture, there was no one unifying feature of Italian Modernism except for the central idea that the new should be championed. *La generazione dell'ottanta* were linked not only through their similar age, but their desire to create and foster a new chapter in Italy's music-making that celebrated serious, instrumental, and new music, and turned away from Opera.

Modernism – from which Italian Modernism is a subgenre, and derives from – is defined as an umbrella term for art, music, that emerged as a reaction to Romanticism, and roughly covers the period between 1900-1950. By umbrella term, I mean that Modernism is a catch-all term that covers various genres of music (and art), such as impressionism, expressionism, surrealism, futurism, neoclassicism, and various others that emerged during the early Twentieth Century. It is also a term hotly debated by both what modernism means, and the period it covers (although it is generally agreed by scholars that it ended around the end of World War Two). If one surveys the literature (which is enormous, and worth of a thesis in itself), then there is no one definition of Modernism. In fact, when one looks at the genres or schools within Modernism, there is nothing that links of unites them other than the fact that they are all new stylistic genres (this is discussed further in Chapter 3). The only thing that is universally agreed to by scholars on the definition of Modernism is that in encapsulates the new. This lack of agreement or coherence in how Modernism is defined is best exemplified by the arguments that it is an inherently fascist genre (or not, depending on whose work is being read).[19]

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[17] Many sources, both during Casella's life and posthumously, agree that Modernism 'arrived' in Italy with the premiere of this work by Schoenberg.
Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola,* 27, 28.
Fontanelli, *Casella, Parigi e la geurra,* 13.

[18] Casella, *I segreti della giara,* 15.

[19] In his book on Dallapiccola, and in discussion, Earle argues that Modernism is an inherently fascist and aggressive genre, that uses violence or violent themes. Similar arguments have been made by others, included Williams. But this does not allow for the nuance of Modernism, and all the sub-categories within Modernism. To say the Futurism is violent in nature is true and fair, but to argue that Impressionism or Neo-classicism are also aggressive and fascist is not. Thus, to simply define modernism as being 'new' art and music made between 1900-1950 is much more fair, and allows for these differences of style within the one genre.
Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola,* 2-97.

It would be pertinent to define several other terms that will arise throughout this thesis to state explicitly what they should be understood as, especially in reference to Casella. Romanticism, particularly in light of the 19th Century 'New Italy' and the Italian Modernists, is understood as a period in music, art and literature spanning the long nineteenth century (roughly 1780 until 1915). As Samson notes, Romanticism was more than a historical period, but also an artistic movement across Europe. It had a strong, defining cultural tone that artists of all mediums should aspire to make works that dignified the natural man, as espoused by Rousseau; and idealised characters such as the tragic hero, the forsaken love, and the intersection natural and transcendental mythical worlds. In music, this was epitomised by the concept of the 'creative genius,' and tragic and heroic works.[20] In the case of Casella, Romanticism is more easily defined as being the period before Italian Modernism, and a period of music and art that Italians saw as overshadowed by German, to a lesser extent French, artistic traditions.[21] This bring into question the idea of the aforementioned 'anti-romantic,' which Casella and *la generazione dell'ottanta* subscribed to. The anti-romantics rejected these principles of the heroic work, and the creative genius of the composer. Instead, the anti-romantics – or Italian Modernists, as Casella called himself and his Italian peers – celebrated craft, ingenuity and construction above ideas seemly built on myths.

Another genre making waves concomitant with Italian Modernism was Futurism. Futurism was a strongly anti-romantic sub-genre within Modernism more broadly. Founded by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in 1909, it was a movement that focussed on industrial, mechanical machines and sounds, and had strong, violent sentiments attached to it. It was a largely 'subversive […] anarchic and violent' genre that found much support from early Fascists because of its aggressive nature. [22] Casella, while respecting of the movement, was not a futurist, and not involved in either the political or musical sides of the movement.[23] Avant-garde (separate again, but still under the umbrella of Modernism) is defined as being new or experimental in method, construction and creation. It is still used today, but came to prominence as a term to describe 'the new' in the creative arts during the Modernist period. As Samson notes, it is used most commonly to 'describe any artists who have made radical departures from

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[20] Jim Samson, "Romanticism," *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 15th February 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.23751.

[21] Conti and De Santis, *Catalogo critico del fondo Alfredo Casella, vol. 1*, xi.

[22] Flora Dennis and Jonathan Powell, "Futurism," *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 15th February 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.10420.
Morgan, Robert P. *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical style in Modern Europe and America* (New York: WW Norton and Company, 1991), 251.

[23] In his various writings, Casella notes that he was greatly impressed by the Futurists, yet had no yearning to join them or be associated with their movement. His pride mainly came out of them being Italian and ingenious, rather than respecting the actual music they made or the values of the movement.
Casella, *I segreti della giara,* 68 98.
De Santis, *Alfredo Casella e l'Europa,* 264.

tradition,' specifically relating to art and music history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to signify the experimental, anarchic manifestations of Modernism, such as Futurism.[24] It is not a term commonly used to describe Italian Modernism, or used in reference to Casella and his contemporaries.

Finally, Neoclassicism and Impressionism should be defined. Both, as mentioned above, are subgenres of Modernism, but are referred to frequently in the literature pertaining to Casella. Scholars largely agree that Neoclassicism occurred between World Wars One and Two, and was a semi-revival of Romantic and Classical values in a post-world-war environs. It comprises distortion, parody, or borrowing of classical and romantic traits within music. Whittall argues that Neoclassicism is interchangeable with postmodernism, and largely borrows or revives traits techniques and forms, rather than tonalities or gestures, from earlier periods in music's history.[25]

Impressionism in music followed the artistic movement of the same name, and is noted as '[displaying] an exaggerated sense of musical colour, […] questioning the authority of academic values' and – just like Modernism – rejected the conventional norms of Romanticism, and was about newness. While in Impressionism there was a fascination with reflecting nature and beauty in art forms, is was very much based on 'impressions' and the studies of perception, rather than the heroic and serious. Impressionism played with the senses (in music, the sound-effects possible), and new ways of expression.[26]

While the literature pertaining to these two terms is extensive and divisive, in terms of Casella we need only understand that he viewed himself as *not* a Neoclassicist, and *not* an Impressionist. In fact, at times, he even posited himself as an anti-impressionist.[27] Throughout his memoires and writings, he states at various points that he viewed both these genres as being nationalistic in nature (Neoclassicism being rooted in German traditions, and Impressionism being a truly French artform).[28] Simultaneously, as well as claiming he was not of those genres, he positions himself as being of the New Italian school of music: an Italian Modernist.

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[24] Jim Samson, "Avant garde," *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 15th February 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.01573.

[25] Arnold, Whittall, "Neo-Classicism," *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 15th February 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.19723.

[26] Jann Pasler, "Impressionism," *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 15th February 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.50026.

[27] Casella, *Muic in My Time,* 95, 96.

[28] Casella, *I segreti della giara,* 94.
Casella, "Modernism in Music," *Christian Science Monitor,* 29th April 1926.
Casella, "Neo-Classicism to Neo-Romanticism," *Christian Science Monitor,* 20th April 1929.
Casella, "Neoclassicism in Italy," *Christian Science Monitor,* 7th January 1928.

Constructing Casella's Biography

Scholars of Casella are left with several different kinds of resources to ascertain the composer's biography. These are: (i) texts by Casella intended for public dissemination, such as his memoirs and articles, (ii) archival sources not intended for public dissemination (letters, diaries etc.), and (iii) secondary sources published both during and after Casella's life.

The most detailed biography of Casella is his memoir, *I segreti della giarra*, published in 1941. This memoir offers a chronological narrative of most of Casella's life, and details his touring and performing career. However, it gives a biased view of Casella's 'laborious and productive life', and does not include his final years, his views on Fascism and the Second World War.[29] He paints himself as a thoughtful, considerate, and rational man, who was patriotic and proud of Italy's cultural and political landscape, but also of a man not engaged with politics. As a musician, he presents himself as equal to his Italian and international peers, rubbing shoulders with the musical greats of Europe, and being a conscientious composer (rather than a sporadic genius). He portrays himself:

> as an artist and as an Italian – as a man who experienced both the inevitable hostility of certain contemporary mediocrities and the purest joys of true beauty, and who gave all of himself to art and to his country.[30]

While Casella tells his story from the position of 'an Italian artist', there is an undercurrent of simultaneously approving of the modernisation of Italy, whilst also not approving of Fascism itself. Casella does not criticise Mussolini or the regime, but there are moments where one may

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[29] Casella, *Muic in My Time,* vii.

For the purposes of this thesis, Fascism specifically and only relates to Italian Fascism under Mussolini's rule between 1922-1943. It is, importantly, not the same as Nazism or other modern forms of right-wing dictatorships. Italian Fascism under Mussolini can be defined as the creation of national dictatorship, with a view to streamline and regulate economic, social and cultural structures. *La dottrina del fascismo* (1927, authored by Mussolini and Gentile) outlines the specifics of such a dictatorship.

Benito Mussolini, "The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism," trans. Jane Soames, *Day to Day Pamphlets No. 18* (London: Hogarth Press, 1933). http://media.wix.com/ugd/927b40_c1ee26114a4d480cb048f5f96a4cc68f.pdf.

According to Gentile, the philosophical architect behind fascism, it was 'a charismatic dictatorship of the Caesarean kind, integrated into an institutional structure based on a single party and on the mobilisation of the masses. It was […] a way of organising the political system, and, in a concrete manner, working as a fundamental code of belief and behaviours for the individual and the masses.'

Giovani Gentile in Bosworth, RJB. *The Italian Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of Mussolini and Fascism* (New York: Arnold, 1998), 22.

[30] Casella, *Muic in My Time*, vii.

Notably, Spencer's translation avoids all political discourse, and does not include various of Casella's sentiments on what he thought was good about Fascism. Casella's original text in Italian has many sentiments thanking Fascism and Mussolini for what was possible because of the regime, but not explicitly saying that he was a fully indoctrinated fascist.

elicit the tensions that Casella must have felt living under the Fascist regime. These tensions are further supported when one looks to other, archival sources. The memoir provides a selective narrative that strives to construct an image of the composer in the best possible light.

The two other kinds of sources used to construct Casella's biography are archives pertaining to Casella, and secondary-source texts by scholars, music critics, and various different authors. For the purposes of this thesis, the archival sources and Casella's written works will be grouped together as 'primary sources,' except for Casella's memoir, which has been addressed above.[31] Although various of the archival sources, such as letters and diaries, were never intended to be made public by Casella, they offer an invaluable piece in constructing his persona.

Fortunately Casella left a wealth of primary sources (most of which are housed at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice).[32] As well as extensive archival sources – letters, diaries, and drafts for articles – Casella authored books and articles. He wrote extensively on music and musicians, as well as contributing to various journals and newspapers (notably, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Ars Nova*). He wrote on all areas of music: performance, compositional, interpretation, music history. His five books cover musicology, compositional practice, and

[31] Casella's memoir should be treated separately from the other primary sources, as it was specifically an autobiographical text, rather than being on music or his world, as his other writings are. Memoirs bytheir very nature are emotive and based on memory, rather than being factual like a biography may be. Casella's, crucially, was written and published during the height of the Fascist regime.

[32] This is literally a room filled with folders and boxes containing various pieces of paper written on, by or pertaining to, Casella. Archives referenced from this collection will be labelled first with their full title and catalogue number as appears in the physical catalogue of the Fondazione. Many of the items in the Catalogue are also not labelled with specific box numbers or catalogue numbers, and so have been assigned titles by this author, and where located subsequent to her extensive knowledge of the Fondo Casella and the documents therein. They were donated by Casella's granddaughter and musicologist Fiamma Nicolodi in 1989, and catalogued by Mila De Santis, Francesco Romana Conti, and Luisa Mazzone. The Fondo Casella contains various materials ranging from scores and letters, to passports and birth and marriage certificates. Most notable for this research, however, are the collections of musical sketchbooks, together with correspondence to and from Casella, and sketches and notes for his writings on various musical subjects. Various other institutions hold archival sources as well, although significantly smaller in size. This includes the Library of Congress, Washington DC where the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge collection has various letters of Casella; and the Fondazione Accademia Chigiana, Siena, where there are similarly letters and documents pertaining to Casella. It must be noted, however, that many of the publisher's scores of Casella's works are kept at various publishing houses, and are not readily accessible to scholars. (The full list of piano works can be found in Appendix 1a as part of Casella's complete works list). There are, however, photocopies and reproductions of many of these scores within the Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia, and thus the materials are still accessible in some way. The archive is catalogued (mostly correctly) in the following source: Francesca Romana Conti and Mila de Santis et al, *Catalogo critico del fondo Alfredo Casella, vol. I* and I**: i categgi* (Florence: Leo S Olschki, 1992).
Anna Rita Colajanni, Francesca Romana Conti and Mila de Santis. *Catalogo critico del fondo Alfredo Casella volume II: scritti, musiche, concerti* (Florence: Leo S Olschki, 1992).
Luisa Mazzone, *Cataologo critico del fondo Alfredo Casella volume III: scritti sul'Alfredo Casella* (Florence: Leo S Olschki, 1992).

organology.[33] Many of his longer articles have been edited and made into a collected edition.[34] These writings have been consulted extensively to understand Casella's views on music, politics, pianism, and performance so that a means of understanding and performing his works can be presented. Casella's writings can be used to document his activities as a musician and exemplify his opinions on music, musicians, and events, and ascertain his political views. Importantly, some of these sources (club- and society-membership cards) hint to political views that are not expressed in his memoirs, and which contradict assertions made in some secondary sources.[35] These archives must be used alongside existing biographical sources to create a more complete biography of the pianist-composer.

The secondary sources fall into three categories: English-language texts on Casella (usually article-or chapter-length biographies); Italian texts on Casella (generally part of broader texts on music in Fascist Italy or *la generazione dell'ottanta*); and doctoral and masters theses. There are also some CD-reviews of pianists performing Casella's works. The secondary sources offer a partial view of Casella, presenting him only as a composer rather than as a musician with many facets. They also present a polarised view of Casella as either Fascist or not Fascist, without discussing the grey-area between these two extremes.[36]

General historical or musicological overviews about Italian music (in both English and Italian) during the fascist regime are limited in that they are too broad, covering too much material, or too narrow and only focus on one aspect of music.[37] There is an important distinction to be made between Italian and English secondary sources. The two languages typically fail to utilise each other. Waterhouse's oeuvre, and Earle's work on Dallapiccola, are the two best examples of English-language scholarship successfully incorporating Italian-language sources. Other

[33] Casella's books include:
The Evolution of Music Throughout the History of the Perfect Cadence (J&W Chester, 1924)
Igor Strawinsky (Ricordi, 1926), *Il pianoforte* (Ricordi, 1937)
La Tecnica dell'orchestra contemporanea (Ricordi, 1948)
I segreti della giara (originally published by Ricordi, 1941, but the reprinted il Saggitore 2016 edition has been used for this research).

[34] Alfredo Casella, *21+26*, ed. A C Pellegrini (Florence: Leo S Olschenki, 2001).

[35] All those referenced throughout this chapter, and throughout this thesis, come from the extensive collection kept in the Fondo Casella, at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini. The collection of correspondence and letters dates from roughly 1919 onwards, with there being some collections of letters from before this date. It is believed that correspondence and letters from before this period were lost or destroyed by Casella's first wife, Hélène Kahn. For pianists and scholars of Casella's piano music, this is detrimental given that the majority of Casella's piano music was composed before 1919.

[36] This is presumably because sources other than Casella's published writings were largely inaccessible to scholars until 1992, when the majority of primary sources pertaining to Casella were donated to the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venice) and then catalogued. Until this time, they were kept privately by Casella's daughter, Fulvia, in Lausanne. However, secondary works on Casella published after this time also fail to utilise the primary sources available, and seem more to be reconsiderations and appraisals of the already existing secondary sources.

[37] Two examples of these kinds of 'overview' texts are Nicolodi's *Gusti e tendenze del novecento musicale in Italia,* and Sachs' *Music in Fascist Italy*. While both are admirable in attempting to give a survey of music during Fascist Italy, both are limited. Arguably, to do this period of music and political history justice, this topic would need an entire series to unearth all the nuances of every composer from this period. .

than this, many sources do not use alternative-language sources. Italian-language sources similarly fail to utilise English-language texts. Thus, further biographical understanding could be gained by reconciling the sources from both languages.

Casella's biographies are generally brief, outlining his life against the First and Second World Wars. Generally, they offer basic chronologies, and focus on his life before 1920.[38] Almost all sources detail the same narrative: largely that Casella learned his compositional trade in Paris inadvertently from Fauré through the Conservatoire, that he was the leader of the 'new music movement' in Italy during the Fascist regime, and he was close with Gian Francesco Malipiero. They all tend to focus on Casella the composer, rather than Casella the pianist, Casella the pedagogue, or any of the other various facets that made up Casella's identity. Waterhouse's various texts on Casella offer the most comprehensive English-language biography on Casella when coupled together.[39] Like Waterhouse, most other English-language scholars treat Casella as a fascist, although not an evil one, and similarly focus on Casella the composer rather than his other achievements.

In Italian-language scholarship, Louis Cortese's *Alfredo Casella* (1936) offers a basic (although incomplete, given that it was published 11 years before Casella's death) biography. Given that Cortese was a student of Casella's, it is likely that the subject participated in Cortese's biography, influencing its tone and content.[40] There are many overlaps between this work and Casella's own memoirs in terms of how Casella is painted as both a musician and as a figurehead in Italian music. The work can be viewed as a glowing characterisation of Casella, rather than a critical biography.[41] It is useful, as it highlights what facets of his life Casella wanted known publicly and was willing to share with his biographer. Critics Fedele D'Amico

[38] Below are three examples of such generalised biographical sources: Waterhouse, Cortese, and Lanfranchi. These are indicative of the available biographies on Casella, being that they are relatively objective, encyclopaedic-style entries, rather than critical investigations into Casella's writings and music, or interrogating the writings of others on Casella.
Luigi Cortese, *Alfredo Casella* (Genoa: Emiliano Degli Orfini, 1936).
Waterhouse and Bernardoni, "Casella, Alfredo."
Lanfranchi, "Casella, Alfredo.'

[39] Waterhouse wrote extensively on Italian music from the first half of the Twentieth Century, and is regarded as the first scholar to really delve into this period of musical history. Importantly, Waterhouse's expertise and central interest lay in the music and life of GF Malipiero – Casella's close friend and colleague – and that period of Italian music between 1900-1950, rather than Casella himself. Thus, while Waterhouse's contribution to knowledge on Casella is valid and interesting, it is not complete in its presentation of the pianist-composer.
Waterhouse and Bernardoni, "Casella, Alfredo."
Waterhouse, "The Emergence of Modern Italian Music (up to 1940)" PhD Thesis (University of Oxford, 1969).
Waterhouse "The Italian Avant-Garde and National Tradition." *Tempo*, No. 68 (1964), 14-25, accessed 30th January 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/943549.
Waterhouse, "Italy from the First to the Second World War," in *Music and Society: Modern Times: From World War 1 to the Present,* ed. Robert P Morgan (London: Macmillan Press, 1993), 111-127.

[40] Waterhouse, 'Louis Cortese', *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 26th May 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.06578.

[41] Cortese, *Alfredo Casella*.

and Guido M. Gattis' work from 1958 is a collection of essays and reviews on Casella written during his life and posthumously.[42] It is not a biography per se, but presents Casella as one of the great musicians of *la generazione dell'ottanta*. It is very much a tribute to Casella, as both D'Amico and Gatti were also friends of the pianist-composer.

Posthumously, Italian-language scholarship has been championed by Casella's granddaughter, Fiamma Nicolodi. Nicolodi's texts on twentieth-century music and Casella are vast, and extremely informative for an initial investigation into Casella. Yet Nicolodi is family, and so – similarly to Casella's own text – one wonders if there is bias behind her portrayal of Casella. Yet, regardless of her tone, Nicolodi's work has ensure Casella studies can continue. In the early 1990s, she donated the majority of Casella's archives to the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice. Many of her PhD students (including musicologist and Casella-scholar Mila di Santis) helped catalogue these archives, subsequently causing a reignition of interest in Casella's music. This donation and the subsequent flurry of interest caused various critical texts to be published on Casella.[43] However, this interest was short-lived. Since 2000, there has been only a smattering of interest in Casella.

Now to the history…

Before launching into an abridged biography of Casella, we need some historical context to his life. This research is not seeking to provide an analysis of how Italy changed during Casella's life, or give new insight into Italy's political history. Rather, it is presented to contextualise Casella's life. Most important in this context is the changing idea of the 'New Italy'. This was an ever-evolving term used throughout Casella's life.

Modern Italy unified in 1861.[44] Previously, the country had been a geographic space containing city-states and agricultural regions, devoid of common language and political ruling. Through fear of invasion, overhanging resentment from the Napoleonic wars, coupled with growing nationalistic sentiments and a burgeoning middle class across the land, unification was made possible.[45] Giuseppe Garibaldi, Camillo di Cavour and Giuseppe Mazzini are credited with unifying Italy. The 'New Italy' they created (a term later appropriated by the Fascist regime)

[42] Fedele D'Amico and Guido M. Gatti, *Alfredo Casella* (Milan: Ricordi & Co. 1958).
[43] The commentary of Conti and De Santis, *Catalogo critico del fondo Alfredo Casella, vol. 1* (and all three volumes of the archive catalogue) is a fantastic example of this, and is probably the best-referenced and researched text on Casella existing (excluding this thesis). Similarly, the publication of the archive catalogue prompted several conferences in Europe, which subsequently generated a flurry of publications.
[44] D M Smith, *Italy, A Modern History*. (Toronto: The University of Michigan Press 1959), 25.
[45] Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny*: *A History of Italy since 1976* (London: Allen Lane, 2007).

was a constitutional monarchy. While it was not the republic that many had dreamed of, it comprised a new government to better represent all Italians.

During Casella's lifetime the meaning of the 'New Italy' and 'being Italian' changed several times. The 'New Italy' of Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi was a unified, nationalist movement that celebrated the birth of a new nation independent in governance and culture from France and Germany.[46] Following the political and social turbulence of the First World War, Mussolini's 'New Italy' emerged after the March on Rome in 1922.[47] This iteration celebrated another, different form of Italy : a Fascist and modern one that had survived political upheaval, war, and was now ruled by a strong and charismatic leader, *il Duce*. The final iteration of a 'New Italy' was the post-World War Two Italy, decimated by yet another war and surviving further political upheavals and regime changes, being led by the anti-Fascists. The 'New Italy' was an ever-evolving concept throughout Casella's life.

Casella frequently used the term 'New Musical Italy' in his writings. Not to be confused with any political alliance, this was a term he coined to signify the radical new music being written, and a new period of Italy's musical history that was occurring. It was his way of terming Italian Modernism, and positioning the developments in music happening in Italy separately from other genres such as Romanticism, Impressionism or Neoclassicism.

The start of the Twentieth Century – while Casella lived in Paris – was a period of 'cultural regeneration' for Italy.[48] Italian Nationalism, after 1900, but particularly in the wake of the First World War, focused on creating national pride and restoring a sense of 'Latin' pride based in the greatness of Ancient Rome, as espoused by poet and nationalist icon, Gabriele D'Annunzio.[49] Italy's involvement in the First World War, and simultaneous attempts at colonising parts of Africa, left the country almost bankrupt, and proved the country remained divided, regardless of unification.[50] In 1919, Mussolini formed the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* party.[51] His initial views proclaimed that Fascism was centred on upholding the values of the nation: Fascism was a "myth […] a faith, a passion [that manifested] the greatness of the nation."[52] Through the First World War, almost all Italian citizens were somehow

[46] D M Smith, *Italy, a Modern History,* 26.
Duggan, *The Force of Destiny*, 370.
[48] Duggan, *The Force of Destiny,* 372.
[49] Ibid, 376-380.
[50] Ibid, 398-410.
[51] Interestingly enough, Mussolini joined the political spectrum in the early 20th Century as a socialist. During the First World War, in 1915, he formed his right-wing party, *I Fasci,* and this was rebranded in 1919 with a stronger political direction and manifesto.
[52] Mussolini in Duggan, *The Force of Destiny*, 426.
Corner, *The Fascist Party and Popular Opinion is Mussolini's Italy*, 23

engaged with or by the military. Part of Fascism's success was capitalising on this pre-existing link. While Mussolini exuded a star-like quality that drew his followers in, it was the militaristic, regimented nature and brute force associated with the Fascism that was so appealing to Italians. The Fascist regime ruled from October 1922 until Mussolini's death and the end of the Second World War in 1945.[53]

Fascism was necessary to modernise Italy. Though a dictatorship, Fascism successfully restructured many elements of Italian life, creating public and government-run organisations, including ones that support the arts. Many of these organisations are still operating today. Although the inherently authoritarian and violent nature of Fascism cannot, and should not, be forgotten, there were many undeniable benefits that came out of the regime, some of which are contemporarily still important parts of Italian culture. When Casella died in 1947, he had witnessed three starkly different political environments: the unified New Italy of the late nineteenth century; the Nationalist New Italy of Fascism; and the New Italy of the post-war globalist world. The New Italy changed at each stage of Casella's life.

Was Casella a Fascist?

The best view of Casella's political position is given by Waterhouse: Casella initially did 'fall under the spell of Fascism' but was by no means indoctrinated by the regime.[54] Sachs incorrectly claims that Casella was a fascist 'full of enthusiasm' until the Racial Laws against Jews were introduced in 1938.[55] This is unfair of Sachs when looking at archival evidence, and when looking at how Casella was treated by his Italian peers during the 1930s.[56] Casella was excited by Fascism, and was right-leaning in his political views. But to say that he was a Fascist himself is untrue. He was most definitely opportunistic – mercenary even – in how he engaged with the regime, but this is not the same as being an ardent supporter.

Whether Casella was a Fascist or not is irrelevant to this thesis, as this research examines understanding, interpreting and performing Casella's piano music, not whether he was a fascist or not. It should not matter what his political leanings were. Wagner is still enjoyed and revered

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[53] In 1943, Italy was bankrupt, and half dominated by Nazism in the North, and half by the Allied forces in the South. The country was politically, militarily, and culturally divided because of Mussolini's incompetent leadership and unplanned and haphazard leadership of offensives during the Second World War.
Ibid, 13.

[54] Waterhouse and Bernardoni, 'Casella, Alfredo."

[55] Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 53.

[56] Respighi et al. "Travagli spirituali del nostro tempo: Un manifesto di musicisti italiani per la tradizio ne dell'arte romantic dell'800." *La Stampa*, 17th December 1932.
Franco Abbiati, "Tornei musicali ma non musicabili: il fenomeno Malipiero-Bontempelli e la "Bomba" del manifesto." *La Sera*, 6th January 1933.

today, even though he was an anti-Semite. Richard Strauss' music is still performed, even though his career greatly benefitted from Nazism, and his time as President of the Reichsmusikkammer between 1933-1935, conferred by Joseph Goebbels. Why should Casella be treated differently to these two giants of Modern German Music? Closer to Casella, Ottorino Respighi's music is performed globally, and his symphonic works are acclaimed as being excellent 'radiantly evocative little masterpieces,' rather than works celebrating Fascist Rome.[57] While Casella's politics, and the political climate around him, may have affected his compositional process or style, that does not necessitate his politics influencing and impinging on how we interpret and perform his works today. The politics of a dead man should not factor into analysing, performing or appreciating his music.

Throughout secondary sources, Casella is continually painted as being Fascist without discussion regarding the nuance of what 'being a Fascist' can entail.[58] After copious discussions, extensive research, and consideration of the biases behind the various sources, this thesis posits that Casella was not a Fascist, but that he was an opportunist – a mercenary, if you will – and a product of his time. Nor was he ever a party member, such as various colleagues and peers of his were (most notable being Giuseppe Mulè).[59] While his opera *il Deserto Tentato* (1936) was a monument to Mussolini's Ethiopian campaign, writing works to ingratiate oneself with a political regime was not a novel concept. Ottorino Respighi's music was similarly titled Nationalistic, and his opera *La fiamma* was a fascist monument. Similarly, being a fascist would have created much controversy in Casella's personal life. His second wife, Yvonne (née Müller), was Jewish.[60] Had Casella been a die-hard Fascist, this would have meant the end of his happy marriage and family life when racial laws were introduced in 1938. Yet, Casella is not innocent. Of course, like many of his time, he would have played along with the regime to further his career. He was also undeniably right-wing in his political leanings, and patriotic.

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[57] Interestingly enough, Respighi was a paid-up member of the Fascist party, where Casella was not, yet is not shoved under the metaphorical bus of being a Fascist like Casella is.
John CG Waterhouse, "Respighi, Ottorino," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 26th May 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.47335.

[58] There is so much nuance as to what being fascist means. There are many contemporaneous political leaders in today's society – such as Priti Patel, Tony Abbot, Marine Le Pen, and Mike Pence – who display elements of fascist belief as defined by Mussolini, but who we would never label as being 'fascist.' Similarly, many Italians would not that there is a vast difference between being right-wing leaning, and being fascist. I would also argue that some of the literature is critical of the quality of Casella's music based on his being Fascist or not. Many texts praise his early music as being similar to Debussy, Ravel, and various other celebrated Modernist Composers. Yet Casella's later music – that which was composed during the Fascist Regime – is unfairly condemned as being either Fascist because of associations with nationalism, or average-quality music.

[59] There are various archival sources (diary entries criticising various decisions of the regime, Socialist party membership cards, letters of complaint to government ministries, etc.) that suggest Casella's approval of Fascism was only public, and he was politically more left-leaning, by today's standards.

[60] David Gallagher, "About this Recording: Alfredo Casella (1883-1947), Sinfonia (Symphony No. 3) Op. 63, Elergia eroica," *Naxos Records*. Accessed 20th May 2020, https://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs_reviews.asp?item_code=8.572415&catNum=572415&filetype=About%20this%20Recording&language=English.

That is completely transparent from various writings by him from before 1920, before Fascism was popularised. But whether being right-wing equates with being a Fascist is an entirely different argument. He used the system as he could to further his own career, and to further his agenda for the 'New Musical Italy.'

Casella's Biography

Alfredo Casella was born 25th July 1883, Turin, to Carlo and Maria Casella. Carlo was a cellist, and an important member of the Turinese musical scene.[61] Maria home-schooled Alfredo, and taught him piano, until they moved to Paris in 1896. She continued to teach Casella until he was well into adulthood, and had a profound influence on his music making until her death in 1931. Even when Casella joined the Paris Conservatoire, she continued to give him piano lessons until her return to Italy in 1904. Casella considered her a superior teacher to both Louis Diémer and Alfred Cortot.[62] Casella's idolisation of his mother is obvious from both his memoir and correspondence: in his eyes, she was 'a woman of exceptional personality.'[63] When Maria died in 1931, Casella acknowledged this as a turning point in his life where he was forced to confront his own adulthood and parenthood.[64]

Casella claims his childhood was 'very sad but also very beautiful, and undoubtedly decisive in the formation of [his] character and [his] art.'[65] Where he excelled in music, regularly performing the German Masters' Bach, Beethoven and Mozart, his other important developments as a child were delayed.[66] It was Guiseppe Martucci – a prominent composer, conductor and pianist – who eventually advised Casella train as a pianist, but outside of Italy and with a new teacher (*not* under his mother). After the death of his father in August 1896,

[61] Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 5.
Casella, *Documenti, vari e famigilia*, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.
[62] Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 15, 16, 25, 27, 38, 45, 54, 69.
It is interesting to note, however, that Casella never discussed the relationship between his mother and his wives in his memoirs or documents left behind. There is no indication of the relationship or potential power struggle between his spouses and mother during his life, and does beg the question of whether his wives similarly influenced his music.
[63] Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 12, 13.
Corrispondenti, Casella e Maria Bordino Casella; Fondo Casella, Istituto per la music, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.
[64] Biographers of Casella fail to pick up on this pivotal movement in his life as being so important, but it cannot be ignored, given the huge impact she had on him both as a musician and a man. It's also an arguably interesting coincidence that Maria's death coincided with the beginning of Casella's decline in public approval and fame. From 1931 onwards, Casella's career did stall (as will be discussed below). From 1932, he also came under attack for having lost his way, and being too modern in his music, and not Fascist enough. Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 188.
[65] Ibid, 36.
[66] Casella, *I segreti della giara*, 16.
Contextually, Casella's immigration to Paris coincided with a particular period of economic poverty in Italy. 1896 saw the failures of African colonisation manifest through poverty, national debt, and corruption within government. It was a period of civil unrest. Casella would miss the political and social unrest within Italy that was shortly about to erupt.
DM Smith, *Italy, a Modern History*, 30, 138-190.

and on Martucci's insistence, Casella and his mother moved to Paris so he could commence studies at the Conservatoire under Louis Diémer.

Casella initially struggled to integrate in Paris and at the Conservatoire.[67] While he took an immediate liking to French music, he was less taken with his French classmates. He was nicknamed 'macaroni' and often bullied.[68] It is likely Casella was ostracised because of his 'Italian-ness.' Italy was seen as the poor, provincial cousin of France, previously conquered by Napoleon, and now struggling to develop as a modern nation.[69] Casella would have been viewed as the poor, provincial hick. However, as an only child, Casella's social skills were likely lacking, and he was probably inexperienced receiving rambunctious taunts, as well as critical feedback from professors.

Although lonely, there is no doubt that Casella thought highly of himself, and looked down at his peers. His memoirs are highly critical of the Paris Conservatoire, dismissing the institution, students, and professors, claiming it was filled with many mediocre characters.[70] Diémer, Casella's main teacher, is described as being an average teacher, partial to flattery.[71] Cortot – who the archives show was a close friend and mentor of Casella's – is also criticised:

> When a piece did not go well, he [Cortot] never knew how to explain the cause, but told the student only to study it again and to practice many exercises, especially scales. From three years in his class, I do not remember ever having heard from him one of those observations which solve a problem for the pupil and disclose a new horizon to him. His technical instruction was thus negative. He was no more interesting in matters of interpretation, where his remarks were colourless and banal.[72]

This criticism of Cortot – written in 1938, the height of Fascism – is interesting when compared with Casella's archives and other sources regarding Cortot's teaching. Casella and Cortot's

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[67] Of his time at the Conservatoire, Casella notes: "I had lived until that day without friends my own age, alone in the severe and sad environment of our home, which was so elevated and intellectual in its tone. I was not acquainted with the envy and the pettiness of school boys."
Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 39.

[68] Ibid, 40.

[69] Since Napoleonic times, and even before, there has always been tension between Italian and French peoples – both as societies and individuals. This is evident even today in some places in Italy. There was – during Casella's life – public dislike for Italians in France because of their attempted attacks on Rome (then still the Holy city, and not a part of Italy), and because of Italy's alliance with Germany and Austria. It is similarly possible that Casella – being from Torino and Piedmont, which was a particularly French part of Italy – was even further ostracised from his peers for being seen as a being from a 'bastardised' place between France and Italy.

[70] Casella, *Muic in My Time,* 40-43. This criticism of a Bach and Chopin heavy curriculum is also interesting, given that Casella edited Chopin's piano works, and Bach's keyboard music, throughout his life.

[71] Casella, *I segreti della giara,* 37-39.

[72] Casella, *Muic in My Time,* 40.

correspondence indicates a friendly relationship, where Casella deeply admired and respected his former teacher. In one letter from 1915, Casella profusely thanks Cortot for his help in getting him appointed as piano teacher at the Royal Academy of Santa Cecilia, Rome.[73] Other correspondence between the two shows a close friendship, and mentorship. Casella often credits his success as a pianist to Cortot. Casella's book *il pianoforte* (Ricordi & Co, 1937) was dedicated to Cortot, with a foreword written by the Frenchman. Cortot's letters to Casella show that he performed Casella's piano works in Paris with much success, showing a mutual respect for the Italian.[74] One must question why this critical and unkind portrayal of Cortot exists in Casella's memoir when it is clear in other sources that the two Alfreds were close friends.

Casella's time in Paris coincided with many famous musicians, being the tail-end of pianism's Golden Age.[75] He worked, was friends, and in communication, with many notable musicians of the period, including Claude Debussy, Georges Enescu, Maurice Ravel, Igor Stravinsky, Gabriel Fauré, Serge Prokofiev, Pablo Casals, Ferruccio Busoni, and many others.[76] This list of friends and acquaintances was not limited to musicians either, or related persons such as publishers and performers. Throughout his life, Casella communicated with many politically, historically, and musically important people and government departments, including Benito Mussolini and Joseph Goebbels.[77] These various contacts – both musical and historical – demonstrate Casella's position as a musician of global renown and respect, and that he was regarded as much more than a pianist or composer. This begs the questions: why has he not been remembered alongside other great names of twentieth-century music, and why is his legacy so limited to composition? Waterhouse credits Casella with bringing atonality, serialism

[73] Letter from Casella to Cortot, dated 13th July (presumably 1915); Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

[74] Letter from Cortot to Casella, dated 22nd October 1930, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

[75] This period of the Golden Age coincided with the late era of Liszt, and the late 19th century, where piano playing was defined by virtuosity and 'diversity of performance styles,' where tradition diverged, and was becoming ever-evolving. It is largely agreed to by scholars as being the beginning of Modernism, and in Paris specifically there was an intersection of Neoclassicism, Modernism and Cosmopolitanism in the genres of music being composed and performed.
Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 5, 11.

[76] Conti and de Santis. *Catalogo critico del Fondo Alfredo Casella.* The catalogue details the entire list of correspondence between Casella and others, and gives dates where possible.

[77] Casella wrote to Mussolini in 1938, and potentially at other times in his life. It is also believed – although Casella does not mention it in his memoirs – that Casella would have met with *Il Duce* at some point; given his prominent position as a performer or international repute, and his being based in Rome as a pianist and piano teacher.
Letter from Casella to Mussolini, 23rd August 1938, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la music, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.
Casella wrote to Joseph Goebbels at least once (although it is possible that there was further communication between the two, given Casella's performance career before 1938 taking him to Germany at various times) claiming that his music was not political, and that his opera *La donna serpente* should not be altered or censored for any reason.
Letter from Casella (Rome) to J. Goebbels, 25th June 1935, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la music, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.
These government ministries included il Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale, Ufficio Nazionale di Collocamento per lo Spettacolo, Ministero Cultura populare, Ministero della publica instruzione, minister per la stampa e la propaganda, and the Ente Italiano Audizioni Radiofoniche, letters from the Fondo Casella, Istituto per la music, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

and Modernism to Italy.[78] Between 1904 and 1939, Casella performed and conducted extensively across the world. He was a cultural ambassador for Italy to the world; advocating for the performance of new Italian music.[79] Why such a highly regarded musician has been forgotten is, in part, due to the taint of Fascism.

Of Casella's relationships with influential characters are several worth noting. Composer and violinist George Enescu is presented as being one of Casella's closest friends during the Paris years. They met in Fauré's composition class, and Casella highly regarded Enescu's understanding of interpretation and composition: 'My great intimacy with Enescu for many years was highly beneficial to my musical development. His interpretative advice was liberal, and he gave me useful orientation in the field of composition.'[80] There are many such anecdotes that Casella shares in his memoir about other composers and musicians, including Debussy, Stravinsky and Ravel. Their music had a profound influence on Casella's compositions, both in terms of style, taste, and indeed the very concept of what good new music was.

In 1907, Casella married his first wife, Hélène Kahn, also a pianist.[81] Concomitantly, Casella began to take an increased interest in music in Italy, and began turning away from the cosmopolitan Parisian scene. Although flirting with soft-core nationalism, the music he was

[78] Waterhouse and Bernardoni, "Casella, Alfredo".
Gatti, "Some Italian Composers of To-Day. VI. Alfredo Casella (Continued)."
Dietrich Kämper, "Casella, Alfredo," *MGG Online* (2016), accessed 12th June 2018, https://www.mgg-online.com/article?id=mgg02553&v=1.0&rs=id-dfe9475c-dfb4-bde8-932c-b7c648aebc32.

[79] Letters from Baldwin Piano Makers to Casella, 11th January 1924, 28th February 1925, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.
Letter from George Gershwin to Casella, 12th December 1929, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.
Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 6, 7, 35, 36, 135-139.
Guido M Gatti and Andrea Adriani, "Modern Italian Composers," *The Musical Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (1932), 397-410, accessed 20th June 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/738883, 401, 402.
Guido M Gatti and Frederick H. Martens, "Alfredo Casella," *The Musical Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (1920), 179-191, accessed 20th June 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/737865,188, 189.
Lanfranchi, "Casella, Alfredo."
L Basini, "Alfredo Casella and the Rhetoric of Colonialism." *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 24 No. 2 (July 2012), 127-157, accessed 30th January 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23319597, 130.

[80] Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 51. It is hugely important to note that there are no letters between Casella and Enescu in the Fondo Casella, or existing anywhere that I could find. This indicates two things: (i) that there was no correspondence between the two composers after 1919 (otherwise it would be in the Fondo Casella); and (ii) that the correspondence between Casella and Enescu only happened before 1919, or possibly didn't exist at all. This lack of correspondence indicates that perhaps the relationship was only active before Casella moved back to Italy in 1915, and that the friendship, whilst extremely influential on Casella musically, was not socially or professionally a particularly important relationship. This happens with various other relationships Casella had: there is closeness with various musicians when they are in his direct circle, but once he changes place in the world (physically or musically), these people tend to drop off in the periphery. Casella's memory of these relationships, however, is still one of fondness even though they are no longer part of his life when writing about them.

[81] In June 1907, he married his first wife Hélène Kahn (a Jewish pianist and singer). They were married until 1919, and remained cordial thereafter, staying in touch until Casella's death. There are various letters from Hélène Kahn to Casella dating from 1920 until 1941 in the Fondo Casella, which outline a degree of friendship and amicability between the two. Their correspondence generally covers topics of music and performances which they had seen, and also contains some correspondence where Hélène mentions performances of Casella's work in Paris and Switzerland.

playing and composing engaged with all genres. One emerging artform that Casella did not dabble with, however, was Futurism – an extremely right-wing and nationalistic genre coming out of Italy in 1915. Though this sense of ingenuity and innovation from Italy excited him, Casella was scared by the violent and aggressive nature of Futurism.[82]

In his memoirs, Casella claimed his cultural identity to be entirely Italian. He never identified as French or cosmopolitan, and zealously defended his 'Italian-ness,' especially in articles and documents written after 1930.[83] Yet this is not true or possible for a man who spent almost twenty years growing, maturing, learning and launching a career in the most cosmopolitan European city of the era. It is bizarre to think that a musician who learned from the French piano masters, who idolised Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky, and who was a stranger to Italian music until 1915, can be Italian in musical foundation, let alone character. Many Italians viewed Casella as a foreigner (even towards the end of his life) because of his time spent in Paris. The French similarly did not view him as one of their own: he was 'macaroni', not a macaron.[84] From investigating the various sources available, this research posits that Casella's ardent national identity came from an attempt to ingratiate himself in Italian society, and the New Italy of Fascism. He was severely excluded by both his French and Italians peers, and this also would have driven him to relabel himself, to feel a sense of belonging. One must also remember that his memoirs, which most ardently champion his 'Italian-ness,' were written and published during the peak of the Fascist regime, which would have a profound impact on their content and tone.

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[82] Some scholars have incorrectly grouped Casella with the Futurists. This is wrong: he was not at all aligned with either their artistic or political philosophies of Futurism, although he did respect their efforts. However, like the Futurists, Casella claimed to be staunchly Italian (at least in his later life), and was proud of his cultural heritage. Payton argues that Futurists believed historical music only dealt with melody and vertical and horizontal placements of notes, which Casella also believed was the structure of music (which he detailed in his *History of the Perfect Cadence)*. Thus, Casella was directly in opposition to Futurists solely based on his ideas of music construction within composition. Futurists were the first group to be aware of the possibilities of a larger technological aesthetic. The Futurists were attempting to enlarge the vocabulary of sounds available to the composer; before the Surrealists 'they demonstrated how categorical might be the imperative of *épater les bourgeois* in achieving an artistic objective … they practice an art of violence demonstrating the use of art as a weapon against the past, against the present, in short, violence as art and art as violence.' Their sound palette was largely composed of booms, bangs, whistles, whispers, screams, percussive, and animal sounds, rather than melodic or 'musical' sounds conceived through standard musical notation. Casella's music combined melody, harmony, and rhythm in all works, thus meaning that – regardless of the social philosophies of Futurism – his creative output was also not Futuristic in manner or tone.
G Jean-Aubry, "The New Italy," *The Musical Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (1920), 29-56, accessed 20th June 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/738098.
Rodney J Payton, "The Music of Futurism: Concerts and Polemics," *The Musical Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (1976), 25-45, accessed 21st June 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/741598, 37.
Casella, *Muic in My Time,* 82.

[83] Cosmopolitanism (a category of person and cultural identity rather than a musical genre) is defined as the 'negotiated space of shared experiences and practices,' and a cosmopolitan person is like a citizen of the world, and someone who is willing to engage with cultures and contexts other than their own.
Cristina Magaldi, "Cosmopolitanism and Music in the Nineteenth Century,' *Oxford Handbooks Online*, February 2016, accessed 26th May 2021, 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935321.013.62.

[84] Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 53: 'Casella was a good European'.
Jean-Aubry, "The New Italy," 6.

Between 1909 and 1915, Casella's fame as a pianist-composer continued to grow. He was admitted to the French Society of Authors and Composers in 1911.[85] In 1912, Casella returned to Italy for the first time as a pianist and conductor. As well as giving several piano recitals, he conducted his *Suite in C Major* Op. 13 (1909-1910) at the Rome Augusteo. This ignited his notoriety as a local, home-grown Italian hero for modern music.[86] The recognition from his Italian compatriots (which surely outshone any his reception in Paris) was a great influencing factor in Casella's decision to move back to Italy: 'In these first real contacts with my country, I found a very cordial reception everywhere. […] The environment seemed ready to accept me favourably.[87] Looking for opportunities in Italy, Casella repatriated to Italy in June 1915 when he was offered the position of Professor of Piano at the Royal Academy, Santa Cecilia, Rome. Despite having been offered the same position at the Conservatoire by Fauré, Casella declined in favour of returning to Italy. While Casella was critical of his time in Paris, he did highlight the positive experiences it gave him at the beginning of his pianistic career:

> That period of study and assimilation [in Paris] was undoubtedly most fruitful […]. I left nineteen years later rich in every European experience, having learned and penetrated all the various aspects of the musical phenomenon from French music […]. There was no sector of world music unknown to me. […] I had accumulated an enormous total of experience in that period, certainly superior to that of my Italian contemporaries.[88]

It is comical that Casella chose 1915 to uproot his life across war-torn Europe. Casella was fortunate in two ways, and managed to avoid the troubles of the First World War. Being the only son of a widow, Casella avoided conscription. Similarly, he was able to move to Rome before Italy's involvement in the war became serious.[89] However, Casella was not immune to war, and this is reflected in his compositions from the period. Many pieces, including his *Sonatina* Op. 28 (1916), evoke artillery- and machine-like sounds. Others, such as *Pagine di guerra* (1917) have titles that directly reference the war.[90]

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[85] This acceptance into the French Society of Authors and Composers would later inspire Casella to form the Italian equivalent, the *Societa Nazionale di Musica* (SNDM) in 1916. Being accepted by the 'authorities' and learned societies in France made Casella want to create and forster a similar network and community in Italy when he returned there in 1915.
[86] And importantly not to be confused with his Symphony No. 2 in C Minor, which some scholars have done, as the work was published posthumously.
Gatti. "Some Italian Composers of To-Day. VI. Alfredo Casella (Continued)," 469.
[87] Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 123.
[88] Ibid, 128, 129.
[89] Waterhouse and Bernardoni, "Casella, Alfredo."
Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 137.
[90] Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 137.

Following the end of the First World War and a divorce from his first wife in 1919, Casella quickly moved on. He had already met and fallen in love with his student, Yvonne Müller, whom he had met and taught at Santa Cecilia. They married in 1921.[91] Concomitant to establishing himself in Italy was Casella's work as a cultural ambassador for Italian Modernism between 1915-1930. As well as taking up his teaching duties at Santa Cecilia in 1915 as Head of Piano, Casella set about reviving chamber and orchestral music concerts.[92] This culminated in the creation of the aforementioned SNDM, which formed in 1916 to create a 'united front' of composers, performers, and musicians 'against mediocrity and dilettantism' in Italian music.[93] Casella formed the society with the aid of *la generazione dell'Ottanta*, including Ottorino Respighi, Gian Francesco Malipiero, Franco Alfano, and Ildebrando Pizzetti.[94] He also founded the journal *Ars Nova*, which, although only operating for a year, was instrumental in promoting music journals and music writing in post-war Italy. In 1919, the SNDM reformed as the *Società Internazionale di Musica Moderna* (SIMM), although only with Malipiero's aid.[95] It then later became the *Societa Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea* (SIMC) in 1922. Each iteration of the society had the same goals: to promote performances of new music composed by Italian composers, and to foster community and activity in the 'New Musical

[91] Both Casella's wives were Jewish. Although the religion of Casella's wives should not matter, it does support the argument that Casella was not a Fascist, and definitely became disillusioned with any positive views of the Regime after 1938 when Racial Laws were introduced in Italy.

[92] Ibid, 134.

[93] This would later become *la Società di Musica Moderna* in 1919, when it was clear that the focus of the society was on then-contemporary and modern music from Europe, rather than just music from all historical periods, and only Italian music.
Jean-Aubry, "The New Italy,", 43.
Lanfranchi, "Casella, Alfredo."
Waterhouse and Bernardoni, "Casella, Alfredo."
Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 143

[94] The *generazione dell'Ottanta* is a group of Italian composers who were all born in the 1880s. The group is largely accepted as comprising Alfredo Casella, Ottorino Respighi, Gian Francesco Malipiero, Franco Alfano and Ildebrando Pizzetti; amongst other lesser-known composers such as Vittorio Gui and Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli. The name was initially termed by Italian music critics in the early Twentieth Century, and was seen to formalise into a sort of group with the creation of the *Società Nazionale di Musica* in 1916. Importantly, the group never composed in a similar style or manner – they were not artistically grouped like the Impressionists or Futurists with a common creative philosophy or practice; but were instead linked through their period in history and their similar desire to create new instrumental music in Italy, and draw attention to instrumental and chamber music, rather than opera.
John CG Waterhouse et al, "Italy," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 28th November 2018: https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40063.

[95] Note that much revival work before now had been focused on German and more 'continental' music from central Europe, rather than being specific to Italian music. Casella's revival focused on old Italian Masters, such as Frescobaldi and Scarlatti, rather than the German masters like Bach (who Busoni had helped revive through his academic and compositional efforts).
Basini, "Alfredo Casella and the Rhetoric of Colonialism," 146, 147, 155.
Franco Sciannameo, "In Black and White: Pizzetti, Mussolini and "Scipio Africanus"," *The Musical Times* 145, no. 1887 (2004), 25-55, accessed 2nd June 2018, https://doi.org/10.2307/4149145, 32.
Nicolodi, *Gusti e tendenze del novecento musicale in Italia*, v, vi, 67
Alfredo Casella, "Italians and Foreigners at Venice," *Christian Science Monitor*, 7th November 1925.
Alfredo Casella, "The Musical Season in Rome" *Christian Science Monitor,* 19th May 1926.
Alfredo Casella, "Antonio Vivaldi." *Christian Science Monitor,* 8th December 1928.
Alfredo Casella, "About Returns," *Christian Science Monitor,* 13th October 1928.

Italy'. These societies were aimed at bringing international composers to Italy for concerts and festivals in a post-War landscape.[96] In 1923, along with Malipiero and poet D'Annunzio, Casella founded the *Corporazione delle Nuove Musiche* (CDNM); Casella's final (and most successful) society for promoting new and contemporary music. It lasted five years, largely due to private funding from Mrs Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (a patron and friends of Casella's).[97] Casella wanted to create publicly accessible music, and promote and mentor the incoming generation of Italian musicians. This desire to join all Italian musicians together – regardless of style – is admirable, to say the least, but more importantly is exemplary of Casella's ongoing desire to create a New Musical Italy.[98] Concomitant with this work at home, Casella also set out on his first of many American performance tours as both pianist and conductor in 1921. While Casella wanted to tour as a composer-conductor, his audiences, wanted the pianist.[99] Just as he was highly regarded as a pianist in Europe, so too was his pianism respected throughout the Americas.

Throughout the 1930s, Casella continued to advocate for Italian new music events and festivals, alongside his performing and teaching commitments. He continued to promote and facilitate many music happenings and festivals, including the Venice *Festival Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea*.[100] During this time, Casella's compositional output shifted towards a focus on transcriptions and editions of historical music. Whilst Casella had done some editing previously (in 1919, his edition of Beethoven's piano sonatas was published by Ricordi & Co.), his editions and transcriptions took on the form of critical and performing editions rather than just pedagogical ones. On transcription as an art form, Casella wrote that it involved 'a great amount

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[96] Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 165.

[97] Correspondence between Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge and Alfredo Casella, and Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge and Yvonne Muller Casella, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.

[98] Unfortunately for Casella though, opera would prove too popular to be replaced by orchestral and chamber music. Similarly, after 1925 and the introduction of the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* After-Work Concerts scheme, purely instrumental music became the enjoyment of the upper classes, rather than the entertainment of the people.
Duggan, *The Force of Destiny*, 492.

[99] Letter from Willem Van de Wall, Department of Welfare, Pennsylvania to Casella, 1th June 1929.
Letter from Agenzia Internazionale Concerto per la propaganda musicale to Casella, 10th July 1944.
Letters from Accademia di Santa Cecilia to Casella, 1th September 1923, 3rd March 1924.
Letter from Baldwin Piano Company to Casella 5th July 1921.
Letter from Boston Symphony Orchestra to Casella, 1st August 1928.
Letter from Edward Lockspeiser on behalf of the BBC to Casella, 18th April 1947.
All from the Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.

[100] This is now known as the Biennale di Musica, Venezia (Venice Music Biennale); just one of many national institutionalised festivals and musical organizations that Casella was formative in creating, but is now forgotten as having ever been association with him. Similarly, the Biennale was originally supported financially by the Fascist Regime; another aspect of the organisation that has been conveniently forgotten.
Letter from Casella to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, 30th September 1930,
Letter from Goffredo Petrassi to Casella, 27th August 1932,
Letter from Ezra Pound to Casella, 7th March 1927,
Letter from Paul Sacher to Casella, 29th June 1938,
Letter from Casella to Stravinsky, 9th February 1937,
Correspondenti, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.

of inventive fancy and a strong dose of boldness.'[101] Transcriptions by Casella were done partly out of love for various composers, but also because they demonstrated his own 'personal principles' and 'complete maturity' as a performer of international renown.[102]

Yet the 1930s saw Casella (and several other 'too-Modern' composers) fall from good graces with the public (although not the Fascist government). Internationally, financial strife caused by the Great Depression, coupled with growing political unease in Europe resulted in fewer concert engagements.[103] Domestically, Casella's troubles related to his apparent lack of faithfulness to Fascism. Critics began to call his music 'un-Italian,' against the Fascist spirit. In 1932, Respighi and various other composers signed *il Manifesto di musicisti italiani per la tradizione dell'arte romantica dell'Ottocento (the Manifesto of Italian Musicians for the tradition of Nineteenth-Century Romantic Art)*.[104] It specifically targeted Casella, alongside Malipiero, for being too Modern and too European, labelling their music as being anti-Fascist in nature.[105] Similarly, at the 1938 National Syndicate of Musicians meeting, Casella was openly attacked for being un-Italian, and anti-Fascist. Although Casella never publicly opposed the Fascist regime, he also failed to show ardent support such as other composers did, including Respighi, and Mulé. Though Casella had written about his support for a New Italy and his belief for the need for a New Musical Italy, he never joined the Fascist party.[106] But, like many prominent figures of his time, Casella corresponded with Mussolini. In a letter to *il Duce* in 1938, Casella claimed that Fascism enabled art to be independent from the political agenda of the regime:

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[101] Casella, *Muic in My Time,* 210.

[102] Ibid, 211.

[103] Letter from Boston Symphony Orchestra to Casella, 1st August 1928,
Letter from Rochester Civic Music Association NYC to Casella, 22nd February 1940,
Correspondenti, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la music, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.
LAS, "What's Going on in the Arts," *Christian Science Monitor,*28th March 1936.
FB, "Casella's Violin Concerto Has American Première," *Christian Science Monitor*, 7th February 1929.

[104] Respighi et al. "Travagli spirituali del nostro tempo."

[105] On 17th December 1932, Ottorino Respighi, Ildebrando Pizzetti, Alceo Toni, Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli, Giuseppe Mule, Riccardo Sondonai, Alberto Fasco, Guido Guerrini, Gennaro Napoli, and Guido Zuffellato (all important composers in Italy during the Fascist Regime) signed their names to a manifesto published in *La Stampa* newspaper. This manifesto claimed that the music of Casella and Malipiero was too modern in its nature, anti-Fascist, and anti-Italian. The public criticism of the two composers from the others also went on to detail how Casella and Malipiero were desecrating and bastardising the great musical history of Italy, and the trust held in them by their audiences and students. From archival sources remaining, Malipiero wrote back publicly to the manifesto, defending himself and Casella as being Nationalists, and not anti-Fascist. A public debate ensued through newspapers over 1933. No archives exist that imply Casella ever publicly defended himself against the manifesto. His only mention of it is in his memoirs, where he states that although he had many professional disagreements with Respighi and others of their generation, he always had the upmost respect for his peers.
Franco Abbiati, "Tornei musicali ma non musicabili."

[106] Alfredo Casella, "Music and Politics in Italy," *Christian Science Monitor* 19th September 1925.
Alfredo Casella, "Musical Situation in Italy II," *Christian Science Monito,*. 11th January 1919.
Alfredo Casella, "The New Musical Italy," *Christian Science Monitor,* 17th January 1925.
Alfredo Casella, "Igor Stravinsky in Rome," *Christian Science Monitor*, 23rd May 1925.
Alfredo Casella, "Corporazione Delle Nuove Musiche," *Christian Science Monitor,* 20th June 1925.
Alfredo Casella, "Music and These Years of Transition," *Christian Science Monitor*, 18th July 1925.
Alfredo Casella, "Music and Politics in Italy," *Christian Science Monitor*, 19th September 1925.

> Fascism has always followed the principle that the creative activity of the artist has to be totally free and that one must therefore form favourable climate and conditions for the life of art, […] in the last fifteen years, three whole generations of Italian musicians representing various tendencies have been able to work in perfect aesthetic independence freely, but all expressing themselves according to their own conventions or to the measure of their own strengths.[107]

Such a statement seems to praise Mussolini's Italy as a place where artistic freedom was welcomed. And it was: high art was free from censorship, and both Mussolini and Gentile (the so-called philosophical architect of Fascism) supported artistic expression and freedom. Thus comes the dichotomy and nuance of Fascism: it was a dictatorship, allowed for creation and innovation in high art. Casella recognised these nuances, praising and criticising parts of the regime alternatively. While appreciative of the creative freedoms given to him, Casella criticised the inevitable path to World War Two that was being taken.[108] As World War Two drew closer, Casella continued to be accused of being anti-fascist. Those same critics who had signed the anti-modernist manifesto criticised the cosmopolitan influences within his music. By his Italian composer peers and critics, Casella was accused of being a sell-out to foreign aesthetic values. Yet again, Casella was ostracised. He was too much a citizen of Europe to be viewed as authentically Italian.[109]

From 1938 onwards, Casella's life was plagued with trouble. His wife and child – Yvonne and Fulvia – were Jewish, and thus suffered from the Racial Laws introduced in 1938. Although never directly targeted, the threat of danger was always present. Simultaneously, Casella's branding as a socialist and anti-Fascist in the press meant he was out of public favour and out of work. The mud that had been slung from the Anti-Modernists had stuck, and he was no longer the darling of Italian Music. As a result, his performance career hugely suffered. However, Casella did receive monetary gifts from Mussolini, along with his state pension to pay for medical treatment for cancer from 1939 until his death in 1947. His correspondence

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[107] Letter from Casella to Benito Mussolini, 23rd August 1938, *Correspondenti*, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.
It must also be remembered that compared to other political regimes of the time, Fascism in Italy was relatively lax in terms of censorship. Schoenberg and Shostakovich were regular guests to Italian music festivals, and regularly appeared on orchestral concert programmes. Similarly, only one work was ever forbidden from public performance. This was Malipiero's opera, *La favola del figlio cambiato* (1932), which was censored because it contained a sex scene between a man and his mother on stage.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Casella, *Muic in My Time*, 230.

during the Second World War shows Casella reaching out to all his contacts, enquiring about performances, favours, and opportunities, but often being knocked back.[110]

Little detail exists about the end of Casella's life. His writings stop around 1940 when his cancer became debilitating. His diaries from this period are sparse, although there are several archives that show plans for further books.[111] The end of his life has – like Casella generally – been largely forgotten.

Since his death, Casella has largely proven to be of little interest to performers and academics alike (except for Nicolodi and her students), especially outside of Italy. Perhaps this is not due to Casella himself, but more because his music has not been investigated in a manner that endears it to musicologists or performers, or because of the mislabelling of his political beliefs and alliances. Casella's importance as a pianist of international renown takes a backseat to his compositions. He is not celebrated as a great or important composer, and nor is his music lauded as being culturally important, or recognised as the turning point in Italian Modernism. Casella should be viewed as both a pianist, and a cultural ambassador for Italy. He should not be remembered as a fascist composer, but as a cosmopolitan pianist-composer.

[110] A wonderful example of Casella reaching out during the war and being knocked back is detailed in a letter from Steinway and Sons (Hamburg) to Casella, 21st July 1942 (*Correspondenti,* Fondo Casella, Istituto Per la Musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice). This letter is a response to a letter sent by Casella requesting a new piano (model B-211) during the middle of the war (and stating that Casella had previously owned the same or similar model piano and was looking to purchase a replacement). The letter states that Steinway and Sons cannot possibly provide Casella with a new instrument because of the ongoing situation of war, and given that importation of instruments to Italy is highly limited for the same reason. It also refuses to give Casella a discount on buying a new instrument.

[111] Diaries, *Doccumenti,* Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

Chapter 2: Casella's Compositional Process

Why performers should understand compositional process

Compositional process shows the conception, development and evolution of a work, showing how the historical object – the score – comes into being. This can illuminate both the creative process of a specific work, and the overall working process of a composer. The order in which different elements were conceived – melody, harmony, rhythm, articulation, phrasing etc. – can also be elucidated. This hints at the importance the composer places on those elements, their hierarchy within the compositional process, highlighting the importance performers could place on those elements within the work. Investigating the compositional process, especially the sketching and drafting phases, highlights what musical ideas and context the composer selected or rejected, and why, which in turn can influence interpretation.

There are many compositional elements that make up a musical work which influence our interpretation and performance, and the fundamental character of the music. One example is tempo: if a composer initially marked a movement *Allegretto*, but then later revises this to *Allegro*, this changes how tempo is interpreted and performed.

Understanding the compositional process can also give narrative to a work, and ais constructing an interpretation. As well as contextualising a work historically and socially, knowing the compositional story gives the work identity as more than just a score. It becomes an evolving cultural, musical, and historical object in itself. Especially for those works – such as Casella's – where only scant fragments in private correspondence and memoirs are noted about the inspiration or personal significance of works, compositional process can infer importance of a work within a composer's oeuvre, and signpost to historical and social events impinging on that work. Similarly, it can be understood how a work relates to other works by the same composer, or other composers, from the period when it was written, elucidating whether there were any external influences on the work. Understanding the compositional process helps form a multifaceted understanding of a work: how it is not just a score, but also an evolving musical artefact.

Let us now turn to look specifically at Casella. As discussed in this chapter using archival and score sources, various repeating processes emerge in Casella's compositional process. Casella shows himself to be a creature of habit: looking through the draft and sketch material available, it can be seen that the same steps are undertaken in the same order for the majority of Casella's

compositional career. He continually shows himself to go through three steps when composing: (i) drafting, (ii) editing, and (iii) polishing. This three-step process is outlined below.

We are fortunate enough to have a wide range of primary sources available that pertain to Casella and his piano works. Within this collection, we can access sketches for approximately half of Casella's piano oeuvre, as well as many of his orchestral and chamber works. However, there are few completed manuscripts available to scholars.[112] To analyse the compositional process and deduce the stages and steps of Casella's compositional process, drafts and materials found in the sketchbooks were analysed then compared with completed manuscripts and published scores.[113] Sketches were looked at for scribbles, erased notes, re-written passages, and any edit that suggested the original sketch had been altered. While no scientific analysis was done to test the age of the paper or type pencil used, scholars of Casella are well able to hypothesise his layering of edits, given his notational style. Edits and scribbles from later stages were usually done with differing heaviness of pencil, or in different coloured inks and crayons. Casella was a fan of scribbling out edits he no longer wanted, and rewriting replacement passages or notes underneath in 'spare' staves. Once the sketch and draft material was understood, we turn to the completed manuscripts and published scores in turn, and compare what was added in or removed between these stages. Casella dated almost all his sketches, manuscripts, and published works, including when he made revisions and edits so – as will be demonstrated – it was possible to deduce the timeline of many works.

Following these initial steps, the sketches were compared to available completed manuscripts. Though the completed manuscripts were not first-hand originals (many were photocopies of the originals), it is still clear where Casella has made final edits and changes, again through his use of scribbles and dating. Coupled with intimate knowledge of the published works in their final form, Casella's compositional process has been deduced. When looking at the sketchbooks, there are also various notes in the inserts and inner covers that help create a map

[112] Many of the completed manuscripts in Casella's hand were given to editors to use for publishing the works. Subsequently, the original manuscripts have either been lost or misplaced, such as is the case for those publishers who have been bought out and merged with other companies, such as AZ Mathot, who was bought by Salabert, with in turn was sold and bought, and now is owned by Universal Music. Various other manuscripts which still exist are inaccessible due to publishers not being generous with reproductions. For example, both Editore Curci and Ricordi & Co did not respond to emails asking for access to their archives or for paid reproductions of scores throughout the course of this research.

[113] This manuscript and score analysis has been carried out using mainly the archival sources housed in the Fondo Casella, part of the Istituto per la musica, at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice. This collection houses sixteen compositional sketchbooks attributed to Casella, as well as various copies and reproductions of completed manuscripts. Alongside the wealth of information housed at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, various reproductions of archives from Archivio Ricordi, the Library of Congress Washington DC, and the Vienna State Library were used. These have been referenced where required. It should be noted that, as of March 2021, not all sources of Casella archives were consulted. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was not able to visit various libraries, such as the Accademia Musicale Chigiana, Siena, or the Library of Conservatorio Santa Cecilia, Rome. Similarly, various archive collections did not respond to requests for materials or reproductions, most likely due to pandemic-related issues.

of Casella's compositional process more broadly, not just of individual works or movements. These notes provided information about movement structure, dedications, and various external influences and other pieces being composed at the same time that influenced Casella. Using all these sources, it is possible to see a very clear and repetitive compositional process.

The Overall Compositional Process

From the archives and resources available, Casella's compositional process can be identified as the following three steps:

1. **Drafting, Sketching**
    a. Consisting incomplete fragments (sketches), completed drafts; the 'completed-ness' indicating if it was a sketch or draft.
    b. Title, tempo, and initial dynamic marks always present, regardless of completeness.
    c. Musical idea, either partially or fully formed, always containing elements of both melody and harmony.
2. **Editing**
    a. Major edits, e.g. changing movement order (or even the structure within a movement), extending or removing or re-writing sections. This is where any major thematic/melodic/harmonic changes or additions are made. Or
    b. Minor edits e.g. changing tempo and expressive markings.
    c. Editing done in sketchbooks, completed manuscripts, or both.
    d. Sometimes done immediately as if part of first compositional step, sometimes done after an extended period of time has elapsed. Shown by dating in the sketchbooks and penmanship.
3. **Polishing**
    a. Adds expression, dynamics, performance instructions, and sometimes fingering on the score with evidence of some last-minute changes on the completed manuscript (although not initial dynamic/expressive marks).
    b. Adds dedications.
    c. Publishes score: generally no changes between completed manuscript and published score other than fingering (sometimes). [114]

[114] This has been elucidated through use of the sketchbooks and reproductions of manuscripts accessible at the Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia, and Casella's published scores.

We can be certain of steps one and three because of the existing archival sources available. The second step is hypothesised due to the edits in various sources, and discrepancies between sketches and published scores. Where there were 'major' changes to a work, these were done on top of the sketch or draft material, and usually at a later date and with a different pen. These changes – or edits – range in magnitude. In some works, the edits are minor revisions – a chord here or there, a change in dynamic or expressive marking, fingering. In others, the editing involves rewriting harmony, altering the movement order of a work, or even adding entirely new sections.

It is most likely that Casella did not compose at the piano – not in the initial phase, anyway. Once the notes of a work were notated, Casella played the work at the piano, and then filled in the completed score. Given that he was a pianist-composer, it is plausible that he would be competent and capable of composing away from the piano, given this intimate knowledge of the instrument and techniques required of performers.[115]

The three-step compositional process outlined above is consistent throughout Casella's oeuvre of piano works, and – from the existing materials in the sketchbooks – his compositions in general. This thesis limits itself to investigating the piano compositions of Casella, as discussing his other works is beyond the scope of this specific project. However, the framework and investigation detailed below could well be applied to any of his orchestral or instrumental works in further studies. By identifying the commonalities in behaviour, and habits that emerge consistently throughout the above-outlined steps, Casella's compositional process can be understood. This compositional process for individual works will then be detailed in each of the case studies.

I Quaderni: The Sketchbooks

As previously mentioned, there are many archival sources available that pertain to Casella's work, not least of which are his compositional sketchbooks (*i quaderni*). There are sixteen sketchbooks in total, dating between 1901-1944, all of which can be found in the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice. There is a nine year gap between the first and second sketchbooks, and t is unknown whether other sketchbooks from this period exist. It is most likely that Casella did have sketches from this period that haven't survived.[116] While the Fondazione lists sixteen

[115] While there are photos of Casella composing at the piano in various archives, these seem somewhat staged, and there is no proof – anecdotal, archival or otherwise – to indicate that his first compositional phase was done at the piano.

[116] Given the various archives and documents in the archives, it can be surmised that Casella most likely did compile and have sketchbooks from between 1901 and 1909. The numbering of the sketchbooks was done by archivists, and not by Casella himself. We know that Casella kept most of the documents and drafts from his adult life, including diaries, passports,

sketchbooks, not all of these so-called sketchbooks are the same. The first sketchbook is more of a folder of a collection of Casella's notes from 1896-1901 – his time at the Paris Conservatoire – and not a compositional sketchbook like all others in the collection. The folder seems to be like revision notes from a composition class, containing notes such revision sheets on instrumental notation. These are likely materials from his classes at the Paris Conservatoire, including exercises in harmony (as can be seen below in Figure 1). Unfortunately, there is no archival material anywhere that shows anything relating to his original compositions written before 1909. However, we are fortunate enough to have two of Casella's early harmony exercises from his time at the Paris Conservatoire. These are the earliest examples we have of Casella's 'compositions,' but are not wholly originally in that they contain given melodic or harmonic lines. While they are merely exam exercises in four-part harmony, they do offer some insight into Casella's education and early harmonic style.[117]

awards, and other documents. However, because of his divorce from Helene Kahn, it is possible that some archival documents, such as letters and sketchbooks, were destroyed or lost when he divorced from her. It is also possible that some documents or archives were lost from Casella's time in Paris, when he moved back to Rome in 1914.
Prove d'esame, M68, MUS 37, Fondo Casella, Isituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.

Chant donné

Transcr. Ellen Falconer

Alfredo Casella (1901)

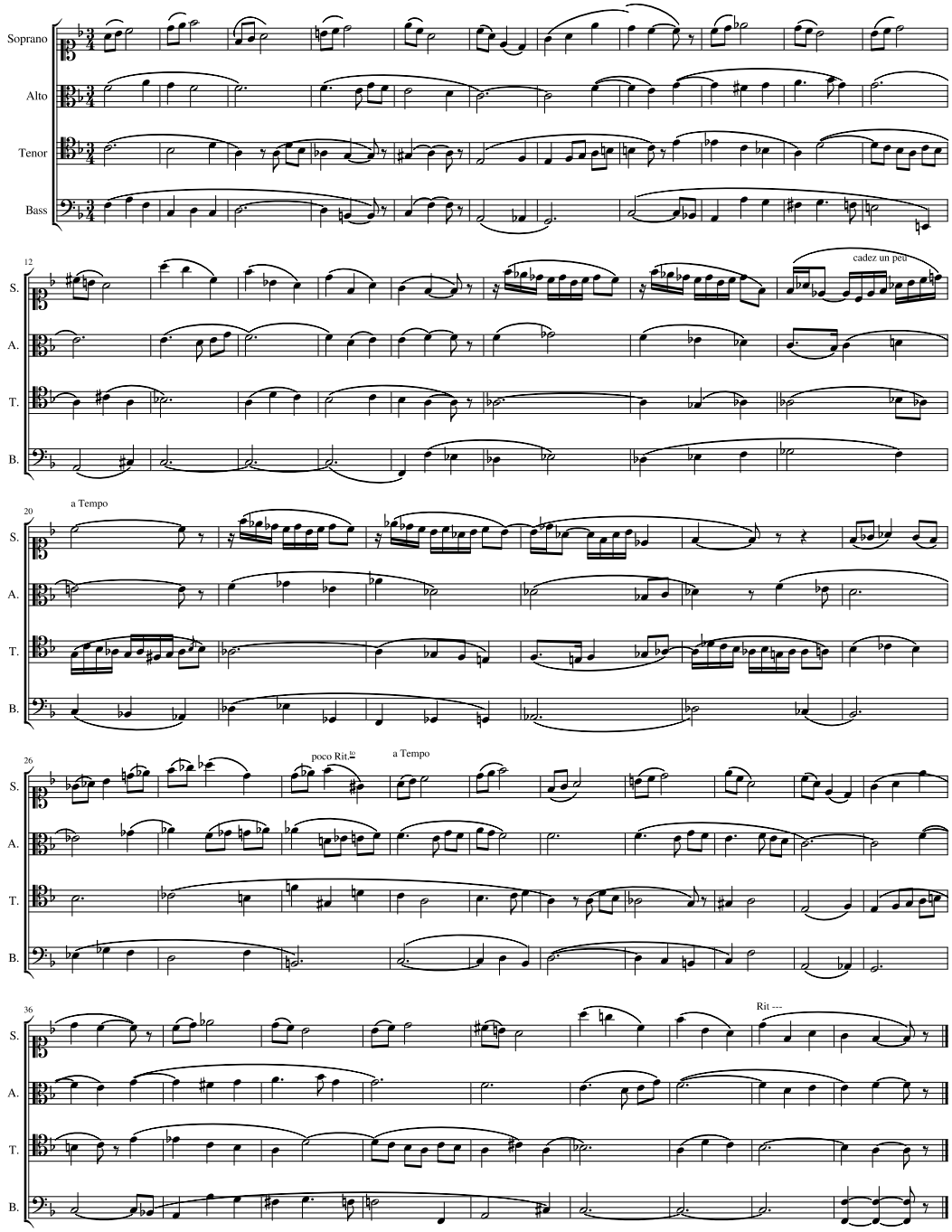

Figure 1: Transcription of Casella's composition for an exam, transcribed from original manuscript. M. 68, MUS 37, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

As stated previously, there are no sketches available for any works Casella wrote before 1909 (even though he had written at least twelve pieces in total by that year). From extensive discussions with archivists, scholars, and Casella's family, there is no knowledge of any compositional sketchbooks existing from before 1909. However, all agree that it is highly likely that Casella did have sketch or draft material from this period.[118] There are completed manuscripts of some works from this period, such as *Toccata* Op. 6 1904. In the case of the *Toccata,* the manuscript is housed with the publishers, but the existence or whereabouts sketchbooks and drafts is unknown. Through various archives (not just the Fondazione Giorgio Cini), we see that the pianist-composer was meticulous in documenting, journaling, and keeping written mementos throughout his life from roughly 1896 onwards. It thus seems strange that Casella would not have made any sketches, or kept any initial drafts of his compositions from before 1909.[119]

There is a similar archival material gap at the end of the composer's career, but for a very different reason. Sketchbook 15 is dated 1934-37, and then there is a five-year gap before Sketchbook 16 appears, dated 1942-43. This would be Casella's final sketchbook, containing notes for his last works. Between 1937-1942, Casella composed various seminal works: *Sonata per tre* Op 62 (1938, for violin, cello, and piano), *Symphony No. 3* Op. 63 (1939-40) and *Divertimento per Fulvia* Op. 64 (1940). Again, it is odd that there is such a stretch without sketchbooks to draft the compositions written during this time. One must again question whether this lack of sketch and draft material is due to potentially lost archival materials, or due to a change in compositional practice. Though the sketchbooks do not document Casella's *entire* compositional career, they provide substantial enough material to help construct Casella's compositional process.

One may well question why we need to understand Casella's compositional process, and how this is relevant to performing the works. Simply put, one could defend this investigation into compositional process with the simple reason that it has never been done before. None of the scholarship pertaining to Casella details his compositional process, nor does it utilise archival

[118] Deduced from various conversations with Fiamma Nicolodi, Mila de Santis, and the archivists at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini.

[119] One possibility is that various documents, sketches, and works were lost when Casella divorced his first wife, Hélène. After their divorce in 1919, Casella married his student Yvonne Müller in 1921, who he had been having an affair with. While Casella and Helene remained amicable after their divorce, it is likely that in the initial aftermath of their separation that several of Casella's documents were destroyed or lost. While there are copies of correspondence that Casella sent (subsequently found in archival collections), we have no replies that he received, no records of travel and only scant personal diaries and artefacts from the period of his first marriage. Yet it is also possible Casella himself lost or misplaced sketch and correspondence materials from this period in his life. During this period, he travelled extensively across Europe, touring, and performing. He also relocated to Rome after almost twenty years in Paris, during the First World War. Not an easy period to keep twenty years of life documents safe.

sources.[120] Casella was primarily a pianist before being a composer. By understanding his compositional process, and the revisions he made to his works, pianists can better understand how and if his practice informed his composition. By understanding the evolution of a work, and what has changed and how from original conception to published score, we can offer more informed interpretations.

Inside the Sketchbooks: plotting, planning, and non-musical pages

The inner covers of the sketchbooks contain invaluable inscriptions, notes and diagrams separate from the drafts of compositions. These inner covers are lined with notes: instrumentation lists, movement titles and order, work titles, and dedications. Casella's sketchbooks detail his plotting and planning, and how he ordered and re-ordered movements. These notes are schematic plans of works, show us how Casella structured his compositions. They also act as reminders of forms he had already used. Secondly, when looking at dedications and instruments, it can be seen as a way of remembering what he had already done. In the back of Sketchbook 4 (Figure 2) there are tables as to the movement order for *Nove pezzi* Op. 24 (1914).[121] We can see below that Casella reorders the movements three times, and edits dedications and movement titles.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 2: Inner back cover of Sketchbook 4 showing lists of movements for Nove Pezzi Op. 24. Quaderno 4, M. 74 Mus 42, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice

[120] Specifically, it should be noted here that almost none of the English-language scholarship on Casella utilises these archives. Several of the Italian-language sources do use and dig into the archival sources, such as the three-volume catalogue of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, each volume of which contains a critical commentary on various aspects of Casella's life. It is not that there is *no* scholarship that uses Casella's archives (the journal of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, *Archival Notes*, has several article that make reference to Casella's sketches), but next to nothing has been done to illuminate his compositional style or process. Similarly, little exists specifically on his piano music or that delves into his works written after 1920. While there are texts, such as Fontanelli's, that look at specific movements of works (his looking at one of the movements from *Nove Pezzi* Op. 24), or Basini's article on *Il deserto tentato* (1936), none look into the performance or interpretation. It is arguable as well that these texts do not interrogate Casella's style, but merely state that it is a certain way (for example, fascist modernism in the case of Basini) without fully investigating the score.

[121] Alfredo Casella, *Qauderno 4*, M. 74 Mus 42, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.
In the frontis of Sketchbook 4 on the inner sleeve at the back of the manuscript and sketches is a list of instruments to be used in *Notte di maggio*, where the orchestral instruments (and numbers therein) are listed in descending order down the page as they would be in an orchestral score. On the same page on the right-hand side are notes by Casella about the title of the same work: various titles are written and then scribbled out, as if he is attempting different versions of titles and then structuring his thoughts. This is interesting to see, especially given that there is only a very small sketch of *Notte di maggio* in this particular quaderno. A sketch for *Notte di maggio* in this workbook is on Folios 2 Verso – Folio 7 Verso, and is largely a sketch of the vocal line and some of the harmony and rhythm of the accompaniment. It is in no way a complete sketch, and various other sketches of the work exist in other, later quaderni as well.

There are three different lists in Figure 2, above. Nominally done as part of the second, editing, compositional phase, these lists show a development of the work. The upper right table in red is likely the first version of the movement structure, given it only plays with title order. The left-hand table (likely the second list compiled) reorders the movements with time and key signature as part of Casella's consideration, and shows the initials of dedicatees of each movement. The lower-right table gives the final order of the work's movements with one of the ten movements removed, and dedicatees seemingly finalised. From these three tables, we see several developments in the creation of *Nove Pezzi* as we know it today. From the first and second lists, we can see that originally the work had ten movements, and was called *Dieci preludi per pianoforte* (*Ten Preludes for Piano*). The final list on the lower-right side can be seen as a final movement-order sketch – correlating with the published score – once dedications had been added and movement had been removed.

We can surmise that this editing was done as a secondary, editing, step. This is supported somewhat by order of sketches and drafts in the sketchbooks, but not entirely. Only seven sketches of the original ten movements are in Sketchbook 4, with the other three appearing in Sketchbook 5 (dated 1914-1916).[122] This re-ordering of movements suggests that Casella had a second, editorial compositional step in his process.

This level of detail both of sketches, and the organisation of works, was typical of Casella's earlier works and sketchbooks before 1930. In the later sketchbooks from the 1930s onwards (e.g. Sketchbook 15 (1934-1937) and Sketchbook 16 (1942-1943)),[123] there are only vague lists of instruments at the front of the sketchbooks, and no other notes appear. Editing is mostly done in the drafts, suggesting that editing had become part of the drafting phase. As he matured, Casella's compositional process became more internally structured and organised throughout his compositional career.

Compositional Versus Published Order of Movements

The majority of sketches for multi-movement works were sketched in a different order to that in which they were subsequently published. This is most obvious when looking at the sketches for *À la manière de …* Op. 17 and 17bis (1911 and 1913, respectively), *Nove pezzi* Op. 24 (1915) and *Sei Studi* Op 70 (1944). In the case of *À la manière de …*the sketch for the *Vincent D'Indy* movement is the first to appear in the sketchbooks, suggesting it was the first to be

[122] Alfredo Casella, *Quaderno 5*, M. 75 MUS 43, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.
[123] Alfredo Casella, *Quaderno 15*, M. 85 MUS 53, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice. Alfredo Casella, *Quaderno 16*, M. 86 MUS 54, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

thought of and drafted. Yet, in the published works, the *D'Indy* movement was not published until 1913 as part of a second set composed in conjunction with Ravel.[124]

Similarly, the first sketch drafted for *Nove pezzi* discussed above was ultimately the sixth movement in the published work, *in modo di nenia*. The published score begins with *in modo funebre*, the fifth completed sketch. This change in movement order, and altering the work's name from *Preludi* to *Pezzi* is significant. *Preludi* implies certain qualities programmatically, interpretatively, and historically to performers and audiences alike. When thinking of 'Preludes,' we think of those collections by Chopin, Debussy, and Rachmaninoff. Not only is there the historical canon of preludes, but programmatic considerations. Usually, several preludes from a set are performed together, or used to prelude other works in a programme. Changing the work's name to *pezzi – pieces* – implies that the movements are not preludes, but individual pieces in their own right, and without the same gravitas as those collections by other twentieth-century composers.

Sei *Studi* Op. 70 (1942-44) is similarly sketched in a different order to that in which it was published, and across two sketchbooks, with sketches for other works interspersed between. *Sei Studi* was composed over several years between 1942 and 1944, suggesting that while Casella had ideas for each movement, these ideas were not all born at the same time, and the concept of the six studies did not come until all movements had been completed.

As Figure 2 above demonstrates, the structuring and ordering of movements potentially had to do with both the overall key-structure of a work, the length of movements, and even the dedications and hierarchy therein. It was most likely done during the editing stage. After the initial compositional period – where the movements were drafted – Casella returned to edit the works in secondary step, reordering the structure of a work as part of these edits.

Penmanship and Notation

Casella's penmanship is rough and messy, though not illegible. Scribbles, crossed-out notes, blacked-out segments and various edits litter the pages. Yet, we are able to navigate his sketches (albeit, sometimes with help from the published scores). From the sketchbooks, five aspects of Casella's notational style are apparent: (i) key signatures are indicated with a number of sharp or flat signs at the beginning of a line, rather than written in the staves (e.g., three flats to

[124] *À la maniére de Borodin* and *à la maniére de Chabrier* were two movements composed by Ravel that formed part of the second collection: *À la manière de… Op. 17bis*. Paris: Editions Salabert, 1913.

indicate C minor (Figure 3 below)); (ii) time signatures are only notated when they change, rather than at the beginning of a work; (iii) only the treble clef is ever notated, implying the lower clef is always bass clef; (iv) repeated notes are indicated with stems rather than with note heads, and repeated material (e.g., a harmony, bars, phrase) is indicated with a repeat sign; and (v) the harmony is never fully written out, although the melody usually is. These can be seen in Figure 3 below.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 3: The first two lines of sketch for Sinfonia, Arioso and Toccata Op. 59 (1932) in sketchbook 15. Casella's style of notating key and time signatures is circled in green. Quaderno 15, M. 85 MUS 53, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

Casella's edits in the sketchbooks

Casella's is the only hand to appear in the sketchbooks. Other than the notes themselves, the sketches are littered with various editorial and corrective markings made by the composer. The majority of these editorial markings are scribbles in pencil or red crayon (seen above in both Figures 2 and 3). These markings in red crayon are likely part of the editing phase. Every sketch contains scribbles – some being simply over the title of movements or individual notes as in Figure 3, and some appearing over entire lines of manuscript. These black tirades across the page (Figure 4 below), are not infrequently. Sometimes they are light, so that the music underneath can be discerned, but sometimes they scribbles are extremely heavy, so that the original ideas are illegible. These black-out style heavy scribbles are used indiscriminately for both minor errors (single notes), and entire phrases, likely rejected during the editing phase.[125]

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 4: Sonatina Op. 28 sketch from Sketchbook 5 showing Casella's use of 'scribbles' – which are both for entire passages and individual notes. Quaderno 5, M. 75, Mus 43, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice

Casella similarly has his own methods of creating a 'map' of his sketches. Several sketches, such as *Berceuse triste*, *triste pour harpe chromatique (ou piano)*, Op. 14 (Figure 5), are sketched in several fragments across various folios, which Casella maps together using a

[125] These scribbles – as will be discussed – are also present in final and completed scores: Casella similarly used smaller scribbles for individual notes, and larger sections to be rejected were scribbled out in large sections.

combination of arrows and ⌖ signs (the coda sign being used above in Figure 4 as well).[126] The arrows serve two functions in the sketches. Sometimes they are used simply to indicate where bars should repeat. Contrastingly, they are a mapping tool, when fragments for an entire work are sketched out of order. The sketch for *Berceuse triste* appears across two folios. However, the first page of the sketch appears on the second page – Folio 4 Recto. An arrow at the end of the folio directs the reader to preceding folio. This mapping occurs in this work, and throughout the sketchbooks.

[126] Alfredo Casella, Sketch for *Berceuse Triste*, *Quaderno 3*, M. 73 MUS 41, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.
Alfredo Casella, *Quaderno 5,* M. 75, Mus 43, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 5: Casella's use of the coda sign and arrows indicate the 'direction' of the sketch for Bercuese Triste Op. 14. The work begins on Folio 4 Recto (the lower image), but continues onto the preceding folio (Folio 3 Verso, above), indicated by arrows and symbols. Quaderno 3, M. 73 MUS 41, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice

Casella uses 𝄐 (typically used as a coda symbol) to indicate where fragments are to be inserted into scores (a 'cut-and-paste' mapping device). This can be seen in Figure 4, in the first page of the sketch for *Sonatina* where there is a red 𝄐 marking at the end of Bar 1, Line 4 that indicates for a section from an inserted folio to be 'pasted' in here. We similarly see it in Figure 5 above as part of the sketch of *Berceuse triste*. This also demonstrates Casella's musical 'economy'. Casella never wastes compositional ideas, recycling them elsewhere.

One final thing worth noting is the use of red and blue crayon markings throughout the sketchbooks. Although there is nothing to concretely indicate when these markings were made, they were presumably done towards the end of the second, editing phase, and are aids for compiling completed manuscripts. They are not scribbles like those in pencil, which signify changes to notes, and are generally larger-scale edits and revisions. The crayon markings are more general revisions, such as to the large structure or title of works. In some sketches, they appear as crosses at the end of bars, which there is no real explanation for (there appears to be no correlating marking in the completed manuscripts or published scores to link with these markings, and they similarly do not correlate with formatting edits for the publisher or page layout, or page and line division in completed manuscripts). However, some do make sense. Those seen in the first line of the sketch for *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op. 59 (Figure 3). Red crayon is used to rewrite the order of movements, and the movement names of these movements. These crayon markings seem to indicate final editorial decisions at the very end of the editing phase.

Tempo and Expressive Markings

There is a limited use of dynamics and expression in the sketchbooks. However, all the sketches begin with a tempo marking. Even the most incomplete of sketches – such as that of the *Vincent D'Indy* movement of *À la maniere de …* (Figure 6) – have a tempo indication. Tempo seem to be the first step in a work's conception, regardless of what follows or how complete the sketch is.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 6: Sketch of Vincent D'Indy from À la manière de… Op. 17bis, which contains a tempo indication, scant melody and harmony: the basics of every sketch. Quaderno 3, M. 73 MUS 41, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

This is not to say that these tempo markings stayed the same from a work's initial conception through to publication. Sometimes tempos or initial markings were later revised when a work was edited, as can be seen in the sketch for the first movement of *Sonatina* Op. 28 (Figure 4). Just as with title changes, Casella revises tempo markings in the editing phase. However, it is rare that markings drastically differ

between the sketch and published score. Usually tempo marking changes are minor, such as with *Berceuse triste*. In the sketch, the work is marked *allegretto, andantino* (Figure 5); whereas in the published version, the work is marked *allegretto, quasi andantino, misterioso*. This change is small, adding to the mood rather than completely changing the character and speed. For those sketches where there is no tempo marking, the title itself can be taken as an indication of tempo and style. *Barcarola* Op. 15 has no specific tempo marking. Yet barcarola itself is a title and form indicating a moderate, lilting tempo, and singing style.[127] Thus, the title acts in place of a tempo marking.[128]

Most sketches also begin with an initial dynamic that accompanies the initial tempo marking. Rarely, however, do they contain further dynamic markings throughout sketches. Contrastingly, in the finished completed manuscripts (and thus also the published scores), there are detailed dynamic markings. This suggests that dynamics and expressive markings are added in the final, polishing phase. This is most obvious when looking at the first page of the completed score for *Sonatina* Op. 28 (Figure 7). While there is much to digest in this handwritten score (which will be discussed in a later case study), let us focus on the dynamic markings and performance directions. The dynamic markings throughout Casella's completed manuscripts are generally extensive and precise. That these expressive markings are present in the completed score but not in the sketches, tells that they were added in during the third, polishing step of the compositional process. Casella is extremely detailed in how he notates expression, dynamics, and articulation. There is nothing to guess at regarding expression and articulation, shown in the detail marking in Figures 7 and 8 (also below). From the outset, it can be said that no dynamic or expressive markings are added to the published scores: those within published versions of works mirror exactly what is marked in Casella's final manuscripts.[129]

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 7: Folio 3 of the finished manuscript for Sonatina Op. 28 in Casella's hand, with extensive dynamic, expressive, and articulation markings. M 113, MUS 66, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice

[127] *Barcarola* is a kind of Venetian song, traditionally sung by gondoliers, and being meant to reflect the lilting of waves along the canals, or the stroke-speak of a gondolier.

[128] In Casella's treatise on harmony, he stated that he believed music was made up of the physical, mechanical, and physiological: '*Harmony* is "music" in the absolute sense of the term; a chord is a sound-value of an essentially and exclusively musical order. *Melody* is, on the contrary, the most elementary musical artifice of mankind […] *Rhythm*, again, leads a kind of independent existence in music economics. If harmony has sprung from the medieval discovery of the laws of resonance and […] from the subsequent application of this discovery; if melody represents a characteristically "human" side of musical art, then rhythm was but the dynamism of its raw and potential state.' (page XX). This makes sense of why Casella included notes, rhythm, and the tempo and dynamics indications at the beginning of sketches, rather than just the 'physical' and 'mechanical' aspects of music.
Alfredo Casella, *The Evolution of Music. Throughout the History of the Perfect Cadence,* London: J&W Chester Ltd, 1924.

[129] This conclusion of these finished manuscripts being those sent to the publisher is possible because of two differing factors. First is the simple question of: why would Casella write out two completed manuscripts? He most likely would not. Second, those completed manuscripts in the Fondo Casella are all photocopies, while the originals exist in other archives (e.g., Ricordi Archives of Ricordi and Co. Publishers), and thus it makes sense that these photocopies are the same scores that were used by publishers.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 8: Completed manuscript of A Notte Alta Op. 30. Casella is specific in his expressive notation of dynamics, phrasing and articulation, and places the pedal marking under the first bar. M 17, MUS 17, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazaione Giorgio Cini.

Just like dynamics, pedalling is only added to the completed manuscripts, as part of the final, polishing phase. Unlike dynamics, they vary in their preciseness and regularity. In some pieces, such as *Variations sur une chaconne* Op. 2, and *Toccata* Op. 6, the pedal is marked only where Casella wants a specific textural contrast, not necessarily where a pianist would organically employ it. He uses blunt commands like *senza pedale* in both works, only employing pedal in the final bars. Often, this pedal for the final bars or chords of works is accompanied by (or sometimes even replaced with) the use of a fermata sign and *lungo* in the final bars, such as in the majority of movements of *Undici pezzi infantili* Op. 32 and the *Sei Studi.* As will be discussed further in the sections on performance and interpretation, the pedals must be looked at both as tools to enhance texture and as a natural part of pianistic expression and taste. Casella agrees with this statement: *A Notte Alta* Op. 30 (1917) (Figure 8 above) is prefaced by Casella that the pedal marking underneath the first bar specifically states that the use of pedal must be determined by the performer, and is dependent on the resonance of the piano. Similarly, Casella leaves a long instruction to the performer for his *Sonatina* Op. 28 (1916):

> Note: the execution of this little work can only be done with perfect consciousness of all the secrets of the modern pedal, and consequently knowing how wonderful and peculiar a poetry can be expected through a complex, very high 'pedalistic' recording. For these indications are superfluous; the performer will understand me without doubt. However, here and there, I thought it useful to guide the performer, compromise certain sounds that I hold dear.[130]

These pedalling instructions are very much directed to the mature, sensitive performer, assuming the pianist reading Casella's instructions understands the nuances of the piano and pedalling. It assumes the pianist will recognise the challenges of notating pedalling and the plethora of pedalling possibilities available. Casella even notes this in the above quote: "these [pedalling] indications are superfluous." The performer must use the pedal with their own discretion, knowing that pedal cannot accurately be notated, but must be listened and reacted to by the performer so as to best employ it and create the desired "pedalistic" textures. There are moments in works where Casella does mark for there to be no pedal: *senza pedale*, *senza arpeggio* and various other similar markings that thus limit the performer in

[130] "Nota: l'esecuzione di questo piccolo lavoro può essere riuscita soltanto da conscitori perfetti di tutti i segreti del pedal e moderno, e che sappiano conseguentemente a quale meravigliosa e peculiare poesia si possa pretendere mediante una complessa , raffi altissima registrazione 'pedalistica'. Per costoro le indicazioni sono superffue; essi m'intenderanno senza dubbio. Però, qua e l'à, ho creduto utile di se giudare all'esecutore, compromettene certe sonorità cui tengo assai."
Alfredo Casella, *Sonatina* Op. 28 (manuscript), M. 113, Mus 66, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, 2. Appendix 7.

how they can perform the work. But this apparent strictness of notation must be taken at face value (it is not a strictness in how the performer must interpret the work!) and is ultimately at the discretion of the performer. At the beginning of *Pavane* Op. 1 (1902), Casella marks *sans pedale*. No experienced performer would take this to mean without pedal for the entire work, otherwise some of the chords would be entirely impossible unless the performer had the hand span of a 10th and the texture would become monotonous. Contrastingly, *A notte alta* (Figure 8) is marked at the beginning to have free use of pedal dependent upon the resonance of the piano being used (and nominally also the room being performed in). Thus, Casella gives freedom in how and where the pedal can be used. There is liberty for the performer in how they interpret pedal throughout the work, dependant on the instrument, venue, and desired texture. Given his knowledge of the piano (he was a pianist, after all), it is logical that Casella would understand the difficulties of notating precise textures and resonances through pedalling. One cannot precisely or accurately notate pedal through conventional notation. In Casella's piano works, pedal should be used as a textural device, and be thoroughly listened to by the performer, rather than taken literally from the score. Finally, given that pedal marks usually only occur in the completed manuscripts, it is highly likely that Casella added them in the final polishing phase of composing.

Reuse and Recycle

One thing is evident from looking at Casella's sketchbooks as a whole: nothing is wasted! As was mentioned above, Casella was economical in his notation, using all possible space in the sketchbooks to draft, plan, and restructure works (sometimes to the confusion of his archivists). As well as being economical with manuscript paper and space in his sketchbooks, he was also not wasteful with *what* he wrote. There are – in every sketchbook – various musical fragments that are unlabelled by Casella, and marked as unidentified (*non identificato*) within archival catalogues. However, with careful inspection, it becomes evident that several of these *non identificato* fragments appear in other pieces not drafted in the sketchbooks. Casella reuses and revises the musical material he has already created, rather than wasting musical ideas.

This is prevalent most obviously in the sketches for *À la manière de …*. In the sketch for *Vincent D'Indy* (Figure 6), Casella only completes four bars on Folio 1 Recto of the movement. Lower down on this same page are six bars of sketched melody. On the reverse of this folio, there is a two-bar melody sketched out. None of these fragments are random, unused or wasted. As can be seen from the completed score of *Vincent D'Indy*, Casella modulates the fragment from Folio 1 Recto, and harmonises the fragment on Folio 1 Recto to be included in the completed movement. Whether these three fragments were originally intended to be worked into a single piece can only be speculated (one would

perhaps suspect not, given the final fragment was written on the other side of the page). It can be assumed that the fragments were cobbled together to make an entire work.

This recycling of musical ideas sometimes seems planned by Casella. On some folios in the sketchbooks, it appears as if Casella sketched various half-formed ideas that were intended to be linked, which then came together within completed works at a later stage. Rather than being an unplanned or random unused sketches that Casella forces together to create completed pieces, it is likely that there was long-term thought given to works, and were merely notated at different times when Casella had a new thoughts to add. As will be shown in the *Sonatina* case study, this happened not infrequently, where movements of works were drafted at different times. In Sketchbook 5, the draft contains four movements, not three like the published version of the work. Instead of abandoning the completed musical material, Casella uses the fourth movement as part of another, later work, *Deux Contrastes* Op. 31 (1918).

Dating and initialling sketches

Perhaps the most important feature of the sketchbooks worth noting is Casella's initialling and dating. Most sketches and drafts have dates at the end of them, often accompanied by Casella's initials, and sometimes a place or time of day. This dating is extremely useful for scholars of Casella. It helps map the evolution of works. We are able to plot the evolution of a work, using sketch, manuscript and published score to create a timeline. For example, without the dating of sketches, we would assume that the movements by Casella of *À la maniere de…* Op. 17bis were written in 1913, when the second volume of works was published alongside movements composed by Ravel. However, with the sketchbooks, the ordering of movements therein and the dates on each, we are able to see that Casella in fact commenced and sketched all movements of both works in 1911, and then returned to complete some of them in 1913 when doing the second volume with Ravel. However, it is odd that Casella would feel the need to initial his sketches. Given that they are sketchbooks, and presumably private, it seems unnecessary.

The Sketches Overall

Casella had a three-step compositional process that involved drafting, editing, and polishing. Subsequently, we have elucidated that the order in which Casella drafted movements of works was not always the order in which they were published. We are also able to understand what musical element came first in Casella's drafting stage: always the tempo indication and title that denotes a sense of style and form. Following this, Casella adds various dynamics and expression in the subsequent editing and

polishing phases. Finally we see that Casella dated his sketches, enabling scholars to easily map the evolution of many works and understand when edits and revisions were made, given publishing dates. Given that these mannerisms appear throughout all of Casella's sketchbooks, one can say he had a consistent compositional process across his oeuvre.

Casella's sketches largely contain the following traits: (i) multi-movement works are out of order; (ii) the notation, while messy, is legible; (iii) tempo and dynamic markings are at the beginning of most works (although are sometimes revised in the second step), (iv) the completion date is marked; and (v) the same editorial 'cut-and-paste' style is used to map revisions and structural edits. This overview of the sketchbooks and scores and compositional archives also highlights which sketches fall outside of this normal pattern of compositional behaviour. Only *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op. 59 (1932) does not conform to this process. Two lines of the *Sinfonia* movement were sketched by Casella, then the work was completed in its entirety in the completed score. This anomaly of compositional process will be discussed further in Case Study 4.

Without the completed and published scores, Casella's sketchbooks would be difficult to navigate (although not impossible). Knowing and understanding the destination (the completed works) makes reading the map (the sketches) and undertaking the (archival) journey much simpler. This is especially noticeable for those incomplete sketches, such as with *D'Indy* movement from *À la maniere de …* (Figure 6), or works sketched and edited on non-consecutive pages, such as *Berceuse Triste* (Figure 5). When looking at the sketchbooks themselves, they are disorganised and chaotic, but this is inherent in the very nature of sketchbooks (regardless of how detailed the sketches themselves are). These sketches were not intended for use in any way by anyone except Casella. To understand and navigate these sketchbooks, the reader must have an intimate understanding of Casella's completed works, so that familiarising oneself with his notational style notes will not seem an insurmountable task.

The Completed Manuscripts

Most of the completed manuscripts available to scholars are photocopied reproductions of the originals. It is not known exactly where all the original manuscripts now live, or if they still exist, although some can be traced back to publishers. There is much confusion as to where the manuscripts really are.[131]

[131] Conti and De Santis, *Catologo crtico*, *vol. 1*, xxxi.
The majority of the original, completed manuscripts for piano works are – according to the Fondo Casella catalogue – kept in the Archivio Fulvia Casella, Losanna (Casella's daughter's collection – which no longer exists after her death in 2018, and apparently had not existed since 1990, according to her relatives); Archivio Carisch Edizioni, Milano; and Archivio Ricordi, Milano (both being the archives of publishing houses which Casella worked with throughout his life, and which published the majority of his piano music). However, when questioning Casella's granddaughter as to where the scores in her mother's collection are, the answer was that they had been donated to the Fondo Casella. She had no other knowledge of where manuscripts, completed scores or other archival sources may be, other than in the Archivio Ricordi. This implies that those scores listed as being in the Archivio Fulvia are lost, or have been

This lack of original manuscripts, however, does not disrupt any analysis. Casella's completed scores are also largely identical to the published scores, except in terms of formatting and the occasional omission or addition of fingering. Given the existing copies of manuscripts available are identical in every way (except fingering) to the published scores, it can be assumed that the published score is an almost exact replica of the completed manuscript in Casella's hand (except for the inclusion of fingering) in those cases where we cannot access the completed manuscript. For most of Casella's piano works, only one edition has been published.[132] Thus, we can use published scores in place of manuscripts.

Fingering

Given it is the only thing that differs between the manuscript and the published score, let us turn momentarily to discuss fingering. Pianistically, this is quite important, as fingering can change the articulation of a passage greatly, and can also be highly personal, given a specific pianist's technical abilities, handspan, and desired articulation. Casella notates fingering in the completed manuscripts of his works in great detail. Though there are sometimes fingerings marked in the sketches, most are added in the completed manuscripts, suggesting that this final polishing phase was completed at the piano. Where edits do occur in the completed manuscripts, it is usually for fingering. This can be seen below in the *Toccata* movement of the *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata*, Op. 59 (Figure 9).

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 9: Folio 31 of completed manuscript for Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata Op. 59. Fingering can be seen in Casella's hand in the last two lines of the manuscript. M. 105, MUS 61, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

In all the completed scores available, Casella includes fingering in some parts of the score, especially during those technically difficult passages. This can be seen in the completed manuscript for *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op. 59 (1932) (Figure 9). Given that the fingering seems to be written in a lighter ink to the notes, it suggests it was added after, in the final polishing stage, just like expression. Interestingly, in the published version of the *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* not all of these fingerings from the manuscript

misplaced. Similarly, as of February 2019 there was no reply when trying to contact both Ricordi or Carisch about accessing the originals in their collection: various emails and attempts at contact were made. They potentially also have scores for piano works that are not part of the Fondo Casella collection, but this cannot be ascertained until they communicate with me in return. As of May 2021, these archives (and many others) cannot be accessed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[132] The one exception that I have found to say otherwise is that the *Toccata* Op. 4 was reprinted and republished as an 'edited edition' in 1943. In this revised edition, an entire four bars has been removed, and one bar changed significantly. This will be discussed further in case study 1, relating to this work. Ricordi & Co did reprint some of Casella's piano works, but these were merely copies of first editions, rather than second editions. No editorial changes occurred between the first editions and the reprints. The only exceptions to these differences in editions are when Casella himself re-arranged and rewrote works for second editions. An example of this is the four-hand piano work *Pagine di Guerra* Op. 25. The work was originally written in 1915 for piano four-hands. Casella later rearranged the work for orchestra and piano, and thus this second edition was published in 1921.

are included. As can be seen in Figure 10 below, the editor seems to have removed some. While the fingering itself has not changed *per se*, not all of it has been included. One must question whether it was the editor or Casella who decided on the lack of fingering in the published score. Either way, it must be assumed that fingering was not included because it was deemed unnecessary.

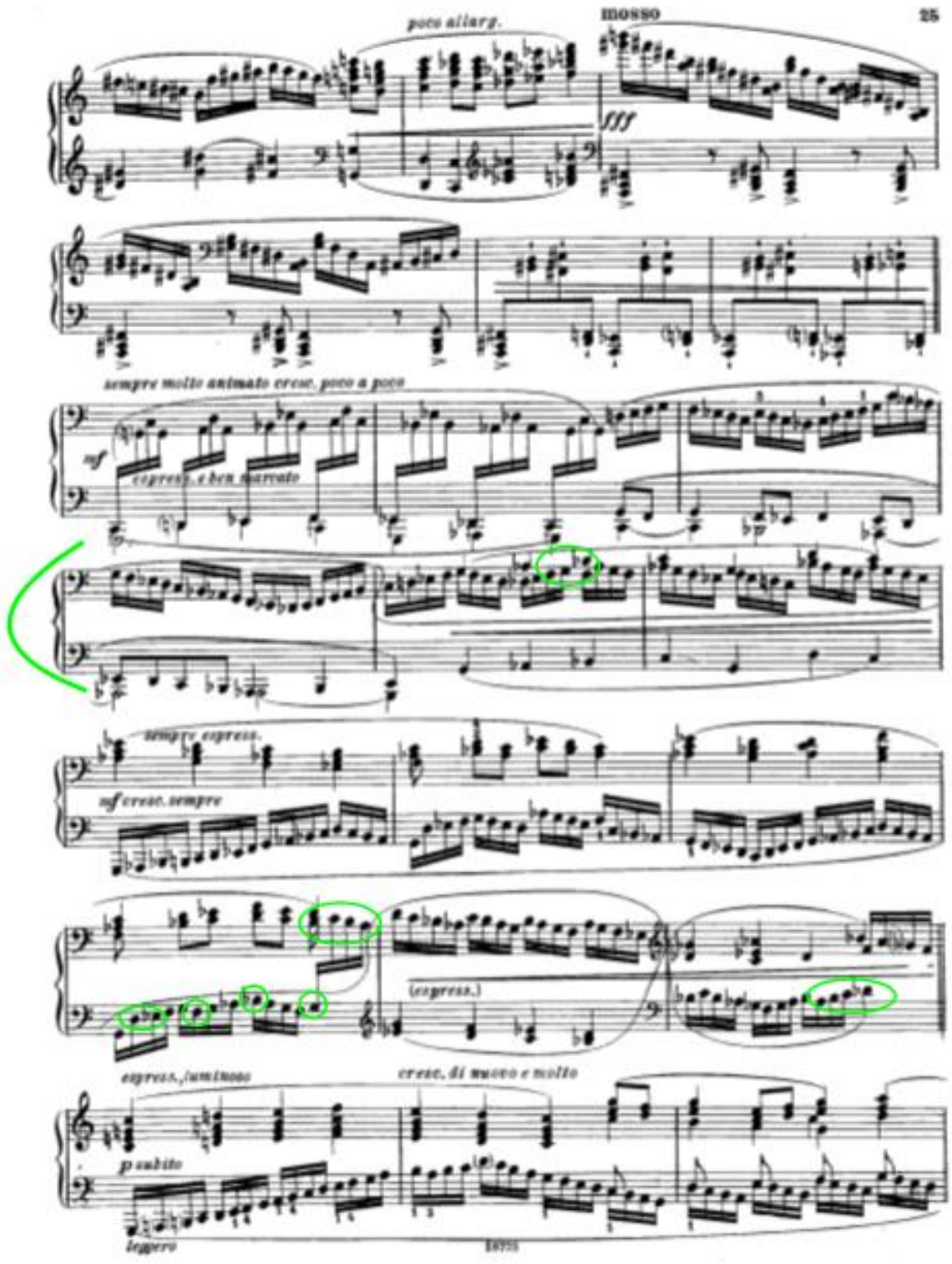

Figure 10: Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata Op. 59 corresponding passage to Figure 9 (marked with green bracket), but different fingering (notes without fingering circled)[133]

[133] Alfredo Casella, *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata*, Op. 59 (Milan: Carisch, 1936). Appendix 13.

Notation and Penmanship in the Completed Scores

Just as with the sketches, Casella has various habits in his penmanship in the completed manuscripts. These are generally to do with 'mistakes', and the notation of dynamics and expression. Just as in the sketches, Casella employs scribbling and black-outs within the completed scores to correct mistakes. Genuine 'mistakes' in copying and notation are obvious because they are small, being a single note or chord in one voice or across one beat, which is similar to the sketches. An example of both of these occurs in the *Toccata* movement of *Sinfonia, Aroioso e Toccata*. Here, Casella scribbles out the left-hand chord at the beginning of the second line, which is circled below (Figure 11). However, these mistakes and scribbles in the completed scores are relatively infrequent. There are passages where Casella has redacted and rewritten an entire passage. In the first line, the left-hand voice is scribbled out (like a black-out, but not as dense as those in the sketchbooks) and he has rewritten the part with different notes. Casella has not 'made a mistake' in this section, but entirely changes the pitch pattern in this lower voice. He has blacked-out a passage like a last-minute change hastily been made. These black-outs are rare in the completed scores – this example below being the most significant – but it is still important to note that, even in the third and final compositional phase, Casella could make large revisions to the musical content of the work.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 11: Toccata movement of Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata Op. 59 - Folio 18 Recto - where there is a mistake in the left hand, line 2, and a complete re-write of the harmony in line 1 with a black-out type scribble. M. 105, MUS 61, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la

Dedications and Dedicatees, other markings in the completed manuscripts

Yet to be discussed are Casella's dedicatees. For the majority of works, we can assume that dedications are added in the final polishing phase, given the lack of dedications in the sketchbooks. The two exceptions to this are *Nove Pezzi* and *À la maniere de….* As was discussed previously in the schematic planning for *Nove pezzi* Op. 24 in Sketchbook 4 (Figure 2), there were notes next to the movement-order of the work regarding dedications. We can assume dedications were made either at the end of the editing step, or at the very beginning of the polishing step. However, we cannot know when Casella began *considering* dedicatees, or if the dedicatees influenced the works themselves.

Other than *À la maniere de…,* in which the dedicatees influence the works from their conception, it is most likely that Casella added the dedications at the beginning of the final polishing phase. When looking at the dedication for *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op. 59, we see Casella made the dedication after the work was completed, and premiered at the Venice International Music Festival 1932. In the

preface to the work, along with the start and end dates for the work's composition, Casella mentions the work's first performance and performer:

> First performance: the 12/9/1936 (Year 14 of Mussolini's Italy), C'Rezzonico, Venice (4th International Music Festival); pianist: Ornella Puliti-Santoliquido. Duration of composition: 20 minutes.[134]

The dedication to Puliti-Santoliquido seems to be because she premiered the work. However, given that she was also Casella's student, it is similarly possible that the work was written specifically for her to perform at the Venezia Festivale Internazionale di Musica. Importantly, though, there is nothing on the sketch of the work (Figure 3) to indicate a dedication was thought of during the first compositional process as with all the sketches in the first compositional phase. This still points to the dedication coming in the final compositional phase.

The dedicatees themselves are an interesting group: composers, performers, friends, and wives. Some, such as *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op. 59 mentioned above, can be seen as dedications to the pianists who premiered the works and students of Casella's. Others are more personal, such as the many dedications to Yvonne and Fulvia, Casella's second wife and only child. Then there are the many dedications to composers, performers, teachers, peers, idols, and friends: Louis Diémer, Gabriel Fauré, Ildebrando Pizzetti, Gian Francesco Malipiero, Igor Stravinsky, and Maurice Ravel to name just a few. Casella used dedications as a means of both honouring and homaging. What cannot be deduced from looking at the dedications, however, is to what extent these dedicatees influenced various works, or Casella's compositional style. This too will be investigated further in the discussion on style.

Just as were seen in various sketches, Casella's completed manuscripts also contain dates and sign-offs. The sign-off appears at the end of the work, with a date and place, and sometimes also a time, and note as to when the work was commenced. The majority of Casella's piano manuscripts were completed in Asolo (Tuscany), Piancastagnaio (Siena), and Prascorsano (Turin), when he was on holiday.[135] Importantly, these signoffs and the precise dates of composition completion are not always given in the published editions (or given accurately). Again, as with the sketches, this helps us add a narrative to when Casella completed these works, and how much time elapsed between him completing the initial sketch of a work, and when the manuscript that went to the publishers was completed.

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[134] Alfredo Casella. Manuscript score for *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata,* Op. 59, M.105-MUS 61, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazion Giorgio Cini, Venice.
Conto and De Santis, *Catologo critico,* Volume II, 157.

[135] Casella predominantly composed in Rome after 1915, and frequently completed sketches whilst holidaying in Asolo, and various parts of Siena and Turin. Thus, this geo-placement would indicate that the majority of his sketching was done on holidays, and completed prior to or when he returned to work; i.e., very few of his compositions were undertaken as part of his work life, but instead when he was on holidays and relaxing.

One final point worth mentioning: there is nothing documenting whether Casella's completed scores were intended to go to the publisher, or if that was the result of works being completed. Some of the copies of completed scores in Casella's hand have stamps from various publishing houses, but this does not prove that publishing was the originally intended use for scores. The photocopy of the autograph score for *Nove pezzi* Op. 24 has a stamp from Ricordi, Milano at the bottom of Folio 2, the first page to have music on it, as well as a printing plate number that corresponds with that on the first published edition. Similar copyright and publisher's stamps appear on various manuscripts. The only other sign from editors on these scores are the various numbers that appear throughout the scores. These numbers are not in Casella's hand.[136] They correlate with the formatting of the published works in terms of marking the number of bars on each line in the published scores.

Concluding the compositional process

Casella's compositional process had three stages: (i) sketching, (ii) editing, and (iii) polishing. Given the available archival and primary sources we have, we can elucidate that Casella had a second compositional phase – the editing phase – where any major changes between drafting and publishing works were made. This has been established by looking at the differences between the sketch materials and completed scores, by looking at the different types of markings and notes Casella made in the sketchbooks. It is confirmed by contrasting the dates of sketches with those of completed manuscripts, and also by comparing changes between the various sources. In the sketching phase, Casella always began his works with a title, a tempo marking and a dynamic marking. His works evolved from an initial tempo and dynamic marking, furthered by use of a title. While his penmanship and use of scribbles – even in the completed manuscripts – is somewhat messy, his drafts and manuscripts are legible. Through understanding the compositional process, we can understand the evolution of a given work, and how it fits within Casella's biography. This makes it easier to situate and contextualise a work, as well as understand what style Casella wrote the work in and the external influences affecting the work.

[136] The best example of this is seen in Figure 11: at the end of the second line there is a large 8 written in a different hand to Casella's, and which corresponds with the end of a line and the 8th bar on a page in the published version.

Part 2: Theoretical Discussions on Performance-Focussed Analysis

Chapter 3: Casella's Musical Style

In this chapter, style, and the different manifestations and types of style, will be defined. This is followed by a discussion of some of the literature pertaining to musical style and stylistic analysis. the concept of tactile style – style felt through playing by the performer that is not necessarily codified in the score or heard experience of a work – will also be discussed. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of Casella's style. It will be shown that his style was to borrow – both musical elements, conventions, and style itself – from other works and composers.

The scant scholarship that looks at Casella's compositions specifically largely labels his compositional style as neoclassical without undertaking any real score analysis. Similarly, this scholarship seems only to look at one or two works, and does not survey Casella's entire oeuvre. Most look at Casella's early works written during the First World War. It is as if the last twenty-five years of Casella's compositional career count for nothing, and that his style stopped developing and evolving after 1920, culminating with *Pezzi Infantili.*[137]

Casella is said to have *tre maniere*; three compositional manners, or periods. This implies he had a different manner, or style, in each period. We know from the discussion on compositional process, that he only had one manner, or process, for composing. Yet his style, and if there are different periods therein, has not been truly proved. While it was vogue to give composers three compositional periods in the early Twentieth Century, this is not truly appropriate for Casella. This thesis posits that Casella had *one* compositional style that matured and developed, not three. He had one style that developed, evolved, and matured through his career that was built on borrowing. He borrowed from music's traditions and historical styles (quasi-neoclassicism), composers around him and their works, and himself. To understand this idea of borrowing, and how it did not change but evolved in Casella's composing, let us delve into what style itself is, and how one can elucidate compositional style, and the relevance understanding style has for the performer. The analysis of Casella's piano works will show that his compositional style was to borrow in various means and for various purposes: to homage, to ingratiate, to make fun of, to experiment with.

[137] The three most obvious examples of studies that do include any element or score analysis are Earle's case study on *In Modo Funebere* from *Nove Pezzi*, Fontanelli's further investigation of *In Modo Funebere* based on Earle's work, and Basini's investigation in *Il Deserto Tentato*. While all these studies are invaluable to understanding Casella, they are limited in that they only look at single works. They do not try to discern style across his oeuvre. Many critics from Casella's life claim that Casella reached his 'mature' style around 1920, and that *Pezzi infantili* signalled that 'maturity.' Guido M Gatti claimed that Casella settled in style with that work. It seems like many scholars agree, or are happy to accept this assessment of style, without analysing works from this period at all. Guido M Gatti and Abram Loft, "In Memory of Alfredo Casella (1883-1947)." *The Musical Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1947), 405-408, accessed 7th February 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/739292.

What is style?

Before defining borrowing, we must first understand what style can be. Style is a concept. It is not a concrete, definitive thing, but an abstract notion built on categorisations. We can envisage style as a library – a catalogue of categorisations. Within this library are different sections: the different elements and subgenres therein. Inside each different style is a catalogue of specific gestures, affectations, and identifying features. These features can often be cross-referenced with others. We need styles (plural.) to compare, contrast, and categorise *a* style (singular). The style of one work is defined by how it relates (or does not relate) to other existing works of a style, and where elements overlap or deviate from one another. Thus, style can be viewed as a conceptual catalogue of gestures, habits, affectations, mannerisms, shapes, attributes, and behaviours.

Without other styles, we cannot have – or define – *a* style. We require other styles, and their cultural and historical contexts, to define new and individual styles. We require classifications of genre, schools, groups, periods, techniques, gestures, and styles themselves, to have *a* style. Thus, to understand a style, we must understand other, surrounding, contrasting styles, and the history and context thereof. We can only understand a style if we can define it against other styles. For example, we know that Debussy's compositions were Impressionist, not Romantic, for several reasons. We have a list of identifying features to cross-reference his works against so that we can categorise him as different to styles such as Classic, Baroque or Romantic. We understand these periods – categorised not just by time but also general affectations, gestures and characteristics – and know from elements in Debussy's music that his works do not have enough overlap with those others styles, so must be different. By then looking at the gestures, habits and mannerisms in his works, and categorising these, we can place him into a style; in this case, Impressionism. We cannot fully understand Impressionism, or Debussy's unique style within that, if we do not understand the context and other styles surrounding him.

In music, this catalogue, or the elements that define style, includes symbols in scores, sounds, timbres, techniques, and tactility or gesture. Style offers a means of defining and categorising scores and sounds, and understanding how a work fits into our catalogue of knowledge. Musical, or compositional, style pertains to those mannerisms, shapes, and gestures that recur throughout a body of works. While this thesis looks at the style of a specific composer – Casella – style can also categorise works within a period or genre, and come to be a denominator for identifying groups of works. While some would term compositional style as 'the composer's voice,' this terminology is too simplistic.[138] Importantly, this is

[138] Leonard B Meyer, "Toward a Theory of Style," in Berel Lang (editor) *The Concept of Style, Revised and Expanded Edition* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1987), 31.

not limited to those shapes and symbols in the score or in performance, but also the resulting sounds and shapes made by the performer through playing. Style is an understanding, or realisation, of those symbols in the score through sound and performance. Ideally, concepts and definitions of musical style should include performance, and the tactile experience of playing a work, otherwise all style analysis achieves is a description of the score (albeit, likely a very complex one). Just as reading a description of a painting can never compare to seeing it in a gallery, so too can reading a written analysis of a score never compare to hearing or performing a work.

The most easily understood definition of style is given in the Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics as being a '"way" or manner' in which something is done with 'characteristic regularity or reiteration.'[139] Style is interpretive, and dependent on the person defining (or analysing) the style.[140] But style itself is not the same as interpretation, especially in music. Style is how we categorise something. Interpretation is a means of expressing and realising style, as well as being a negotiation of compositional and performance style. As will be further discussed in the following chapter in interpretation, style and interpretation are inherently linked. But both are realised through performance.

Approaches to Style and Stylistic Analysis

So how do we approach understanding Casella's compositional style? Before we can analyse Casella's compositional style – what repeated manners are in his works, and how we categorise them – we need to choose a method of analysis. Broadly, there are two approaches to style: descriptive, and cultural identity.

Descriptive approaches to style are based on listing the various common features of a style category. As the name suggests, this approach is based around describing the various features within a body of works, or period. Usually, the descriptive approach is applied by analysts describing a score in a particular way. While this descriptive approach is a good way of looking at the various elements within individual works, it becomes problematic given that it can lend itself to generalising. In Rosen's work *The Classical Style*, he states that there is both group and individual style.[141] For example, Casella's style is unique, but he is also part of Modernism, and modernist style generally. It follows that, if we

Edward T Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (London: University of California Press, 1982). Cone raises the concept of the 'virtual persona,' and music as a mode of representation. 18, 32, 106-7.
Clyne's composer-pulse theory, explained in: Eric Clarke, "Expression in Performance: Generativity, Perception and Semiosis," in John Rink (editor), *The Practice of Performance; Studies in Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 23.
[139] Michael Kelly, (editor), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, Volume 6 Situationist Aesthetics – Zhuangzi,* Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 58.
[140] Ernst Gombrich, "Style," in Donald Preziosi, *The Art of Art History: A critical anthology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), , accessed 24th February 2020, https://monoskop.org/images/1/19/Gombrich_Ernst_1968_2009_Style.pdf. 138, 139.
[141] Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: WW Norton & Co, 1997), 22.

have either group or individual style, that style is somewhat generalised, so that we can categorise composers and their works together. Other authors such as Crocker and LaRue similarly use a descriptive style, but attempt to codify descriptive features of works or styles.[142] Both present straightforward and systemic approaches that ask the analyst to identify and list features of the score, subsequently allowing the analyst to choose which musical feature they place most weight on in their analysis.

The Cultural Identity approach tends to draw links between stylistic features and surrounding cultural traditions, conditions, and norms. This is where the zeitgeist, or spirit of a nation, can be argued as a contributing factor of style. Typically, this raises questions as how a work's style is linked to the essence of a work, whether compositional styles remain the same if used or featured in works from a different cultural background. Lang argues that style is timeless and placeless, claiming an 'an octave is an octave regardless of when (or where) it occurs, and the same is true of triadic melodies, imitative textures, deceptive cadences, [and] ternary forms.'[143] It begs the question as to what is nationalist music: is Casella's music Italian if he takes stylistic features from music of other cultural backgrounds, or does that stylistic feature become Italian because Casella has used it? It challenges our notion of identity through style.

Performance Style versus Compositional Style

Compositional style is often used interchangeably with the 'composer's voice'. It has been perpetuated through music criticism that works are the composer's voice speaking to us through time.[144] It is how the composer repeatedly uses various elements in their work, their use of musical language, and how that language and those elements manifest: melodic contours, harmonic language, uses of form and structure, expressive profiles. For the composer to 'speak to us', we need a translator, or mediator – the performer.[145] By having this translator, we the hearer have to accept the inevitable of there being an interpretation of whatever we hear, but also hope that the performer's own style will not overshadow that of the work. We have to trust the performer not to bastardise or adulterate the work's style. Distinguishing compositional and performance style is fairly straight forward. But what happens when we do not know a composer's style well, as is the case for Casella? We must look at style from both the perspectives of the origins and influence of style, to ascertain compositional style and differentiate this from performance style. In the case of Casella, that is exactly what this thesis aims to do: elucidate

[142] Richard Crocker, *A History of Musical Style* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986).
Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis.*
[143] Lang, *The Concept of Style,* 38, with further discussion on this on: 164, 302, 303.
[144] Zofia Lissa, "Historical Awareness of Music and its Role in Present-Day Musical Culture," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music,* Vol. 4 No 1 (June 1973), 17-33, accessed 24th February 2020, https://www.jstor.org/stable/836424, 23.
[145] Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 2.

Casella's compositional style, and then present an appropriate and informed possible interpretation of his works.

Although compositional and performance style are different, they are inextricably linked. You cannot have one without the other. Performance style informs the compositions from that period, and vice versa. Casella's compositions would have been informed by performance practices of his time. Scores are fixed objects that directly influence performance. One cannot faithfully replicate the score if ignoring the compositional style of the work – the gestures, mannerisms, and characters in the score.

Stylistic analysis

Before moving on to discuss Casella's style, a distinction must be made between compositional style and performance style, especially given that this thesis posits that tactility forms a part of compositional style. Firstly, performance style is different to compositional style, as stated above. How someone performs (both in general, and regarding a specific a work or oeuvre) is entirely different to how a composer wrote a work. There is a tactile element to composed works, but this is not the same as the performance style that an individual performs with. Works have compositional style, performers have performance style.

It is all very well to say Casella's style was 'borrowing,' but this begs the question as to *how* we know this. As is stated above, this conclusion has been reached by analysing Casella's various piano works through a framework devised to enhance performance. But this raises a further question: what form of stylistic analysis has been used to discern Casella's style? Simply put, a descriptive one that incorporates elements of a cultural identity approach, using the frameworks of LaRue, Keller, and Dahlhaus, and one which places emphasis on the tactile experience when playing his work – using gesture to help categorise works. To understand this framework, let us unpack several methods of analysis used by others. As Dahlhaus notes: 'all too often, musical analyses […] suffer from turbidity of purpose and hence provoke the suspicion that they are useless.'[146] Musical analyses do not speak to or for the performer or audience, but are done by and for the musicologist and, as Dahlhaus suggests, present as being irrelevant to music making and enjoying. This is demonstrated by the fact that none of the methods of analysis discussed below give consideration to the tactile, felt experience of playing these works, and only focus on the written object of the score. Several theories of analysis are discussed below, followed by a discussion on tactility of style so that an appropriate framework can be devised by which to analyse Casella's music.

[146] Carl Dahlhaus, *Analysis and Value Judgement*, trans. Siegmund Levarie (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), 9.

There are various forms of stylistic analysis. As discussed above, there are two common approaches to style and stylistic analysis: descriptive and cultural identity. Within these two approaches, various scholars have formed methods or frameworks for analysis. The majority of these frameworks stem from the belief that one must understand the written work to understand the performed and heard music, suggesting that the score is the authority of a work's existence.[147] They are, largely, descriptive in nature, and generalise mannerisms exhibited by individuals or groups of composers, or present data through inaccessible means, such as graphs, data charts and tables that mean little or nothing to the performer. In all these analytical frameworks, understanding the score is posited as crucial to understanding the work.

The following section interrogates various methods of stylistic analysis. It will not discuss *all* methods of stylistic analysis, as that is beyond the scope of this project, but will look at some well-known methods of analysis, and select elements that are useful for analysing Casella's works. These chosen elements will then be presented as the framework used to stylistically analyse Casella's works. As the framework demonstrates, we can see how Casella composes his works, and the various elements within his works, and also hypothesise what elements in each work are borrowed, where they come from, and how he makes them new. 'Understanding the score' is only part of understanding style, and should not be confused with 'understanding the music'.[148] This analytical framework then can be used by performers to enhance performance and interpretation. Elucidation of a work's character and style does not merely come from reading dots and symbols on a page, and then writing about what that potentially means. True elucidation – of any kind, stylistic or otherwise – comes from an informed reading of the music, and realising that reading through performance, negotiating the various meanings of the written symbols in an aural, tactile, and performative context.

Some types of Analysis

When considering stylistic analysis, Schenker is one of the most prominent names that springs to mind. Who can forget his bold and alienating statement that "every true work of art has but one true

[147] Various scholars tells us or hint that we performers *must* understand what we play, an implication that suggests understanding what we play (only) comes from understanding the score:
Donald Tovey in Roy Howat, "What Do We Perform?" in John Rink (editor), *The Practice of Performance; Studies in Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), X, 3, (although, important, Howat does not agree fully with Tovey).
Eric Clarke, "Expression in Performance," in Rink, John, 22.
Nicholas Cook, *Music, Imagination & Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 3.
Nicholas Cook, *Music as Creative Practice*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 27.
[148] William Rothstein, "Analysis and the Act of Performance," in John Rink (editor), *The Practice of Performance; Studies in Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 237.
Robert Pascall, "Style," *Grove Music Oxline, Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 2nd December 2019, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.27041.

performance."[149] As well as there being only one correct way to perform a work, Schenker espouses that a work is not a true work of art unless it contains contrapuntal voice leading.[150] While for some styles of music Schenkerian analysis is appropriate and offers an interesting insight into a work, it is not the only 'correct' (or even best) solution for discerning style. This is especially obvious in cases of obscure composers or musical styles, or music that does not contain voice-leading. In these instances, a Schenkerian analysis comes across as an exclusive, and excluding, approach. This is symptomatic of all forms of musical analysis: different methods only work for those works that fall within their specific frameworks. Secondly is problematic fact that one form of analysis will not reveal the same meaning or style as another. A Schenkerian analysis of Casella will not reveal the same things that a comparative analysis would, such as the melodic-expectancy framework presented by Narmour. Methods of analysis can, and are, chosen to provide specific types of insights that analysts desire.

Narmour and Meyer are two other authoritative voices of stylistic analysis.[151] These analysts both emphasise the 'authority of the score' as being key to understanding the music, which, in itself, is a gateway to illuminating the 'the genius of the composer'. This kind of analysis focuses on understanding the inner voice of the composer by understanding a specific work. It is descriptive, although focussing on relationships between structural units. While there is some discussion of performance and interpretation as a result of analysis, any focus therein relates to what is heard, rather than what is played, or who is playing it. The focus centres on the written experience of a work.[152]

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[149] Schenker in Rothstein, "Analysis and the Act of Performance," in Rink, *The Practice of Performance,* 217.

[150] Arguably this excludes a lot of music from being true works of art. There is a lot of music that does not have voice leading, such as percussive, atonal, and minimalist musics, not to mention non-Western Art Musics where voice-leading is not even a concept of the tradition.

[151] 'Lerdalh and Narmour both eliminate the musician as an individual, and replace him or her by a theory whose input is some kind of musical text, and whose ultimate output is an aesthetic judgement; like all music theorists, perhaps, they explain music without musicians.'
Nicholas Cook, "Analysing Performance and Performance Analysis" in Cook and Everist, *Rethinking Music,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 242.
Narmour's method of analysis focuses on the idea of 'implication-realisation,' positing a framework that looks at formations and transformations that depend on each other, and rules therein. Narmour is critical of Scheknerian-style methods of analysis that are idealised for tonal or diatonic music, and which requires strict harmonic parameters be placed above other elements in music. Yet, his own framework is reliant on other strict elements in music, such as understanding the 'construction and structuralism' of a work, and placing a work's structure as the foremost important element of a work.
Eugene Narmour, *Beyond Schenkerism: the Need for Alternatives in Music Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).
Eugene Narmour, *The Analysis and Cognition of Basic Melodic Structures* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
Meyer's method of analysis is again focussed on the score and meaning therein. His theory revolves around emotion, expectation and meaning, and 'pattern perception'. Again, the performer seems to be overlooked in this form of analysis.
Leonard Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).
Richard R Randall, *A General Theory of Comparative Music Analysis*, (New York: PhD Thesis, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, 2001), accessed 12th February 2020,
http://www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu/~randall/publications/rrthesis_3.pdf.

[152] Cook discusses this, especially in relationship to Beethoven and returning to the grail-like status of the score when analysing a work, and the prophet-like view that Schenkerian analysis seems to hold over many.
Nicholas Cook. *Music, Performance, Meaning. Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), XI.

There are two issues with this score-centric approach. Primarily, music is performed and heard, not read. The majority of people experience music through either playing or hearing, not worshiping or analysing the score. Thus, fixating on reading the score as the best way to understand a work is exclusionary. Secondly, it posits that understanding a work means understanding the composer. Unless a composer is alive to tell us the meaning of themselves or their work, this is impossible. It also suggests that both the performer and the work are worth less than the composer. Without allowing space in analysis for performance, the frameworks of Schenker, Narmour, and others exclude many different understandings of style that do not fit within a written framework.[153] Knowledge and stylistic understanding of a work is enhanced by practicing, performing, and listening to a work, rather than just reading it.[154] The limitation of any analytical framework (including the one presented below) is that it does not accommodate all music, or all analytical methods available to music.

Many analysists not only present the idea of analysis as revealing the composer's voice, but also limit the input a performer 'should' have. Tovey's statement that 'players should understand what they play' is typical of this sentiment that the player is subservient to both the composer and score.[155] Tovey infers that written analysis provides the best way of understanding the music (and, further, that performers and audiences are subservient to this). It implies that, without written analysis, performers cannot know what they play, and that analysis through performance is less valuable than written analysis. It fails to allow for accumulated or inherent knowledge that all performers have, and implies that understanding style through tactile or aural means is inferior to written, textual analysis. Lester highlights that 'like most analysts, Tovey lists, discusses and graphically depicts both obvious and subtle features of the music.'[156] Lester also notes that this information is not useful for performers, only for describing the score. He similarly states that 'theorists suggest or even insist on specific performance directions based on their analyses,' as Schenker was known to do, without the understanding of how to perform or interpret a work.[157] While written analysis can elucidate some important elements within a score that a performer may miss in their practice, it is ignorant to say that written analysis should totally inform performance (or vice versa). Written analysis should instead be used hand-in-hand with performance to help facilitate a deeper elucidation and subsequent performance of the work.

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[153] Similarly, frameworks such as those by Réti are useless for performers. His idea of music being a series of linear compositio nal processes is arguably similar to Schenkerian analysis, focussing on only linear movement (rather than voice leading), and not looking at other factors (such as vertical movement – key to harmony).
Ian Bent and William Drabkin, *The New Grove Handbooks in Music: Analysis,* (London: MacMillan Press, 1987), 60, 61.

[154] Janet M Levy, "Beginning-Ending Ambiguity: Consequences of Performance Choices," in John Rink (editor), *The Practice of Performance*, 151.
Lester, "Performance and Analysis," 205.

[155] Tovey quoted in Ibid, 197.

[156] Ibid, 197.

[157] Ibid, 197.

Various analysts subscribe to the belief 'that a composer's work is […] uniformly suffused with a particular expressive profile.'[158] A similarly upheld view is that composers have a unique style that is present in, and identifies, all their works.[159] Repetitions and recurrences of expressive, harmonic and melodic, and various other gestures written in the score are ascribed as being the 'composer's pulse' rather than looking at those elements within music's tradition, or the resulting sounds. But what happens, such as in the case of Casella when we (i) do not know enough about the composer to assert a 'pulse,' or (ii) their expressive profile is borrowed, and possibly even overshadowed by these borrowed elements? Does this result in composers such as Casella having no style at all, or borrowing a pulse from other composers? No. But it does make analysis difficult. If we agree that stylistic analysis should, and does, incorporate the aural and tactile experiences of a work, as well as reading a score, then this idea of an expressive profile becomes defunct. Think of Beethoven: his use of dynamics and expressive language is uniform in style when surveying his piano works. But the expressive profile of the individual works are all different when we listen to them, or play them. Every composer has an original yet repetitive manner in how they arrange notes and symbols on the page, but this written recurring habit – or written style – is not the only consideration that should be taken when discerning the overall style of a composer, or a work. An 'expressive profile' must also allow for recognition of style within a composer's oeuvre to be feeling and hearing, not just reading, expression.

Yet there are some more recent scholars who do look to performers. Samson, Rosen, and Cone all posit that score analysis must be flexible and inclusive. Rink and Cook in their later works come to a similar view, and also promote the idea that analysis should work with and for performers, to help them.[160] However, reading versus playing a work are two very different experiences, which generally result in different – although not unrelated – analyses. Samson notes that analysis must be flexible in its approach otherwise it can 'presuppose […] that there will be [no] alternative interpretations.'[161] This statement contradicts Schenker. While not discrediting Schenker, Samson encourages different findings from different forms of analysis, thus permitting different expressive and performative interpretations of a

[158] Clarke, "Expression in Performance," 23.
Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 2, 105.
[159] This has been perpetuated by various theories, both scientific and musicological. The scientific include theories such as Manfred Clynes' 'Composer's Pulse' theory – the idea that a composer's works sound like that composer because they created them, and their 'pulse' or style thus runs through all their music.
Manfred Clynes, "Microstructural Musical Linguistics: Composer's Pulses are Liked Best by the Best Musicians", *Cognition, International Journal of Cognitive Science*, vol. 55 (1995), 269-310.
[160] Jim Samson, "Analysis in Context" in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 45.
Joel Lester, "Analysis and Performing Mozart," *College Music Symposium*, Vol. 51 (2011), accessed 12th February 2020, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26513065.
Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 1, 111.
Rosen, *The Classical Style*, 22.
Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score*: *Music as Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
John Rink (editor), *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
[161] Jim Samson, "Analysis in Context," 45.

work. Rink similarly allows space for performers in his view of stylistic analysis, giving place for the performer to use analysis to 'reveal the 'spirit' of the music,' implying that score analysis enhances performance possibilities. Rink claims that performers' use of textual analysis 'not only revalidates the close study of musical scores in this post-structuralist era; it also broadens our understanding of what 'historical performance' might properly involve,' yet at the same time claiming that 'not all critical interpretations elucidate music as sound.'[162] Rink's double-sided claim – that performance broadens our understanding of analysis yet also that not all analyses are about sound – perfectly encapsulates the issues of analysis: yes, performance happens, but many analysts still think that performing a work may not be the best elucidation of a work. Cook is of a similar view to Rink.[163] While he takes analysis as a means of problem-solving to be done practically, rather than simply through reading the score, this problem solving seems to forget that performing and playing, and creating a language to support such practice, can offer an invaluable means of stylistic understanding.

While Rink, Cook, and to some extent also Samson, make ground-breaking contributions to the discourse of musical analysis through use of the score, they are, ultimately, not performers by their own admission. Thus the inclusion of the performers' perspectives in their discussions remains a peripheral consideration, rather than the central driver of their analysis. Cook's earlier writing on analysis, including his guide to musical analysis is score-centric in its approach.[164] Admittedly, Cook's later work *Beyond the Score* presents a re-evaluation of his initial writings on score-based analysis, and concludes that analysis should in fact be centred around performance rather than the score. Nonetheless, *Beyond the Score* does not sufficiently offer an applicable or practical means of synthesising the act of analysing with the act of performance. As Kivy points out, there can never be a reconciliation between analysis and performance unless the two acts become part of each other's process. Performers subconsciously analyse the music through the learning process, undergoing an agile, dual approach of analysis and interpreting through preparing for performance. Yet analysts for whom the score is the starting point miss this agile, dual approach by not beginning at the instrument, by treating the score as a written object rather than a practical one. Thus, while Rink and Cook undertake thorough written analysis of the score and sound combinations possible therein, by starting at the score instead of the piano, the tactile and stylistic experiences of a work is lost. Although Rink discusses performance style and interpretation at great length, codifying style in terms of the tactile and gestural experience of playing is not a central concern. There are many decision-making moments that performers undergo that can only be understood when playing and performing, and not just gleaned from the score.

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[162] John Rink, "Translating Musical Meaning: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator," in Cook and Everist, *Rethinking Music,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 237, 238.

[163] Nicholas Cook, *Analysis Through Composition: Principles of the Classical Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[164] Ibid,s

Nicholas Cook, *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (London: Butler & Tanner, 1989).

The final group of style analysts to discuss are the element-orientated, comparative types such as LaRue, who analyse the individual components of the score.[165] While totally removed from playing per se, his method of comparative analysis helps compile a wealth of data about a work in a structured manner, without forcing a specific reading of the score. Some argue LaRue's guidelines do not offer anything explicitly insightful about a work, and that he fails to create deeper meaning by merely creating a wealth of data.[166] This is true: at the end of completing an analysis based on LaRue's framework, we are left with a large pile of data about how a piece of music has been constructed, without instruction as to how necessarily to make use of this information. However, this allows the performer to synthesise, negotiate, and create links between all these 'facts', and make sense of them through performance. Importantly, it also allows the performer to place analytical weight on those elements of the score that they identify as central to understanding and performing the work. Instead of a performer undergoing a chord-by-chord harmonic analysis for the sake of it, LaRue's framework allows the analyst to focus on any element within the music, even sound itself. It puts the onus on the performer to synthesise what the composer has done with these various elements, and it allows for creative space in the performer as to how best to possibly interpret and perform the completed work made from these various elements. As Tovey stated that we must understand what we play, perhaps LaRue's framework permits exactly this without forcing an agenda onto that understanding.

Every form of stylistic analysis has limitations, biases and benefits, and interacts with performance practice in differing ways, with these limitations and biases coming from either the framework itself, or the analyst's unique experience of music. It is not the purpose of this discussion to mediate the chasm between stylistic analysis and performance. However, a framework for use by performers and to enhance performance is possible to construct. Thus, the framework for stylistically analysing Casella, outlined below, has been developed specifically for this task. While it is a descriptive form of analysis, it seeks to look to how these categorisations of 'descriptions' of elements are useful or relevant to the performer, including gesture and tactility. This framework draws on those concocted by LaRue, using category- and feature-analyses.[167] It looks at the individual musical elements and what possible influences from external sources are present. As will be shown, this stylistic analysis does not solely focus on the score, but also on Casella's context: external influences on him, his style of pianism, and who and what he was writing for. This combines the cultural identity approach to style with the descriptive one.

The Tactile in Style

[165] Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis*.
[166] Randall, *A General Theory of Comparative Music Analysis,* 25.
[167] Bent and Drabkin, *Analysis,* 93.

None of the analytical frameworks discussed above draw on the performer's knowledge of tactility, gesture, and their instrument. The various approaches to style focus on what is in the score. But let us turn to tactility, and the felt, physical embodied experience of music. Style, as stated above, is a series of mannerisms, attributes – shapes, simplistically – that regularly occur across an oeuvre.[168] But there is also a physical element to style: repeated, recurring mannerisms and elements that are physically embodied and acted out by playing the written work. It can be assumed, theoretically, that if a number of attributes recur across a collection of written scores, the same 'recurrences' will be physically acted out and felt (and subsequently heard) when playing the works. In other words, those recurrences in the written score manifest in the performed, tactile, gestural experience of the work. Similarly, there will be tactile stylistic features not realised in the score in any way. Like other elements of style, tactility can be categorised and used to define and differentiate works.

Just as there are repeated gestures and elements in the score, so too are there repeated gestures and actions demanded of a performer from performing a work. We can have repeated tactile experiences when playing a work, or a body of works. This, as well as the various other recurring and repeated elements in a work, should be incorporated into discussions of style. Just as visual shapes in scores often repeat across an oeuvre, so too are the physical gestures required of a player's hands. If style uses analysis of shapes in the score, so too should we analyse the shapes of the hands that actualise it.

If we focus on the experience of compositional style from the performer's perspective, style can be seen as tri-partite, consisting of (i) the score, (ii) playing the work, and (iii) hearing the work. Style from the score is easily understood – there are many different ways in which to investigate and analyse scores, some of which will be examined below. But almost no literature investigates the felt or tactile experience of style – the performer's experience of style. This tactility and physical, performed experience of style is different from technique. All performance requires technique, and many techniques are repeated and shared across music of various genres and styles. Performers regularly note the recurring technical requirements of various composers.[169] But technique and tactile style (or tactility) are different. Technique is the skill and ability to do something, and implies that a work necessitates a certain way or technique, to correctly perform a work.[170] The difference between technique and tactile style is that technique is a required skill-set, where tactile style is touch-sensory experience, and a means of categorising a work.

[168] For the purposes of the rest of this chapter, I am talking about style in relation to entire oeuvres rather than individual works. Much of the literature on Casella has already discussed single works, rather than his oeuvre. Similarly, the case studies look at the style of individual movements and works, which has in turn fed into this discussion on overall style.

[169] Joel Lester, "Performance and Analysis: Interaction and Interpretation," in John Rink (editor), *The Practice of Performance; Studies in Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 202.

[170] Perhaps this feeds into Aristotle's ideas of rhetoric and art, and that the two cannot equate each other, but where rhetoric here can be taken as the musician's technical language and means through which they play and perform.

Tactile style is extremely difficult to articulate. While some of it can be discussed in terms of musical elements and technique, there is so much in this that cannot be verbalised. This difficulty in discussing tactile style is for two reasons. Primarily, there is little written research existing on tactile style in music, or tactile experience from the perspective of compositional style. Literature on this largely pertains to either the tactile, sonic nature of hearing music (rather than playing), or covers extremely elementary, pedagogical aspects of learning to play and recognise gestures in music.[171] Other than those texts mentioned below by Le Guin and Cumming, the literature does not focus on the many nuances which the experienced, expert performer undergoes.[172] In the instances where literature does discuss expert performers, it relates to the individual author's experience of playing, rather than a general experience of tactility that is felt by all performers. Secondly, there is so much in music – and when discerning compositional style – that is subjective – style and tactility being no exception. Every performer will have a different tactile experience of playing Casella's music, or any repertoire. Although the manners and gestures will be the same in principle, each performer will physically articulate them differently. Thus, it is so difficult to articulate tactile experiences of anything, let alone finding a use of language that adequately categorises the tactile attributes of style. Thus, eloquently and coherently discussing the tactile means of categorising style is a challenge in itself.

Tactile Analysis in Practice

There are several studies that try to incorporate the tactile, gestural, or kinetic, experiences of style. As Cumming notes, playing is not just a means for the performer to express themselves, but a means of 'working the demands of a style,' and a means of analysing style through the demands made upon the performer's body.[173] Cumming views performing as a means of analysis, arguing that conventional score-based analysis is privileged above practice-research because of its foundation in a solid, written object: 'Forms of analysis that privilege the notated features of music can easily overlook timbre or nuance in their ability to make a substantive difference to the effect of a piece.'[174] By this, Cumming posits that the score-based analyst runs the risk of not appreciating and considering non-written elements of music, such as timbre, tactility, and tonality. Conversely, Cumming implies that there are aspects of non-score based analysis – such as tactile or aural analysis – that can offer different and equally valid analytical insights into works.

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[171] The foremost source specifically on 'tactility' in music is Aho's *The Tangible in Music: the Tactile Learning of a Musical Instrument* (Routledge, 2016), which speaks to beginner and amateur musicians rather than experienced performers who interrogate and analyse style in the works they play. Other research on tactility in music often relates to improvisation and new music, or electronic music (specifically EDM). Other sources are details below, and discussed in the session on Tactile Analysis.

[172] As will be discussed in the following section on Tactile Analysis, much of the standard literature on analysis ignores the work of Le Guin and Cumming, or misrepresents their contributions to scholarship.

[173] Naomi Cumming, *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 5, 6.

[174] Ibid, 110.

Da Souza argues that, given that music is played, the score is a medium for perception, rather than a means of perception.[175] The score is positioned as a vehicle to help us reach an understanding of the music through playing, rather than being the central object to be understood itself. Da Souza similar highlights the importance of the performer's body, and inherent knowledge therein. The act of performing and playing – which, just like hearing music, is temporal – are bound to the human body, and there are many embodied actions that come with performing. Da Souza notes that 'embodied knowledge shapes musical concepts,' further going on to state that 'aspects of musical organisation and meaning may be felt by performers but not always heard by listeners,' or read by score-based analysers.[176] He exemplifies this with JS Bach's keyboard music, noting that the composer's music – particularly his keyboard works, and most notably his fugues – is often dissected and interrogated from the score, rather than at the keyboard, even though 'his music is grounded in embodied know-how' of the hands and body.[177]

Elisabeth Le Guin's research similarly places the performer's tactile and kinetic experience at the forefront of understanding compositional style and voice in her work on Boccherini.[178] Throughout her work, Le Guin argues – just like this thesis – the case for music to be performed to be truly understood. Drawing on Diderot, and her own experiences as a cellist, Le Guin similarly argues that 'a piece is created less to be read than to be performed,' and that 'the composer achieves nothing with executants!'[179] All three authors draw on Barthes' concept of the grain of the voice, although inadvertently in the case of Le Guin and Cumming. The "grain" refers not just to the voice itself, and what the voice is recreating through sounding, but the central concept that "the grain is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs."[180]

Yet Cumming, Da Souza, and Le Guin face the same two problems in their analyses: upsetting the traditional order of musicological understanding and analytical process, and running into issues of language with which to discuss tactility.[181] Le Guin explains:

> To put the performer always first, front and centre [in analysis] inverts an established order of musicological thinking; and that order was established for good reasons. Taking the

[175] Jonathan Da Souza, *Music at Hand: Instruments, Bodies, and Cognition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 21.
[176] Ibid, 1.
[177] Ibid, 143.
[178] Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: an essay in carnal musicology* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 2006.
[179] Ibid, 2, 13.
[180] Barthes in Da Souza, *Music at Hand*, 49.
[181] Naomi Cummings, *The Sonic Self: Musical subjectivity and signification* (2000);
Robert Hatten, *Interpretting Musical Gestures, Topics and Tropes* (2004); and
Fisher and Lochhead, "Analysing from the Body," *Theory and Practice* (2002, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41054335).

> performative point of view profoundly complicates the whole enterprise of talking coherently about music. […] It is [so difficult] to unite performance and musicology into one discourse.[182]

As Le Guin notes, the 'established order of musicological thinking' is a difficult one to disrupt and re-establish with the performer at the forefront. Le Guin, and Cumming and Da Souza, all attempt to place the performer, alongside the act of performing, at the forefront of their work. Simply put, they approach analysis through performance. As highlighted above, this is a different approach to authors such as Cook and Rink, who approach analysis through the score. When we look to whether traditional musicologists have embraced tactile analysis, or carnal musicology as Le Guin calls it, we can see that their work is celebrated, but not for their contributions to musical analysis. Le Guin's work on carnal musicology has been highly praised by eighteenth-century and Enlightenment scholars as bold and radical, not least of which is because of the centrality she places on the body for understanding compositional idiom.[183] Yet, given Le Guin's focus being limited to the tactile-style experience of playing and performing eighteenth-century cello music, analysts such as Cook only praise her work for its discussion of describing 'a relationship scripted by notes on the page,' rather than her nuanced and innovative means of approaching and categorising style.[184] Cumming is similarly not widely accepted by music analysts. While she is well received by various semiotic and embodiment scholars, her work is largely not reflected in the discussions relating to methods of music analysis.[185] It would seem that tactile analysists such as Cumming and Le Guin, are pigeon-holed by their analytical contemporaries, rather than successfully upsetting and establishing a new tradition of analytical musicology.

As Le Guin also notes in the quote above, tactile style analysis also runs into the difficulty of language, so that any attempts to diplomatically and coherently subvert the natural discourse of analysis fall down at the first hurdle. Crucially here, it is not the place of this thesis to offer a comprehensive new language or syntax for discussing the embodied and tactile experiences of style. That is beyond the scope, and will form part of future research. It is perhaps another reason as to why Le Guin, Da Souza, and others'

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[182] Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 13.

[183] Annette Richards, "Reviews Work: Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology by Elisabeth Le Guin," *Journal of the American Musicological Society,* Vol. 61, No. 1 (Spring 2008), 215-220. Accessed 25th April 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jams.2008.61.1.215, 216.
Stephen Rumph, "Review: Music and Philosophy: The Enlightenment and Beyond," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association,* Vol. 133, No. 1 (2008), 128-143, accessed 25th April 2022: https://www.jstor.org/stable/30161419, 129.

[184] Cook, *Beyond the Score,* 287. It should be noted that Cook's inclusion of Le Guin in *Beyond the Score* seems to miss the point about 'carnal musicology,' or understanding analysis through the body rather than just through the score. References made to Le Guin in *Beyond the Score* are either moments of descriptive analysis relating to technique (258), or minimise her authority as a carnal, tactile analyst to one of performer mediating a scripted thing (the music) through playing.

[185] Jairo Moreno, "Review: Naomi Cumming, the Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification, Indiana University Press, 200, 370pp," *Music Theory Spectrum* Vol. 27, No. 2 (Fall 2005), 283-307, accessed 25th April 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/mts.2005.27.2.283, 285.
Moreno notes that Cumming engages with many of the leading analytical music philosophers, including many referenced through this thesis. Yet she herself does not receive mention in return by her peers. She does not feature Cook's *Beyond the Score,* written over a decade after her death. Nor does she appear in Rink's works on methods of analysis.

research into tactility has not been fully by analysts other than Cook (and even then, only to a limited extent, as discussed above). There is no good language or method to explain the 'gestural-bound experience of embodiment,' as Le Guin calls it.[186] Nor is there a succinct enough way in which to describe the temporal, ephemeral and often transcendental manner in which our bodies are bound to the sounds we may through performance. Yet, there is a sensory experience of style when playing, as agreed to by various (although limited) authors, and a carnal, kinetic and tactile means of understanding and analysing a work through playing. As Cumming notes, the only language we have to articulate playing and touch are 'verbal terms,' that only convey technique or character, and even then with extremely varying degrees of abstraction.[187] Trying to articulate gesture and tactility as style is difficult, and as a result we come up with either presumptive statements about meaning that cannot be verified in the score, or statements that are misinterpreted to refer to performance style rather than compositional style.

A Glossary of Gestures

To offer an entry-point into categorising style in terms of tactility, this thesis presents a glossary of gestures that categorise works and moments therein. Just as we have a library of stylistic elements, so too can we have a library of gestures. Just as the score creates a written map of a work, so too can we create a tactile map of a work through the gestures, or stylistic tactile moments, that make up said work. Instead of creating a stylistic understanding that is based on elements in the score, we can do what Le Guin suggests, and describe style in terms of what the performer is doing (aside from technique and making sound), reframing the performer as central to creating style through their embodiment.

These gestures, or tactile moments of style, are presented below. However, it is crucial to remember that this glossary, while relevant to Casella, and applicable to all music, is somewhat subjective. While the terms listed below make sense to any pianist, they come from my body, and my understanding of playing a piano. My body is not going to display and experience the same gestures as any other performer, but we will feel many similar things. While there may be cross-over of gestures, and mutual understanding of what gestures and tactile experiences mean and feel like, these can never be identical. Just as sound cannot be heard in the same way by any two people, neither can style and gesture be felt in exactly the same way. Thus, this glossary is subjective.

Although the physical experience which comes when playing is subjective, the language used to describe these gestures and moments of tactility are usable by others, and hopefully will be seen as objective terms. They broad enough that they can be applied to other works and repertoires, and used

[186] Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 234.
[187] Cumming, *The Sonic Self,* 110.

in future research by other performers. Where Le Guin, Da Souza and Cumming have all run into problems through the lack of language, the gestures outlined below can be seen as a starting point from which to develop this syntax. The terms outlined below will then be used throughout two of the Case Studies: No 1: *Toccata* Op. 6, and No: 4 *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op 59, alongside score-style language so that it can be seen how tactility is as usable and valid a means of analysis. There are two means of using stylistic gestures: as a means of identifying a structure, and as a way of conveying character, and thus aiding interpretation. *Toccata* Op. 6 uses tactile style to create a structure of the work: tactility and gestures go hand-in-hand with structural elements found in the score to present the style of the work overall. With the *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata*, gesture and tactile style is used to help understand and analyse the character of the work. Each gesture is emotive, and helps embody a character or feeling, thus aiding interpretation. Tactility and gesture can codify a work through both structural, and expressive and interpretive means.

Now, admittedly the best way to describe and explain this glossary of tactile terms would be to have you sat next to me at the piano so I could show you each specific gesture, and explain how one term could mean a broad thing (such as defined below), and the many nuances of gesture and meaning possible therein. However, given the limitations of a written thesis, I have instead given a list of terms, followed by a short explanation. These are not the only possible terms. If time and word counts allowed, an entire thesis could be devoted to creating a language of tactile stylistic categorisation and gestures possible for pianists of Casella's music. Hopefully any musician can make sense of the hand gestures defined below, although they refer best to piano-playing gestures:

- Cascading (of octaves): a rapid descending pattern that can involve one or both hands. In this case (cascading octaves), the hand is spread the span of an octave, yet the figuration of the octaves themselves could be one handed, use both hands, involve repeated or single notes, the same octave played in both hands, or with the hands separated by an octave. The crucial part is that the pitch descends in octaves, and rapidly.
- Unevenly distributed hand-weight: where one part, or side, of the hand is played louder, and more weight it put into one part of the hand, to bring out a voice with a particular attack or physical emphasis on the voice. Most obvious examples are where the melody is in the thumb, or 5th finger, of a hand. However, could also be applied to the middle fingers in a chromatic passage, or for rhythmic and harmonic emphasis, rather than just melodic.
- Scrunch-like contraction (outer to inner): going from a spread-hand position to a central finger, scrunching the hand up and contracting inwards. Literally contracting the hand and making it small from a spread position. Somewhat like a grabbing action that pulls the fingers from a spread position inwards. Can be going from a chord to a single note, and vice versa.

- Reverse-scrunch expansion (inner to outer): going from a note or chord played with the inner fingers to a spread-hand position, literally expanding the hand from small to a spread position. A reverse grab, like throwing the fingers away from the hand/palm. Can be going from a single note to a chord, and vice versa.
- 'Poly-rhythm' hands: playing a poly-rhythm. Can be a polyrhythm in one hand, or across the hands, and can be 2 or more rhythms at once. Crucially it must be a cross-rhythm-type polyrhythm, rather than just melody/accompaniment (defined below), as there must be the groove to lock into, rhythmically, but also the physical clunkiness of negotiating a polyrhythm.
- Striation (and poly-hand striation): An arpeggiation going up or down, and usually on repeat in one or both hands. Can be melodic or harmonic in function. Poly-hand striations are when both hands are striating, but not in the same pattern, at the same time.
- Small hand movements: movements that make the hand seem and feel small, and require minimal hand and finger movement. This has a subsequent effect on the performer's whole body, making them move in small movements, rather than normal gestures, and usually is employed in soft, quiet passages.
- Big hand movements: the opposite of small hand movements. Almost exaggerated large movements of the hands, whether vertically or horizontally. Usually for verbose, loud and dramatic passages.
- Block hands/chords: series of chords that have the same interval and hand span, so the hand moves as a block across the notes, rather than fingering the passage and changing fingers.
- Still movements: similar to small hand movements, but specifically about small movements. Movements that involve slow and very little action, and that help maintain a still atmosphere, rather than detracting in sound or exertion from the passage being played.
- Weighted falls: falling onto a note in a heavy manner. Not the same as landing heavily – a real sense of falling is necessary, and the implied freedom of movement therein, rather than being placed, or landing heavily.
- Thumping, stomping: done either with the fingers or the hands or, when really exaggerated, the whole arm and body. Crucially this is not slapping the keys, but really thudding into the key-bed, with the entire weight of the limb and join in use.
- Melody/accompaniment fixture: this can be in one hand (poly-rhythm hand) or across two hands, and is literally where there is a melody and accompaniment. The feeling of playing two parts at once that are linked through rhythmic and harmonic links, but yet two distinct parts contributing to one concise whole.
- Spikiness: related to staccato and accented textures, an almost hoping but more aggressive gesture that is largely in the fingers. Can be dulled by pedal, but requires the same dexterity of lifting and jamming the fingers back down with force in a detached manner.

- Crunching (chromaticism), hunching: a hand gesture that seems crouched over itself so that the fingers are moving very closely to each other in small movements, and the hand is close to a fist-shape. Can be fast or slow movement, but usually a small movement where the thumbs are moving beneath the other fingers, and not necessarily visible under the hands. Results usually in a crunchy, chromatic texture and makes the hands hunch over close to the keys.
- Floating, ethereal: how the hand or finger leaves the keyboard, and comes out of the key-bed. A movement with lightness, and usually where air will happen both between notes, and physically between the hand and the instrument. A light, soft manner to end or come off a note physically and aurally. Very atmospheric, as much as it is also linked to technique.
- Calm evenness: as much a mood as a tactile style, where the hands move gently, without any excess movement of effort, and the texture is a legato-smooth one where all fingers are given the same weight and volume.
- Swelling: usually a means of embellishing a melody, where each note grows or diminishes exponentially in volume. Like when a singer inflates and then gradually builds to the loudest note of a phrase, then diminishes down in a controlled way when expending their breath. In a pianist, each subsequent note is depressed with more and more, then less and less weight, thus creating a tactile and dynamic swell.
- Swaying: like swelling, but without the up-down linear progress of inflection and increase/decrease of volume and pressure. This is swelling in a random pattern, with almost random swell notes surrounded by other less important notes.
- Stealthy, cunning, sneaking: similar to crunching and hunching, but with a more expanded hand shape. Similar to the closeness of motion of doing legato parallel 3rds or 4ths in one hand in that the hand moves cunningly and carefully with a deliberateness that is not bold, but not necessitating any particular interval, or even a chord at all.
- (Crashing) waves: undulations, whether melodic, harmonic, rhythmic of dynamics, usually with a crashing point that can either be an accented note, a pitch peak or trough, followed by a steadily moving passage. Usually groups of semiquavers or triplets repeated across the hands, with the hands passing over and under each other.
- Sitting: sitting in the note. After having sunk into the key-bed with a note, the performer does not hurry leaving the key-bed, and really stresses the entire weight of the finger, the hand, the arm, the shoulder, and even the body. Importantly not to be confused with sitting in a sound, but sitting, sinking into the key-bed and the piano itself. Often accompanied with a sinking of the shoulders in relaxation.

Importantly, none of the above terms are pianist techniques. While good technique is needed to carry out of any of these stylistic gestures, and to play Casella's works, they are not the same, and should not

be confused. Instead – these are just some of the gestures and tactile moments of style that arise throughout Casella's piano works, and thus can be used to describe, structure and characterise his works.

Casella's Style: *Tre maniere*, borrowing, and authenticity

Now that we have waded through methods of style analysis, we can look to defining Casella's style. It has yet to be defined as anything more than 'modern' or 'neoclassical;' two broad and unspecific terms.[188] Simply put, his style is to borrow, and this is reflect in the scores, the sounds and gestures when playing his works. We must now look to what, where, and who Casella borrows from. His borrowing manifests in three ways: (i) borrowing historical, traditional forms and structures; (ii) borrowing tonalities and harmonic structures and settings; and (iii) borrowing character and affectations of other composers.

Problems with the *tre maniere*

Casella is claimed to have three compositional manners throughout his career: *prima maniera* (1902-1914), *seconda maniera* (1915-1919), and *terza maniera* (1920-1944).[189] It is arguable as to what constitutes a *maniera*. *Maniera* translates literally as manner, or way, rather than specifically meaning style (*maniere* being plural). This suggests that for each *maniere*, Casella either had a different manner or style in which he composed, or both. However, as already stated, this thesis posits that Casella had one compositional process, and one compositional style, both of which evolved and matured over his career. Casella's compositional voice did not radically change to ever have three distinct styles. Even if we take *maniere* to imply differing periods, this is still not accurate. Across his oeuvre, we still see Casella borrowing relatively uniformly, regardless of time, place or historical context. There was a definite maturing of style – a refinement of how he borrowed, and his harmonic language, and a change of what he borrowed from. But from the analysis of his piano works undertaken for this thesis, there is nothing conclusive that heralds three distinct or different styles or periods. Throughout his oeuvre, the manner in which Casella borrowed – or, one could say, his style itself – largely stayed the same.

This raises the question as to whether borrowing can really constitute a style in itself. If we use the above definition of style as being the recurrence and repetition of various elements, then yes, Casella has style, albeit perhaps not an original one. He repeatedly borrows, although each work showcases a

[188] Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 163.

[189] These periods were designated by Guido M Gatti, Casella's friend, critic and sometimes-biographer. Casella only refers to his 'maniere' in *I segreti della giara*. However, in this text, he does not use the *prima, seconda* or *terza* regarding his maniere, merely hinting that works come from different stages of his life. It is Gatti who denoted and labelled his compositional periods.
Gatti, "Some Italian Composers of To-Day. VI. Alfredo Casella (Continued)," 469.
Gatti, "In Memory of Alfredo Casella (1883-1947)," 405.

different ‘something borrowed’ and in a different way. Because Casella borrows various elements, including style itself from others, he himself arguably has no original style. However, it is arguable that all style is borrowed and then evolves and is manipulated by composers to create individual style, thus suggesting that Casella does have original style. We know, as musicians, that the evolution of styles in music is exactly that – an evolution, rather than phenomenon.

Here we are faced with the conundrum of Casella: he simultaneously has no original style, and yet is entirely original, as no one has composed the same works before or after him. To say that borrowing style negates the existence of style implies that composers, in their early careers, have no style.[190] Many composers borrow from their teachers and mentors, which makes sense given that music is a learned tradition. We then come to the issue of style not being limited to the written work, but also the tactile and aural experience. Style is also in the tactile experience – a recurrence in the physical gestures experienced in playing a body of works. In the case of Casella, there is a uniformed, unifying tactile experience across his oeuvre. There are repetitive, familiar tactile embodiments of style across his works. We can feel that we are playing Casella, we know his style of composing not just through reading, but also through feeling and playing. As mentioned above, it is difficult to articulate this tactile experience of style, which is exactly why we have performance to serve us. But it does support the argument that Casella had style, and a unified style across his oeuvre at that.

Authenticity and Originality in Style

> Authenticity is a much overused, indeed much misused, word in cooking, in life generally, come to think of it. Honest borrowing is the natural province of the cook, and recipes are living, evolving entities.[191]

If one replaces cooking with music, recipes with scores, and cooks with musicians, we come to a similar conclusion that the concept of authenticity is much misused. This idea of ‘authenticity’ in compositional style is a curious one. Having style, regardless of whether in compositional language or performance practice, does not equate with authenticity, or originality. Casella has style, but his originality (or lack thereof, depending on who you ask) does not negate or influence whether he has style. One does not have to be original to have style. The very notion of style itself – repetitions and recurrences across a group and being defined by the existence of other groups – is somewhat the antithesis of originality. In fact, given that style is a means of categorisation in reference to other styles, it implies that there is no

[190] Bloom discusses this extensively in his theory of ‘the anxiety of influence.’ It claims that in their early careers, artists (in his case, poets), are influenced in their early style. He posits that this influence only truly happens in the early career of an artist, and that it comes from misreading other artists, rather than truly understanding an art form. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), xxiii.

[191] Nigella Lawson, *Cook, Eat, Repeat,* (London: Vintage Publishers, 2020), 60.

one original style, but simply differentiations of style.[192] A work or oeuvre does not need to be original to have style.

Borrowing, and the problems therein

Now to delve into what borrowing is, and the various methods therein. As was noted above, the style of one composer is only realised by being defined against other styles, and is a concept that requires understanding of styles generally. Style is a way of categorising and defining. There is no wholly original style or work of music, as all works and styles overlap with others. Kristeva argues that:

> Text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another … in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralise one another.[193]

In other words, everything in music is 'borrowed' from, influenced by, or done in reaction to already existing music. Music, like art, cannot escape its own history, and all works, whether they choose it or not, are linked, and respond to, the canon either through their inclusion or exclusion from it. As Burkholder importantly notes, all music borrows:

> Within a tradition, a piece may use common […] formal conventions. Most broadly, all music draws on the repertory of notes, scales, gestures and[/or] other elements available in that tradition, so that every piece borrows from earlier pieces in its own tradition. Thus in the widest sense the history of borrowing in music is the history of improvisation, composition and performance.[194]

Casella's compositional style is no different, in that it borrows from music's tradition. He not only borrows from music's tradition, like Burkholder argues all composers do, but also borrows specific and traceable gestures, tonalities, and elements. Casella borrows three things consistently. First is form and structure (particularly from the Baroque and Classical periods, favouring works and structures that have

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[192] Peter Kivy, *Authenticities. Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 6.

[193] Kristeva in Kevin Korsyn, "Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue," from Cook and Everist, *Rethinking Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 56.
Strauss similarly agrees with this in his work *Remaking the past*, where he argues for *intertextuality*; No text can be truly discrete, its boundaries clearly marked and impermeable. Rather, every text is interpenetrated by others and speaks with a variety of voices. In most [...] musical works [...], there is a clear delineation of new and old elements. The older elements are recognizable but placed in a new context that confers upon them a new meaning.'
Joseph Strauss, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1990), 16.

[194] J Peter Burkholder, "Borrowing", *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 27th November 2019, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.52918.

specific implications in their form such as toccata, berceuse, or sonatina). Secondly, he borrows tonality in two ways. While Casella's works feature 'harmonic counterpoint' – a form of atonality borrowed from – the Second Viennese School,[195] he also borrows specific harmonic structures from other works. Finally, he borrows style itself, composing in the style of various composers. One work sounds like a quasi-romantic tone-scape evocative of Debussy, where another work borrows from machine-like atonal characteristics similar to Bartok. His borrowing is response and reaction to music around him, and the Modernist movement generally. Each time Casella borrows a specific element from another work, he offers an insight into his understanding of music's history and traditions. Subsequently, his style is recognisable through its use of borrowing.

This idea of borrowing was not a novel concept during the early Twentieth Century.[196] Neo-Classicism, which is built on the idea of borrowing Baroque and Classical forms, was evolving during Casella's life. Stravinsky, Casella's idol, is commonly labelled as a neo-classicist, and noted for his borrowing.[197] However, Casella does not fully fit as a neo-classicist: there is too much nationalist, Impressionist and unique influence to label him as such. While some of Casella's works are ironic, and do exaggerate on the styles of others (such as his *À la maniére de…*), he typically is not borrowing to distort, but to enhance. It is somewhat reductive to categorise Casella as neoclassical, especially when he was Modern in the context of Italian instrumental music at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. He deserves to be seen as original, even if his originality is built on the traditions of others.

Casella's Way of Borrowing

Borrowing literally means to take from another source and use for one's own. Borrowing – for this thesis – means using 'existing music as a basis for new music;' taking musical ideas present in other works and using them to create new music.[198] Burkholder terms borrowing in composition as 'a new piece of music [referring] to existing music in various ways.'[199] By this, he means that new works

[195] Harmonic counterpoint is a term used by Casella that implies there is a lack of melody with harmonic accompaniment, but instead a series of harmonies that move simultaneously, and which move horizontally, rather than harmony being constructed vertically. This comes from the idea of having multiple harmonies at once, or harmonic simultaneity. Gordon terms this as a 'horizontal streaming of chords to create multiple melodic lines moving simultaneously in constantly changing vertical sonorities.'
S Gordon, *The Compositional Styles of Alfredo Casella: An Examination of Four Vocal Works,* DMA Thesis, Arizona State University, May 2014, accessed 30th January 2018, https://repository.asu.edu/attachments/134832/content/Gordon_asu_0010E_13704.pdf, 15.
[196] Burkholder, "Borrowing".
[197] Whittal, "Neo-Classical."
[198] Burkholder, "Borrowing".
John Rink, "Translating Musical Meaning: the Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator," 219.
Leo Treitler, "The Historiography of Music: Issues of Past and Present", in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 357, 365.
[199] Burkholder, "Borrowing".
Ezra Pound famously said "be influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt outright, or to try to conceal it," implying that borrowing was natural and normal in artistic creative practice. He himself borrowed extensively from Walt Whitman in his own style and works, and acknowledged the debt overtly and through stylistic means within his own works.

borrow features and 'qualities identified with another.' Every piece of music borrows something from another, previously existing work, whether it be a formal convention, such as tonality, rhythm, structure or title, or something more abstract: gestures, textures, and characters.

Borrowing is not the same as copying, mimicking, quotation, allusion, pastiche, or collage. Specifically, it is making something new from something already in existence. In borrowing, only an element, or small facets of a work are taken and used, such as Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* melodically and harmonically borrowing from Pergolesi.[200] Borrowing may result in allusion, or seem to be modelled on another work, but it is not the same thing. Borrowing can be done intentionally or subconsciously by composers, and even coincidentally. Quotation – or paraphrasing – is also not the same as borrowing. While Casella uses quotation in his music, it is usually quoting other works by himself, rather than directly quoting works by other composers.[201] Borrowing was not new to Modernist genres. But the fact that Casella's *entire* compositional style was built on borrowing does makes him unique. Borrowing was the major tool in Casella's compositional practice. He borrowed styles from other composers, structures from other periods of music history, and tonalities from various periods and pieces. This unique manner of pastiche is what makes Casella original.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Casella dedicates various works to an impressive list of composer friends. While these composers obviously influence and impress upon Casella, this use of dedications does not necessarily equate to him borrowing their styles in these works. In some instances, title and dedication do directly point to stylistic features present in the work, but this is not always the case. This is most obvious in the suite *À la manière de …* Op. 17 and 17bis (1911 and 1913, respectively). Each movement is titled after a composer, and is written (somewhat ironically) in the style of that composer. *À la manière de…* is partly an homage to each composer, but more an ironic and playful set of pieces based on several composers Casella thought were interesting. Although the work is on overt example of Casella borrowing style, it is still indicative of his own compositional voice. Other works, such as *Nove Pezzi* Op. 24 (1915), borrow from modes and the historical inherent styles of works, rather than specific composers.

Ezra Pound, "Essays on Poetic Theory: 'A Retrospect' and 'A Few Don'ts,' *Poetry Foundation,* accessed 12th February 2020, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69409/a-retrospect-and-a-few-donts.
Charles B Willard, "Ezra Pound's Debt to Walt Whitman," *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 54 No. 4 (October 1957), 573-581, accessed 12th February 2020, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4173219.

[200] "Pastiche," *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, Ed. Rutherford et al, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), accessed 12th February 2020, https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199578108.001.0001/acref-9780199578108-e-6885?fromCrossSearch=true.

[201] *Deux contrastes* (1918) by Casella is a perfect example of quotation in his music. The first movement quotes Chopin's *Prelude No. 7 Op 28*, but presents the harmony in an inversion. The second movement quotes Casella's own work, quoting from the first and third movements of *Sonatina* Op. 28 (1916).

The above discussion is a very abstract one on how Casella borrows style. This idea of borrowing style will be made obvious through the case studies: comparing his scores with those of other composers, how works feel similar under the hand (tactile style) to other composers', and how they sound similar to other works. But first let us look now to how composers can borrow from a tradition. Throughout the history of any academic discipline, there is always a reverence for, and rebellion against, tradition. Casella's case in music is no different, in that it both rebels and reveres the works of music's great history (the canon). Bloom raises the idea of 'the anxiety of influence', which describes new artistic creation as a kind of

> Oedipal struggle to overcome the potentially overwhelming impact of the artistic forefather and achieve originality and asserts that a strong younger artist 'misreads' an older work in order to create space for his own art.[202]

Bloom implies that there is a divide between old and new art: new generations of artists believe they must kill off and reinvent their artistic predecessors to become great in their own right, and to ensure their own works are remembered as part of the canon. Casella did not want to kill off his artistic 'forefathers,' and did not go through any oedipal struggle.[203] Yet Bloom's theory is partially relevant in the case of Casella, and musical history generally. Casella definitely was influenced by his musical forefathers (both literal and figurative), and strove to be and compose in an original manner because of their overwhelming inspiration for his own music. Rather than struggling against them, however, Casella borrows (more overtly than most) and does so in a manner that is fun, cheeky and playful. It is undeniable that composers of Casella's generation were consciously aware of, and revered, the historical weight of music before their own time.[204] Casella was not suffering from an anxiety of influence, but something closer to Joseph Strauss' 'Anxiety of Style.' This is:

> A feeling that some past era, as a whole, represents a never-to-be-reattained artistic pinnacle. […] the anxiety of style appears in the constant comparisons of the new [Modern] music to the classic-romantic music amid defensive assertions that the new music is as rich, as expressive, as comprehensible, and as capable of producing coherence as the music that came before.[205]

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[202] Burkholder, "Borrowing".
Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*.
Strauss, *Remaking the Past,* 12, 13.

[203] Given his reverence, and his explicit desire to make a new musical Italy, it is far more likely that Casella revered, rather than struggled, under the music legacy he perceived and believed he was a part of. Similarly, given his reverence of so many differing historical and contemporaneous composers, it is unlikely that he suffered from an oedipal struggle, but more a case of idolisation.

[204] Strauss, *Remaking the Past,* 1.
Burkholder, "Borrowing".

[205] Strauss, *Remaking the Past*, 18.

As we know from discussions on Casella's vision for a New Musical Italy, he was eager that Italy should reattain an artistic pinnacle in music as it had displayed during the Renaissance and Baroque eras. This is demonstrated through his historical borrowing in his compositions. As stated in the biographic overview of Casella, it is clear that he had a great affinity with Italy's musical past, and wanted to, in some way, resurrect this great musical and cultural history.[206]

Finally, it is important to note that Casella also borrows from himself. Borrowing from oneself is not unusual, but quoting oneself – as Casella does, whether intentionally or not – was less common when he was actively composing.[207] Many of Casella's works for piano borrow harmonic language and texture from one another, and all of them borrow physical gestures and motifs required of the performer. A common feature of many of Casella's works are large-stretching block chords in both hands, such as 7ths, 9ths, or stacked 5ths, which are all routinely marked *senza arpeggiare*. Similarly, in all of his toccatas is the repeated use of one particular octave motif, which is always used to herald a new theme and build dynamic and emotive intensity. Casella frequently uses chromatic scale passages with a sustained bass note as a textural effect. While these borrowings from himself are just instances, one can still feel and hear the similarities between works which enable us to denote them as being of Casella's style. We also see an example of Casella directly quoting himself, as explained in the second case study on *Sonatina* Op. 28.

To look at Casella's borrowing, we need to look at specific works individually to ascertain what is borrowed, and demonstrate how it is done similarly across his body of work. An analytical framework has been devised for this thesis that investigates both origins of, and influences on, style. By investigating the conventional musical elements of works alongside external influences, historical context, and how performing the work feels and sounds, we can suggest a balanced understanding of the work's style. Not all elements of this stylistic analysis are always relevant to the performer, or hearer, of a work. However, they are still necessary to know about, to help the performer construct an interpretation.

Analysing Casella: The Framework

Once I had learned the majority of Casella's works, I knew two things. There was a unique gestural experience to playing Casella's works. The gestures outlined above in the Glossary repeated and were

[206] It should be noted that while Casella was the greatest champion for the New Musical Italy, he was not alone. Malipiero and Respighi (especially before Mussolini's regime) were similarly aligned with Casella in their desire to foster a new musical scene. While Respighi turned more and more to musical conservatism, Malipiero and various others continued to champion new compositions and music through both historical and innovative means alongside Casella.

[207] The works of Prokofiev, Rachmaninov and Richard Strauss show other composers who borrowed from themselves across their oeuvres. While Casella would have heard the music of Strauss, it is much less likely that he was much exposed to the two Russian's works, given his travel movements, correspondence and diary entries.

common across all his piano works, and felt borrow from or similar to other, canonical piano repertoire I have played. But there was nothing obviously uniform in what appeared in each score, other than them all being works for solo piano. As stated, Casella's compositional main stylistic feature is to borrow. I could not immediately identify this in the score, but felt and heard it when playing. Thus, I needed to find a way to make sense of this – the seemingly borrowed gestures, motifs, and phrases in the score that were reminiscent of other twentieth-century repertoire I have played. What I read, feel, and hear when playing may be experienced differently by another pianist, and differently again from a musicologist or non-pianist. Rather than making the apparent allusions the driving factor behind this analysis (fitting the framework to the outcome), I needed to create a nominally unbiased framework that would potentially prove my performance and tactile-based analysis wrong. This meant opting for a descriptive-based framework that would allow me to codify and categorise Casella with other individual composers and their works.

The framework devised for this analysis begins by discussing various elements in the score, and then posits possible meanings, links, and borrowings therein, rather than the other way round. It is largely based on similarities between scores, with some influence from seemingly borrowed gestures as well. By looking at individual elements such as structure and form, key structure, tonality, expression, and then placing them alongside historical context and potential musical influences upon a work, we can posit possibilities of borrowing. In the case of Casella, we want to discover possible sources that he borrowed from. But it must be remembered that this is only a possible reading of Casella's style. Of course this analysis is limited, as are all forms of analysis.

The analytical framework used for this analysis has been developed by incorporating the element-based, comparative analysis of LaRue and Keller, alongside Samson's view that analysis must be flexible, and taking a historical and contextual look at works to investigate what else was happening in music and history that may have impinged on a work's composition.[208] As well as analysing the score, and the 'concrete' musical elements therein, this framework hypothesises potential links between Casella's works and others. Some aspects have also been drawn from Hans Keller's theories of Functional Analysis, but this is limited, given that Keller's model is realised through analytical scores about the works being discussed, rather than being realised through performance.[209] The framework also uses Dahlhaus' argument that there are three elements within stylistic analysis: formal analysis, energetic interpretation, and gestalt analysis.[210] The first two of these elements – formal analysis and energetic interpretation – are used in the framework below. The structures of works and the relationships between

[208] LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis.*
Hans Keller, *Essays on Music,* ed. Christopher Wintle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[209] Bent and Drabkin, *Analysis,* 85.
[210] Ibid, 79.

and functions of various elements, as well as the movement of tensions and sounds are included in the framework below. However, the gestalt analysis, which is the stage where one deduces the character or essence of the work, has been incorporated into the following chapter on interpretation. Casella himself notes that he viewed understanding a work's character as part of the interpretive process, which is why it has been included in that section of this research.

LaRue categorises music into definitive elements that are easily discussed across a wide variety of works, genres and styles: sound, harmony, melody, rhythm, texture, and 'growth'. While the analytical framework developed for Casella is somewhat different, it is modelled on similar headings that group musical features that can be discussed in any work of music and in a way that is useful for the performer. LaRue's framework is deemed the most helpful for performers given his statement that 'a succession of tones [i.e., music] can mean an infinity of different things to a composer, performer, and listener.'[211] LaRue acknowledges the importance of music and style being a tripartite experience of equal measure, with reading, performing, and hearing the work all equally important to understanding it.[212] LaRue treats the performance (and hearing) of music as equally important (if not more so) to the score when analysing a work.[213] Rather than the score of the composer being the authority of the work, the score and performance of the performer are the more important existences of the work, as tactile and aural experiences are allowed to factor into analysis.

The Framework

As can be seen in the table below (Figure 12), the initial framework for this analysis was very prescriptive. Each possible element of a work was surveyed in a matter-of-fact way. From this initial reading of works, the various elements were then grouped together under more general headings. Melody, harmony, and voicing were grouped together as tonality and texture. Form, structure, time signature, and changes therein were discussed with the historical connotations therein. Dynamics, expressive markings, and pedal were grouped together. There were then various elements – such as pedal, some expressive terms, tempo markings, and harmonies that needed to be interspersed throughout the discussion. Pedal is expressive, but it also affects texture and perceived harmony. Thus, having a prescriptive approach that could then be flexibly applied for different works was the easiest to begin with. Possible external influences and historical and musical contexts were added into the analysis as a second step once the initial elements had been understood. These broader, overarching categories of analysis were then drawn on *together* to present a stylistic understanding of Casella's piano music.

[211] LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis,* 1.
[212] Both Casella and LaRue's notions of listening and hearing seem to imply critical or deep listening, such as that practiced by Pauline Oliveros: listening beyond the surface of the work, and listening in as many ways possible to a work.
[213] Randall, "A General Theory of Comparative Music Analysis," 2006.

Individual features can be discussed as entirely individual entities. But this does not give them meaning or significance in relation to an entire work.

Work/ Opus/Year	#Bar/ Anacrusis	Key Sig(s)	Time Sig(s)	Melody	Harmony and modulations	Texture and voices	Dynamics and expressive marks	Pedal (written and implied)	Narrative/ Character/ possible external influence

Figure 12: Spreadsheet layout of analytic framework used to collate data

Unlike other forms of analysis, this stylistic analysis is done with the intention that it will enhance performance, and is only one way to understanding Casella's compositional style. This element-based framework dissects the score, but it is up to the performer to elicit what is most important to highlight through performance, and also different possible readings and interpretations of those elements through negotiating sound, playing and the score. While Casella's style itself largely did not change across his life (except becoming more refined), the external influences and things he borrowed from did change, extensively. This will be demonstrated through the case studies. This, in turn, will facilitate the following discussion on interpretation, and performing Casella's piano works.

Why is Style Relevant for Performers?

Style is relevant to performers for several reasons. Primarily is the fact that performers realise works of music by performing them, thus realising style itself through their performances. It is all very well to say that there are various written elements of Impressionist style, or of Casella's style. But the majority of people will understand what is meant by Impressionist or Casella's style will understand it in terms of what they hear, rather than what can be read in the score. Performers, who actualise what we hear, thus arguably should understand the style of what they play so that listeners (of whom the performer is one) hear this style. Yet there is a second reason, which is linked to interpretation. As has been noted before, many analysts argue that it is important to deduce the true character of a work, and the voice of the composer. This understanding of the work's character, or essence as both Dahlhaus and Casella term it, can only be achieved through interpretation. As will be discussed in the following chapter, Casella himself notes that understanding the style of a work is crucial to constructing an interpretation and creating a convincing performance of a work.[214] Performance actualises style, which is otherwise

[214] Alfredo Casella, *minuta di articolo sull'interpretazione*, 4, 5, Appendix 3.

simply a concept based on written elements in the score. But style is also important to performance, as it aids and informs interpretation and the means of performing a work.

Chapter 4: Performance and Interpretation

> I often used the following image in my teaching: in a musical work, the inexperienced performer finds himself like a stranger trying to walk from Piazza san Marco to the station in Venice and after a short journey he gets lost in the labyrinth of the *calli*, whose topography remains hermetic. Meanwhile, the aviator who flies over the same city sees that it has the shape of a huge fish.[215]

So begins Casella's sketch for an article on pianistic interpretation in 1944. In this one phrase, we are presented with a beautiful metaphor of the transformation that all works undergo in a performer's mind. There is no doubt that a performer can feel lost, or view a work as an unsolved puzzle – or labyrinth, as Casella suggests – that they gradually become the aviator, intimate and able to see and understand the entire work through playing. Casella's use of 'the inexperienced performer' and what he could mean by this that is intriguing. This, along with what interpretation is and how it is constructed, will be made clear through this chapter.

After discerning Casella's compositional process and style, it is now time to look at how one goes about performing, and also interpreting, his piano music. One may argue that this could determine how Casella performed and interpreted his works. Casella's scant solo piano recordings left to us will be discussed, along with those of some of his students. But this discography is not the focus of this thesis, nor is understanding Casella's individual performance and interpretative style, which we can ascertain through recordings. However, this is not the way to construct an interpretation. We do not want to replicate Casella. Instead, this chapter will focus on how performers now may construct their own, individual interpretations of Casella's works, and underline the framework and process for how an interpretation was made for the recordings submitted alongside this thesis. This chapter outlines a means of interpreting Casella's music through performance. This chapter also delves into the literature on performance and interpretation, and authenticity in performance (contrastingly to authenticity in style). Casella's own views and writings on interpretation will be discussed, drawing predominantly from the unpublished sketch quoted above. Casella's views on interpretation are not discussed at all in existing literature. Nor are they discussed in relation to the philosophical debate of what a work is, and how a work is formed, identified, and interpreted. By also looking at how Casella fits within the aesthetic views and debates of his time, we can form a view as to what interpretation is, and how it is formed, and then apply to Casella's works.

[215] Ibid, Appendix 3.

Performance and interpretation are two much discussed terms. Every performer would relate to both words as verbs, and claim to know how to do these two acts, arguing that they are fundamental to music-making. Most analysts would contrastingly claim that performance and interpretation are nouns: static, definable, and object-like that can have good and bad qualities and judgements made upon them. Yet both performers and analysts would construe that performance and interpretation can be the same thing, and also entirely removed from one another, depending on the performance and the interpreter. Here is where the analyst and performer must negotiate: what is performance, and what is interpretation, and how do they interact or overlap?

Performance and interpretation are both nouns and verbs, with meanings that are as fluid as the meaning of music itself, rather than being static terms. However a performance does not necessarily contain an interpretation. Performances can occur without an interpretation, being merely a display of a work. Similarly, a work's interpretation can be known without a performance, such as through score analysis and presenting a written understanding of interpretation, as Rink claims.[216] But most importantly – and here is perhaps where the analyst becomes upset – interpretation can only be fully realised through performance. Similarly to the argument made that style can only be actualised through performance, so too can interpretation only completely exist through performance. To interpret a work successfully is to understand the work. This presents the need to understand how an interpretation is constructed, and what Casella means by 'the inexperienced performer' so that we can best interpret and understand a work.

Before unpacking various definitions of interpretation, or methods of constructing one, or even if interpretation and a work's meaning are subjective or objective, let us look to Casella, and delve deeper into his writing on the subject. After investigating Casella's views on interpretation, we can situate his ideas within early twentieth century aesthetics, particularly those of Italian philosophers Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile, and their very public debate on the meaning and existence of 'the work' in Fascist Italy. Following this will be a discussion of contemporary performance and interpretation literature, looking again to the works of Rink, Cook, and Kivy. Finally, we will look at the performer, and their process for constructing an interpretation.

Casella on Interpretation: the Unpublished *articolo sull'interpretazione*, 1944

One of the last boxes of archival footage from the Fondazione Giorgio Cini is dedicated to Casella's notes and writings on interpretation. Amongst the many disorganised notes and scribbles, we find an

[216] John Rink, "Analysis and (or?) Performance," in *Musical Performance: a Guide to Understanding,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 35.

invaluable little notebook that drafts an article on interpretation: titles of topics and works to be discussed and demonstrated, and the draft of what appears to be an introductory chapter. These notes on interpretation – from which the opening quote of this chapter is taken – are the most useful resource we have to understand Casella's views on interpretation.[217] The article can be found in full in the appendices of this thesis. However, in this chapter, the main points are summarised by his main arguments and themes. There are many points repeated through his text, such as the idea of an interpretation being a construction. Various parts are also incomplete, given missing and ripped pages.

Importantly, Casella's article begins as a response to Boris de Schloezer's text 'Comprendere la musica' published in 1931.[218] De Schloezer was a phenomenologist of music who believed in the gestalt, totality view of music. His article, discussed below, suggests that there is only one way of understanding a work, and that while there are many possible interpretations and hearings of a work, the meaning of the work itself will be understood to be the same thing, regardless of who hears or performs the work. Casella's article-sketch is a continuation of de Schloezer's argument, but from the authority of a performer. While Casella agrees that there is one meaning, or essence – as Casella terms it – to a work, there are many different interpretations, with more onus and liberty given to the interpreter, who is ultimately, the performer or listener.

While he states there are as many interpretations of a work as there are performers and listeners, and the importance of the interpreter (synonymous with performer throughout the article) is crucial to experiencing a work, Casella is firm in his view that there is only one understanding of a work:

> Every work of musical art is a whole in itself, […] without the interpreter's understanding we could not even pretend to listen […]. When you catch the essence of the work in its whole, then you understand the music. Faced with the same work of art, there are as many reactions as individual interpreters or listeners, but there is only one way to understand the work.[219]

Let us delve into what Casella means by the essence of the work, and the importance he places on interpreters. This is crucial to understanding Casella's view of interpretation. He states that, while performers, interpreters and audiences alike all may have a different reaction and response to hearing a work, there is only one meaning, or character, or essence to a work. While stating there is only one understanding of the work, Casella also specifically makes reference to there being many different

[217] It is worth noting here that this article has never before been transcribed, translated or published. I found this article amongst various others in the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, and transcribed it with the help of Francesco Fontanelli, then translated it into English. It has never been used in any research previously.
[218] Boris de Schloezer, "Compredere la musica,", *la rassegna musicale* (1931), 7-16, accessed 3rd November 2020, https://www.scribd.com/document/40145878/De-Schloezer-B-Comprendere-la-musica.
[219] Casella, *minuta di articolo sull'interpretazione*, 3.

interpreters – 'hearers' or listeners of a work. While a work has a single character, there are many ways of knowing, interpreting, and experiencing that character.

In a very simplistic way, we may understand this as follows: the work is objective, but experiencing the work is subjective. A work has a happy, joyous character (or essence, to use Casella's word), but the manner in which a listener interprets or perceives that happiness is dependent on the listener's understanding of happy, what music is, and how happiness manifests. This idea of essence or character of a work is easily identifiable in Casella's own works. Many times he gives expressive marks that are characterising terms, or emotive terms: *stridente*, *indolente*, *carrezevolemente*. These are not exclusively musical commands, but terms that imply character. How the performer interprets these characters is personal. How the listener hears them is subjective. But that central character is still the same, no matter who interprets it.

In the case of Casella (and arguably all dead composers), we can hypothesise the meanings of, influences on, and true essences of, various works. As stated in the previous chapter, we can never know for sure if and what a work 'means.' Casella is not alive to tell us, nor did he leave us any information other than the scores themselves to tell us the objective meaning of works. However, we can find the various characters within his works through analysis and constructing an interpretation. This singular meaning or character of the work comes from the Hegelian philosophical debate that ensued during Casella's life time. Much of Casella's understanding of 'the work' would have been informed by the public discourse between philosophers Gentile and Croce, discussed below. However, before delving into philosophic debates on aesthetics, there are ways musicians can elucidate essence or character in a work through the score and the sounds therein. We are reminded again of Casella's words, and that being faced with defining the character of a work is like trying to navigate a labyrinth-like puzzle. But just as Venice can be viewed as a fish from the sky, so too can it be viewed as a chicken drumstick lying alongside crispy scraps. Every person who experiences, learns, and hears a work will have an individual response to it, even though the work will remain the same in character and substance.

After stating that a work's character is objective, but interpretation subjective, Casella then moves on to discuss how one goes about constructing an interpretation, with specific consideration for piano music. While every performance, or instance of an interpretation, will change (not just because of human error, but because of factors such as venue, instrument, and audience), the construction of an interpretation is decided upon in the learning process, and largely remains the same. He uses

> The word "construction" because every interpretation must be considered in this way. […] No element can be abandoned to chance or to improvisation, but everything, up to the last detail,

must be decided upon. Once "constructed" […], the interpretation will remain unique for the performer.[220]

This idea that an interpretation is constructed makes sense. Performers do not randomly play works, but build an interpretation (as well as and analysis) when learning a work.[221] No performer performs without a plan. Even improvisatory musicians rehearse, structure, and plan their improv moments. Alongside learning the notes, performers learn the gestures, sounds, and techniques required for performing a work. To execute these elements, and one's desired interpretation of them, they must be decided upon during the learning process.

According to Casella, there are various elements that must be added to create a good construction of interpretation. Primarily, there must be a thorough understanding of the score. Regardless of the work, 'every interpretation must always start […] as if the work were totally unknown,' and the performer should create their own working edition of the score.[222] The work needs to be intimately known on a personal level, not just in terms of notes, but voicing, direction, and shape. This idea of intimately knowing a work suggests more than learning a piece by heart, but also understanding where and how each voice develops, the structure (and the historical implications of musical structures, e.g. what *toccata* implies), the context and history surrounding the work, and the character of each voice and section within a work.

This is followed by Casella's view that the performer should analyse – or come to understand – the various formal music elements within the score: the key and time signatures; structure and form; harmonic language and textures and shifts and developments therein throughout a work; and, as well as this, how these elements could have been approached when the work was written (not just contemporarily, generally, or abstractly). Contrary to what our stylistic analysts argue in Chapter 3, Casella suggests that many performers do this subconsciously in learning a work intimately, but suggests that the performer formalise this consciously. They should understand harmony not just as a series of notes or chords, but as a language: diatonic, chromatic, atonal, modal. This deeper understanding of harmony as a whole system rather than just an element under the melody leads to a better understanding of the work, and its structure and context.[223]

Next, Casella states that it is essential to know about the composer and the work's context, historically, culturally and musically. Understanding context can feed into one's knowledge of harmony, form, and

[220] Ibid, 4, 5
[221] Alfred Cortot, *Studies in Musical Interpretation*, ed. Jeanne Thieffry and trans. Robert Jacques (London: George G Harrap & Co Ltd, 1937), 16.
[222] Casella, *articolo sull'interpretazione*, 7, 8.
[223] Ibid, 8.

stylistic convention. Understanding a composer's national identity can also aid interpretation and elucidating a work's character. Once these more 'concrete' elements surrounding a work have been understood, then they can clarify the character and feeling of the work: 'each [performer's] sensitivity is different, and therefore individual interpretations are no less different than each individual interpreter.'[224] It is interesting to note that Casella's three main elements for constructing an interpretation of a work are extremely similar to the three elements used to analyse his compositional style (musical elements, context, and potential external links). This in itself supports the idea that understanding style leads to better interpretation, and constructing a good interpretation can lead to a better understanding of style – both of which are realised through performance.

Casella's concluding remark is that interpretation is a 'sonorous discourse' realised solely through performance.[225] All the various elements considered within the construction of an interpretation can only make sense when they are performed – when the interpreter (who Casella here equates with the performer) makes them function as a whole. Important also in the last sentence of this excerpt is that Casella implies the musical work can only exist through performance:

> Those same elements, already "organised" by the composer, acquire their full value of art when […] the interpreter totally, concretely coordinates them, where each of the elements – big or small – is constantly thought of as a function of the whole, of that whole whose revelation through interpretation constitutes the unique truth of the musical work.[226]

What is Interpretation?

Unfortunately for us, the first page of Casella's article-sketch on interpretation is missing, and so we have no clear-cut definition of interpretation that we can use for this thesis. While the original plan for the article suggests Casella meant to include a definition of interpretation, we simply don't have it. We can form an idea of Casella's definition of interpretation through his concluding remarks. As mentioned above, interpretation is a 'sonorous discourse' or 'sonorous system' by which a work's meaning is conveyed by a performer. The latter part of this definition - 'by a performer' – is perhaps the most crucial part of the definition, as it places the performer as central to interpretation existing.

> In terms of interpretation, understanding and constructing are two sides of the same activity, and it is essential to conceive all interpretative work as a true construction [of a work], which establishes those countless and various elements in complete harmony, in a sonorous discourse

[224] Ibid, 9.
[225] Ibid, 23.
[226] Ibid, 22.

> that, little by little, unravels the essential content contained in those sounds. This 'discursiveness' is the supreme goal to which the interpreter must tend (as well as the composer).[227]

We thus further understand interpretation as comprising two things: the act of interpreting, and the outcome of this act; an interpretation. The act of interpreting is a discourse, or negotiation, between performer and composer – a sonorous 'discursiveness' – that results in a presentation of a work's true character, or essence. Secondly, an interpretation is the richest and best aesthetic performance possible by a performer of a work. Crucially, interpretation can only exist through performance. There are three elements that make up interpretation, that Casella mentions throughout his article, and which most performers would agree to: (i) the aims of the performer, (ii) the methods of fulfilling these aims, and (iii) the subsequent successes or failures of the resulting performance, which is judged against the aims. Let us unpack these three aspects a little, before comparing them with the scholarly literature existing on performance and interpretation.

When discussing the aims of the performer, we can return to what interpretation is: a performer's negotiation of composer, score, and sound to create the richest and best aesthetic representation of a work's character. This is the performer's aim. The building of an interpretation is a completely individual and subjective task, and is dependent on the interpreter correctly understanding the essence of the work they are to perform. However, this understanding of character will nominally be achieved by the various steps in constructing an interpretation: learning the notes, becoming intimate with the score and music, and understanding the context in which the work was created and the author. To pardon a somewhat cliché view, it is the awesome power of music that allows one performer to construct a fantastical character and narrative of a work, and another to construct a voice-leading based structural view of a work, and have both result in unique, contrasting, and – most importantly – valid interpretations of the same work. What the 'best possible interpretation' of a work is, is unique to each performer, and to each performance, and to each work they undertake.

It should be noted here that a valid interpretation may also be termed as acceptable, appropriate, correct, or suitable. I have tried to avoid using terms such as 'good' and 'bad' that imply value or judgement, such as the music critic might use. There are no good or bad interpretations, merely more or less successful – or appropriate – ones, depending on the listener. What is appropriate to experiment with in the practice room would not be successful in an exam setting. Nor would that same interpretation prepared for an exam necessarily be appropriate for a public recital. This is where the performer's aims come into play, and judging the successes of a performance against those aims and the outcomes. It also

[227] Ibid, 22, 23.

offers a framework to judge interpretation that is not necessarily based on personal aesthetic choices, but whether the aims of the performer were realised, and whether the character of the work was presented clearly to the listeners or not.

Just as there is no good or bad, so too is there no truly objective *best* interpretation, nor a *best* performance of a work. Each listener will have their own unique responses to those interpretations and existences of works, and their own judgement-value set for how they rate performances, performers and interpretations. However, it can be said that there are acceptable or relevant interpretations of works; and there are performances that contain no interpretation at all, as mentioned before. One can judge an interpretation acceptable or relevant if it adheres to all those elements listed as part of the methods of fulfilling and constructing an interpretation (i.e., meeting the performer's aims). Regardless of what aesthetic richness comes from a performance, there will be aesthetic richness and interpretation if all the methods and means of constructing an interpretation have been undertaken.

While many critics would argue that there are good or bad interpretations, this thesis posits that there are no *bad* interpretations, but merely appropriate or inappropriate ones (and also performances that contain no interpretation at all – displays). An interpretation is not bad – it is merely subjectively successful or not when judged against the performer's aims and the audience. The successes (or failures) of a performance can only be judged by the *hearer* of a performance, thus giving every performance an infinite number of adjudicators. It also means that the performer judges themselves – they *hear* their own performances, and are the best judge of whether they achieved the aims they set themselves. The success of a performance can be judged on several aspects: practice prior to a performance, and adhering to the rehearsed 'plan' for a performance; reactions and responses to a performance whilst it is on-going – both performed and external sounds, and both emotional and physical responses to sounds; and reflections on a performance in hindsight. Not all interpreters, or hearers, of a work will go through all these listening steps. Not all of these considerations are necessary to all hearers of a performance. Only the performer makes, plans, and responds as such, and only the performer can fully assess the successes of their aims against the planned performance. This is why the focus of this thesis is the performer.

Importantly, it should be noted that an interpretation and the aims of the performer are not simplistic, such as 'I want the piece to sound good,' 'the character is happy,' or 'I will interpret the work this way.' The performer's aims are constructed through a deep (and often non-verbal) understanding of various aspects of the work, thus constructing a detailed type of analysis and understanding. Just as it was difficult to outline a language to explain gesture, so too is it difficult to articulate the million micro-decisions that go into learning a work, and constructing and interpretation therein. Casella himself states this: while we cannot articulate every word of the interpretative and creative process of the performer, we can understand the steps they take to create an interpretation. From understanding how an

interpretation is formed, we can also elucidate what elements in the interpretation are objective (i.e., those that come from the score, and come from knowing the character of the work and the context and author of the work), and which are subjective (the interpreter's unique reaction and interpretation of the work's character).[228]

What is the best and richest aesthetically pleasing interpretation of a work that an individual performer can construct? Every listener of a work will have a different response to hearing a work. Taste is conditioned and subjective, and formed in relation to our personal, unique experiences.[229] No two people will experience a performance in the same way, whether because of their emotional and cognitive differences, or simply because they are hearing the work from two different physical places in a space, thus rendering the aural experiences differently. How we individually relate to, understand, and know the character of a work, and sounds in general, influences taste. Regardless of musical knowledge or expertise, and the piece being performed, the success of an interpretation is dependent on the individual listener. The interpretations of Casella's works presented alongside this thesis are subjective interpretations. The recordings submitted alongside this thesis are a way in which his works may be interpreted and heard, but they are not the only way. In fact, the central aim of this thesis is not to present the 'best' interpretation of these works, but to open the discussion on different ways Casella's works could be interpreted (and analysed). These recordings are not the best-ever possible interpretation of the selected works. But they are judged as successful interpretations with the best and richest possible interpretation from a specific performer based on when and how they were recorded, and the aims set by the performer.

Does a Performance Constitute an Interpretation?

This term 'display' that keeps arising leads us to the very important question of what constitutes an interpretation, and whether all performances contain interpretations. The easy is no, not all performances contain an interpretation.

An interpretation cannot exist if all the means of constructing one have not been undertaken. Even the performer who has the most intimate knowledge of the score, and who has considered their own interpretative and aesthetic response to a work, cannot claim to be fully or knowledgably interpreting if they have not explored the context surrounding a work and a composer. Similarly, whilst a performer

[228] Casella, *articolo sull'interpretazione,* 20.

[229] Arnie Cox discusses the subjectivity of experience, and subsequently taste, in music in their paper "Tripartite Subjectivity in Music Listening," *Indiana Theory Review* (Spring 2012, Vol. 30, No. 1), 1-43, accessed 27th May 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24045414, 29.
Similarly, we can draw on Kant and Adorno, and ideas of subjectivity and objectivity in music, and in the listening experience of music. David Kaufmann notes that aesthetic experiences can be both subjective and objective in his article "Matters of Taste" *Monatshefte,* Vol. 94, No. 1 (Spring, 2002), 67-79, accessed 27th May 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/30161950, 67.

may know all the details about a work's origin and context if they have simply been taught – or are replicating – the intricacies of the score, and have not bothered to understand the structural and expressive shapes within the music for themselves, then it cannot be a true interpretation. Without any of these means of constructing interpretation, the performance is merely a display.

Many times we see students flawlessly mimic and copy the gestures of their teachers. This is not an interpretation, but a display, a replica of someone else's interpretation. An interpretation must also include the personal response of the performer to the music and sounds therein, not copies or mimicry. A display of a work is simply a performance without individual, unique interpretation. There are many performances that do not contain interpretations. This, importantly, is not meant to be a value judgement on performances without interpretation. Performances may be displays for various reasons: if a student has learned the 'interpretation' from their teacher, then it is not their individual interpretation – it is not an interpretation at all, but a reproduction or display of someone else's interpretation. If a performer within an ensemble follows a conductor and has no choice regarding critical interpretative thinking about their performance, that performance is just a display of a work, and not an interpretation. One could say that many (younger and less expert) performers play without interpretation, given that their learning process is consumed by getting the notes right and following the score. Without synthesising the inner character and possible meanings, and the rich possibilities of what the symbols in the score could mean or sound like, this type of performance is also a form of display. These are just three examples of different kinds of displays.

What constitutes an interpretation could simply be answered as a performance of a work where an interpretation is present. Yet quantifying this answer is relatively difficult. Performance, simply, is an act of bringing 'life' to a piece of music – actualising the sounds implied by the signs in the score.[230] Deciding whether a performance includes an interpretation can only be judged by the listeners (both the audience and the performer themselves), as to whether the essence of the work has been successfully conveyed and communicated through the performance in question. While a performance is the truest possible existence of a work, it may not truly convey style or character, or be void of interpretation.

Two things need further discussion from this definition of performance: what makes a good performance (including how an interpretation is constructed within that), and, secondly, what would Casella have thought makes a good performance? If we look first to 'good performance' during Casella's time, and the performer's role, we have two different approaches we could take: that of Stravinsky, and the idea that performers should play what's written, and that of Cortot, who preached

[230] Jonathan Dunsby, "Performance" *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 27th May 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43819.

that the performer should interpret the music beautifully, and with a poetic understanding of the work.[231] Although this somewhat reduces pianistic styles during the early twentieth century, it is representative of the two general schools of thought. Stravinsky is famously noted as saying that performers should do what the music tells them to, and should not interpret, but simply play. Many others, such as Ravel, similarly believed there was no need for interpretation, and that everything the performer needed was in the score. Ravel decreed "I do not ask for my music to be interpreted, only to be played," while Stravinsky criticised interpretation for revealing "the personality of the interpreter rather than that of the author," as good performance should.[232] Cortot, conversely, viewed performance as an extremely expressive and personal task, where the performer was free to bring out voices, tempi, and dynamics with as much freedom as the work allowed, provided that the performer understood the history, context, and appropriate approaches to a work.[233] Freedom of expression and interpretation was central to Cortot. Stravinsky's idea to only play what is in the score is dangerous. It is easy to say 'play only what is written', but to actualise this is so much more difficult. Importantly, neither Stravinsky nor Ravel were able to stick to the strictness of their own scores. In recordings and archival sources left by both composers, their recordings are full of liberties that do not appear in the score. Thus, we do not know what a 'good performance' would constitute as according to Casella, based on his peers.

Casella respected and admired both Cortot and Stravinsky, placing him in the middle of the debate. Let us see which side he took. Well, one may say, why not look to Casella recordings, and the recordings of his pupils? Surely they will indicate how Casella interpret music. This is a valid proposition until one actually listens to the recordings of Casella and his students. There is one solo recording of Casella at the piano, which is a collection of his solo performances and duets with Ottorino Respighi from 1925.[234] He performs *Inezie* Op. 32, *Pezzi Infantili* Op. 35, and *Deux contrastes* Op. 31. Similarly to the previously mentioned recordings by Stravinsky and Ravel, Casella does not follow his own score. At the end of the second movement of *Inezie*, he performs a chord marked ***pp*** with a hard, loud accent (more like ***ff***). There are various other discrepancies through the recording, such notes not coming exactly together between the hands, dynamic markings being ignored, changes in tempi (accellerandi and ritenuti where none are marked), and articulations used that contrast what is written in the score. In

[231] Stephen Walse, "Stravinsky, Igor" *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 27th May 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.52818.
Cortot, *Studies in musical interpretation*, 19.

[232] Ravel and Stravinsky in Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 187.
Hamilton goes on to say that these views were 'not entirely realisable in practice (as Stravinsky's very different recordings of his own pieces unintentionally succeed in demonstrating). For many composers and performers, the idea of even trying completely to remove "the personality of the interpreter" would have been a puzzling aim that might well have impoverished rather than enriched a performance. Busoni went so far as to claim that any notation of music is a transcription of an originally abstract sonic idea, and every performance of this inevitably inexact notation is, like it or not, a further transcription – a view explicitly supported by Arnold Schoenberg, who used it to defend Mahler's retouching of the orchestration of Beethoven's symphonies.'

[233] Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: A Historical Perspective*, Second Edition (London: Kahn & Averill, 1999), 44, 45.

[234] Ottorino Respighi and Alfredo Casella, *The Composer as Pianist*, The Calwell Collection Volume 7, Pierian, PIERIAN0024, 1925 piano roll, accessed 18th July 2019, https://rcm-nml3-naxosmusiclibrary-com.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/catalogue/item.asp?cid=PIR0024.

Pezzi Infantili, the opening *Preludio* movement begins with the hands entirely out of sync with each other – one would think there is a demi-semiquaver syncopation, rather than quavers coming together, as is notated. Across all three pieces, there is a sense that Casella is performing the works as fast as possible. Casella rushes through the *Pezzi Infantili*, and gives little heed to phrasing or resonance. All the movements are like this: seemingly, as fast as possible, and with little thought to exactness of coordination, phrasing or resonance. Casella's students' recordings of his works show a similar rushed and non-expressive nature. The most notable recording of Casella's works is by Lya de Barberiis.[235] Most of the pieces are played as quickly as possible, and without apparent interpretative consideration given. There is no variance in expression, character, or dynamics between the pieces. One would think from this recording that Casella had only one compositional *maniere*, rather than three, and that his only pedagogical output was velocity.

Why would someone who writes so eloquently on the individual nature of performance and interpretation perform in a way that seems devoid of much interpretation, other than the goal of going fast? Why would someone pound and plough their way through works that have so much latent potential in the score for beauty, reflection, and expression, and which show off such an intimate knowledge of the resonance and potential for the contrasting sounds of the piano? We can find the answer outside of Casella, in his historical context. It was the Italian – and arguably Fascist – style to play as fast as possible.[236] The fascist aesthetic was to be aggressive, loud, and strong, and this seems to have manifested – in pianism at least – in playing works as fast as possible. But there is more to this. Both Casella and de Schloezer's articles were part of a larger discussion on aesthetics, and what the nature of the work was. Casella was situated within, and entirely aware of, this larger debate on aesthetics occurring in 1930s Italy between idealist post-Hegelian philosophers Bendetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile.

Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944) was the self-titled philosopher of Fascism, and a member of the Italian Senate during the Fascist Regime. He ghost-wrote *The Doctrine of Fascism* for Mussolini, and his philosophies helped form many of the defining features of the Fascist government, including the dictatorship elements. He believed in rejecting individualism, and instead embracing collectivism and the state as the centre of authority and place where all loyalty should be given. Largely, his view on art and 'the work' was that there was but one existence of the work – an objective existence. It was self-conscious in its creation.[237] Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) was another Italian philosopher important to

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[235] Lya de Barberiis, *Casella: L'intergrale dell'opera per pianoforte*, Nova Fonit Centra, 1974, accessed 18th July 2019, https://open.spotify.com/album/1dLujGb5T1iDUJdexqys8G?si=qBT1KOD1SPmXk-UmRCRibw.

[236] This has been garnered from recordings, and my analysis of recordings made by pianists from this period, including Casella and his students.

[237] Ben Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola,* 159.
Margerita Anselmi, "Interpretazione musicale: esecuzione o creazione?" *A Duevoci,* (2020), accessed 21st February 2021, https://aduevoci.org/2020/02/02/interpretazione-musicale-esecuzione-o-creazione/.

aesthetic discourse during Casella's life. Croce initially supported Fascism, but rejected the dictatorial nature of the regime. He was also a member of the Italian Senate, but voted against Gentile on most issues during Fascism, particularly the rights to free elections and freedom of anti-Fascist intellectuals. Croce was a liberalist, and believed in 'immanentism' and individual human experience. He was interested in aesthetics throughout his career, and set forth a theory of art that positioned it as the most important discipline, that all human knowledge can be reduced to imaginative and intuitive knowledge and that beauty is a representation or recreation by the artist of their imagination. Most crucially, Croce argued that art expresses emotions, and not ideas of a singular nature or existence, and that expression was achieved through a conscious process.[238]

Croce and Gentile can be seen as exemplar of two sides of the aesthetic coin; Croce arguing that a work's existence was entirely subjective and expressive of an individual's emotions and feelings, and Gentile arguing that there is but one existence of a work, the work's meaning is objective and true and individuals either correctly or incorrectly express this meaning. Casella – or at least his sketch-article on interpretation – seems to sit in the middle of this: the work's meaning, or character, is objective and inherent in the written source, but the interpretation and experience of the work by the interpreter and listener is subjective. Thus, we understand 'good performance' in the time of Casella.

How does this compare to current views on good performance and performing? Similarly to style, there is a wealth of literature about performing and good performance, although little of it written by the performers that fill the world's great concert halls. Importantly, this is not an attack on musicologists writing about performing. Practice-research is still not always greeted wholeheartedly by performers. There has, and still is, a great rift between performers' and analysts' views on what good performance, and thus good interpretation, is, what it involves, and the best methods for forming an interpretation of a work. Much separates the performer and the analyst.[239] This is not just manifest in the ways in which they present and express their findings (performing versus writing), but also in what they find (possibilities versus apparent truths). This thesis does not try to heal the rift between traditional scholarship and performance; that is something no individual piece of research can achieve without a collective shift in thought within music academia from all disciplines. However, it should be noted that the practice involved in this research has been given equal weight to the score analysis and, as said previously, that performance is the best and fullest possible realisation of the style and interpretation of a work. The multidimensional and multifaceted expertise of the performer – which is tactile, analytical, and intuitive – should never be forgotten.

[238] Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, 158.
[239] Lester, "Performance and analysis," 197.
Rothstein, "Analysis and the act of performance," 218.

As a pianist, I already know some of the ways of constructing both a good performance and interpretation. Through understanding how pianists learn a work, can we see how performers construct interpretations and performances. Thus, the literature selected for this thesis has been limited to interrogate only a select few scholars: those seen as 'leading in the field' of performance-research regarding Classical Music, such as Rink, Cook, and Kivy. These same authors were also referenced throughout the section on Style, and attempt to link style and interpretation. While all three give invaluable contributions to how we can think about music and interpretation, they fail to place the performer, or performance as an important part of realising interpretation. Similarly to them ignoring the performer's experience of tactility in style, and stylistic analysis through playing, they fail to negotiate interpretation as a thing constructed through performance.[240] While it is likely that this is not their intention, these authors seem to posit performance as an afterthought to analyses of style and interpretation.

Cook is a case-and-point example of one who tries to position performance as central to his writing, and yet fails to convince us that performance is truly equal to the score. He posits that 'thinking about music as performance' is necessary for analysis and interpretation, and notes the that analysis and performance feed into one another.[241] This is a u-turn on his as his previous, analysis- and score-centric texts. Cook grapples with the idea of the musical work as an objective whole, and performance as being an opportunity for subjective, expressive and interpretative experimentation by performers.[242] Yet ever the musicologist prevails: there are many traces of the authority of the analyst present in his writing, tracing all the way back to Schenker: 'the composer has a vision of the work as an organic whole, and […] the performer's primary duty is to create it.'[243]

Rink similarly argues in favour of the performer, yet like Cook, succumbs to the legacy of analysis and score-based authority. He does support the intuitive and conscious expertise of the performer, and notes the link of analysis within performance:

> It cannot be denied that the interpretation of music requires decisions – conscious or otherwise – about the contextual functions of particular musical features and the means of projecting them. […] Such decisions might well be intuitive and unsystematic, but not necessarily: most

[240] Cook, *Beyond the Score,* 10.
[241] Ibid, 10.
[242] Cook, "The Conductor and the Theorist," 106.
[243] Ibid, 107
In his work *Music as Creative Practice,* there are many echoes of the 'composer's alter ego' being heralded as central to the performed existence of a work.
Cook, *Music as Creative Practice*, 156.

> performers carefully consider how the music 'works' and how to overcome its various conceptual challenges. That process is in many respects an analytical one.[244]

While Rink does give the performer credit for analysing a work through learning to create a good performance and interpretation, there are still echoes of scholars such as Dunsby and Berry. Throughout many of his texts, score-based analysis is positioned as crucial to a *good* performance, suggesting, like Dunsby, that the best performer are indebted to the 'exceptional intelligence' of musicologists whose analyses they use to form their own understanding of works.[245] Similarly, Rink hints that the performer is a critic rather than analyst, suggesting like Cone that performance is an 'implied act of criticism' rather interpretation or analysis.[246] While all these scholars note that understanding musical structures and symbols is not the same as understanding the performing of music, none seem to allow performance to be a driving force equal to score-based analysis. Rink himself highlights this, noting that performers' analyses are difficult to discuss and quantify, as they are themselves 'an integral part of the performing process.'[247] It seems that many musicologists cannot escape the implications of Schenker, Tovey, and various other analysts who give authority to the score and the composer, rather than to those who actualise and perform it. As Cumming and Le Guin highlighted, the analysts and musicologists are loath to invert the hierarchy of music research, and place performance on top.

Too often we see those who try to reconcile performance and analysis focussing on the written text, rather than performance practice. Too frequently do we see analysts turning to focus on one specific element of a work rather than the sounds of the work as a whole. So many analysts, such as Dart, Cone, and Berry, focus on structural elements rather than the work as a whole, or how these structures are realised in sound and relate to the act of performance.[248] Works do not exist in a vacuum, and cannot be realised through purely structural or analytical means. As Casella notes, they require an understanding of the inner character of the work, and expressing and interpreting this as an individual performer.

The last analyst worth noting is Peter Kivy, who began to interrogate descriptions and analyses of music earlier than Rink and Cook, and sits in a somewhat different seat. Kivy's reflections seem to note that there can never be full reconciliation between analysis and performance, partly because of the misconstrued notions each discipline has of the other, and because he is not a performer. He is critical of analysis, noting that 'description is often a form of flattery, which perhaps explains why we are so

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[244] John Rink, "Analysis and (or?) Performance". 50.
[245] Jonathan Dunsby, *Performing Music: Shared Concerns* (New York: Oxford Uni Press 1995), 5.
[246] Edward Cone, "The Pianist as Critic" in Rink *The Practice of Performance*, 241.
[247] Rink, "Analysis and (or?) performance," 36.
[248] Cone, *The Composer's voice*.
Thurston Dart, *The Interpretation of Music* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1978).
Wallace Berry, *Musical Structure and Performance* (London: Yale University Press, 1989).

fond of describing works of art' and specifically describing famous and audience-favourite works rather than the obscure.[249] Kivy notes that discussions on interpretation isolate analysts and musicologists, leaving 'a large and worthy musical community [aka performers and audiences] completely out in the cold.'[250] This is perhaps the most important part of the issue of reconciling performance research with performance: not only does this research not adequately address and work with performers, but it also alienates and excludes (just as stylistic analysis does). Moreover, Kivy importantly notes that it is the heard experience of music that makes it meaningful, and discusses the success of a performance not being directly linked to the score, but being linked to the performer, and the context of the work.[251] Kivy sets out a good proposal on what a good performance is or contains: faithfulness to the composer's performance intentions (i.e., what is on the score and what the composer would have meant by those symbols given their time/place/historical context), faithfulness to the sounds produced because of the symbols, and finally faithfulness to the performer's own self and reactions to the symbols and sounds.[252] Most resoundingly, Kivy reminds us that just as historians write interpretations of histories, so too do musicologists write interpretations of works. No one except the composer can claim to know the absolute truth about a work.

Learning Repertoire: a Means of Linking Analysis to Performance and Interpretation

The views of various musicologists on performing and interpreting have been outlined. We have Casella's view on how to construct a good interpretation. We have a negotiated view of good performance by selecting elements of academic discourse from respected scholars. But let us not forget the performer, as we have accused our esteemed musicologists and analysts of doing! By investigating the practice and process of learning a work that a performer undertakes to get to a performance, we can attempt to further the discourse on performance research and practice. The following section is self-reflective: while it is written from a general, third-person perspective, it is my perspective and comes from my own experiences as a performer. I am – first and foremost – a pianist, and a performance researcher second. The piano is the first place I begin thinking about a work, and is essential to how I understand a work, and construct interpretations. Some steps of learning a work, such as the endless repetitions to accumulate muscle memory, have not been detailed, as they are self-explanatory

What is meant by "learning" a work? There are two aspects to learning a work: the physical sense of knowing a work (physically being able to play a work, and knowing how to press all the correct keys and pedals at the correct times); and the intimate sense: understanding an acceptable way in which to

[249] Kivy, *The Corded Shell. Reflections on Musical Expression* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 3
[250] Ibid, 8.
[251] Kivy, *The Fine Art of Repetition. Essays in the Philosophy of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 199), 26, 122.
[252] Kivy, *Authenticities,* 6, 7.

press those keys at those times. The first part of this "learning" – the repetitive practice – does not warrant much discussion. It is what happens during the second part of learning that is interesting: the synthesising and internalising of the score that demonstrate analysis and an interpretation.

No experienced performer could seriously say that they give no thought to the various musical elements within a work when learning a piece. Whilst they may not categorise their thoughts such as the analyst does, there is definitely a consideration of those same elements. Of course the performer considers time and key signatures, tempo, form and structure, expressive language, and voicing and texture when learning a work. While the manner in which they think about this may not be consciously at the forefront of their "learning journey" through a work, they are – and must be – considered for the work to be performed with any sort of 'correctness'. Similarly, while these categories and elements are considered, they are considered with the intention of conveying that information through *performance*, and not through textual, analytical means designed to be written and read, such as the musicologist might.

There are other considerations that the performer will make that the analyst will not because of the medium of sound. The most obvious of these is texture. As was discussed to some degree in the preamble on style, and understanding the various elements in style, texture is more than just the number of voices at any time within a score. Similarly, there is more to style than just voices. When discussing piano music in particular, one must consider pedal as a part of texture, and the various nuances and extensive ranges of textures available through the different pedals that are also dependent on register, voicing and tempo. While the analyst may theorise about texture, the reality is that texture – when written – can only be theorised and hypothesised, and that texture is dependent on *hearing* a work. One only need think of Bach, and the contrast between the written texture of the *48 Preludes and Fugues* and contrast to the literally thousands of differing performances and recordings of these works to see how texture actualises itself through performance, and not through written, perceived visual texture from a score.

Similar to this are tempo and dynamics. The choice of these elements – whilst indicated in the score – are highly subjective and dependent on the performer and their aesthetic choices, as well as the historical context of the composition itself. One only need to look to Beethoven's piano sonatas to see how a range of tempi can be interpreted differently, and yet all be appropriate. Similarly, dynamic markings have no fixed value, and are entirely dependent on context. Whether performing, listening to a live performance, or listening to a pre-recorded work, dynamics, and the heard experience of them, are entirely dependent on the context. What is forte without piano? What is a crescendo without a diminuendo? The answer is, in short, nothing. For these musical elements to exist, other concepts must also exist for them to define themselves against.

This is not to say that there are no definite and fixed properties in the written score. Of course, time and key signatures and fixed pitch values (the notes) exist on the page. There is definiteness in what the composer has written, otherwise we would not be able to know that the thousands of recordings of Bach's *48* are all recordings of the same works. A definiteness, or sense of concreteness in shape also comes from the performance traditions behind a certain work, and the work's historical context. Once again, if we look to Bach, there are many acceptable ways in which to approach performing Bach, and many ways as well in which performers can differentiate themselves from others through the various performance choices they make (such as dynamics, tempo, textures, and phrasing, to name a few).

Performers come to know a work beyond just the notes and tactile shapes and movements, but also how they decide and fix upon these expressive and performative choices for a specific work. This is where the balance of subjective and objective interpretation comes into the learning process. As mentioned before, pedal, dynamics, and expressive language can be interpreted and used in a myriad of ways by the performer. How these elements will be employed is based on several things: the performer's conditioning and aesthetic tastes and penchants, and the work in question. Interpretation is a negotiation of these elements, and a negotiation of what the composer commands, what the performer wants, and what is possible through sound. There are many moments in Casella's music where a bass note is sustained throughout many bars, and where one would assume use of the middle sostenuto pedal. But what if the passage is also marked ***ppp***? What if the performer thinks *una corda* is also needed? What if the piano being performed on only has two pedals? All these factors that go into the performance require negotiating not only the desires and needs of the performer and the work, but also negotiating these two things with the realities of sound. This is also just *one* example of the negotiations that the performer must undertake to create a good performance and an acceptable interpretation. To detail all of them would be to write an entire library's worth on performance and interpretation.

My Performance and Means of Constructing Interpretation

As stated previously, this thesis focuses on the perspective of the performer. The case studies presented in the second half of this thesis, and the recordings submitted in the appendices, are designed to present a perspective of Casella that is based on his own method of creating an interpretation. It is also founded on the interpretations and performances of one performer – me. Before going into the case studies, I think it pertinent to explain how I create an interpretation of a work, and how these recordings were done.

My Approach to Interpretation

My interpretive approach (for all music, not just Casella) can be understood through the following steps:

1. Playing the work: sightreading, hearing the notes as individual voices, then the voices combined (i.e., hands together)
2. Understanding the structure: working out individual phrases and overall structure of the work
3. Mastering the technical challenges (learning the notes, building muscle memory)
4. A. Structure part 2: working out the dynamic and expressive structures of the work, and how this maps onto the formal structure

   B. Context: looking to the history of the work and composer, listening to other performances/recordings, looking at the performance history of the work
5. Emotive/colour responses to phrases and larger sections: articulating and concretely mapping my own emotive/expressive profile to the work.

I do not start with the structure of the work, or a score analysis, or a contextual understanding of the work and composer. My interpretive process starts with the sounds and voices in the work, and responding therein (especially to textures). Much of my interpretation comes from the negotiation of textures – including those created with the pedal – in this initial stage. Those sounds and combinations of voices that I initially hear often form a strong foundation for the interpretive structure I form. Following this, I analyse the structure of the work, looking at individual phrases and phrase structure, but also the larger, overall form of the work. This then sets the parameters of my interpretation, so that structure and interpretation are linked. There is also a stage in my interpretation where I link tactility to structure and style: what gestures are being repeated, what are the physical demands of the work, and how are they linked to the overall style and interpretation of the piece. Once the notes have been learned, and my process is revolving less and less around building muscle memory, I revisit the structure of the work, looking at the dynamic and expressive structures within the work. This largely involves comparing my own expressive and interpretive responses to the sounds with what the composer has put in the score, and re-evaluating the expressive choices I am making. It is important that I critique my own expressive and dynamic responses to the notes and sounds, and look at how this compares with those commands the composer puts in the score. I then look to the history and context of the work and composer, and begin listening to other recordings. Rather than letting existing recordings and performances influence my approach to a work from the beginning, I do not do this until I have learned the notes. While the history of a work and composer, and how others have interpreted and performed the work, is important, I do not want my interpretation to be prematurely influenced.

Throughout the learning process, I develop a colour-scape, story-board, or emotive-scape that corresponds to the various phrases and structures of a work. This is a narrative-based approach to interpretation. I conceptually construct my own structure of the work internally throughout the learning

process. However, it is not until the final stage that I formalise and cement my own structure: my conceptualisation of the work is flexible throughout the learning process. My process of constructing an interpretation is evolutionary and progressive.

The Case-Study Recordings

Given the nature of the research, and the evolving focus and structure of my thesis, the works to be discussed were not fully decided upon until the middle of my second year (around May 2019). I had originally intended to submit a recording of two recitals as part of my research, rather than recordings of the specific works submitted as appendices to a written thesis. I had wanted to do two lecture-recital type concerts, one featuring the *Toccata*, *Sonatina,* and *Pezzi Infantili* alongside various Debussy and Rachmaninov Preludes. The second concert was to be the *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata,* and *Sei Studi* alongside Franck's *Prelude, Chorale e Fugue* and Ravel's *Jeux d'eau.* These would have been to demonstrate the external influences on Casella throughout his life, and also to showcase how Casella's music is just as technically difficult and expressively commanding as these other composers. However, due to continual lockdowns, I subsequently had to make the decision to record rather than publicly perform these works. Recording a performance and doing a recording are very different. Performing is unique: there is the rush of adrenaline, the simultaneous fear and thrill of not just performing the work itself, but the audience's reception of the work, and there is the alluring challenge of managing mistakes and responding in real time when the notes don't sound as planned.

After a year spent preparing for live performances, it was a heavy blow to accept that I would not be able to record these works in the way that I had intended and wanted. It also created a different set of problems and considerations: do attempt single or multi-track takes? How do I manage page turns of works where previously I would have had a page-turner? Do I record as a single take, or allow myself a certain number of 'takes' per piece? How do I treat multimovement works? Recording the works and how they are captured in these recordings produced a very different sound than I had planned for in performing them. As I have stated, this is one possible interpretation of Casella's works, meant to demonstrate style, influence, and possibilities for interpretation and performance. Just as this thesis hopes to open avenues of discussion for Casella, so too does it hope to create more opportunities for his works to be performed. Perhaps the best thing to come out of this thesis will be future performances of Casella by myself, in the situation and space that I originally intended, and to see how that compares with the recordings submitted here.

Part 3: Case Studies of Casella's Music

At the very beginning of this research back in January 2018, I set about learning all of Casella's piano works. This was my entry into this research, and the best initial method of understanding his music from a broad perspective. How better to come to understand this repertoire and this composer than by learning how his music feels and sounds, and the technical and expressive challenges therein. Originally I had conceived a different structure in which to present this research discussing Casella's piano works, but given the scope of repertoire Casella wrote, it would have been exhaustive to write (and read). It also ran the risk of only offering a superficial, shallower understanding of Casella's music, thus not making a strong enough case for Casella. Therefore, once I had learned all the piano works, and completed a stylistic analysis of them, I decided that case studies of five select works would better exemplify the beauty, nuance, and complexity within Casella's music.

The five works chosen for the case studies are:

- *Toccata* Op. 6, 1904
- *Sonatina* Op. 28, 1916
- *Undici pezzi infantili,* Op. 32 1920
- *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op. 59, 1936, and
- *Sei Studi* Op. 70, 1944

These works were chosen for several reasons. They have not been written about extensively (with the exception of *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* being the focal point of two other doctoral theses).[253] The majority of literature pertaining to specific piano works by Casella focuses on his *Nove Pezzi* Op. 24 (1914) and *A Notte Alta* Op. 30 (1917).[254] There is little discussion of his early or late works, only those that focus on his music written during the First World War and his emigration back to Italy in 1915. This literature does offer a stylistic analysis of Casella, but only for singular pieces. Thus there is the need to explore repertoire from across his oeuvre, and investigate works written outside this period.

Toccata Op. 6 is Casella's first concert-worthy piano composition. It is dazzling, immense, and even virtuosic in places. It demonstrates Casella's early, immature compositional style – unrefined, but ambitious – and shows his 'borrowed' elements most obviously. The influence of his Parisian circle,

[253] Nancy Copeland, *The New Classicism: Alfredo Casella's* Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata *Op. 59,* DMA Dissertation. Accessed 29th May 2021.,https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc332281/m2/1/high_res_d/1002782932-Copeland.pdf.
Warren Lengel, *An Analysis of* Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata *by Alfredo Casella*, PhD thesis, 1956, accessed 29th May 2021, https://urresearch.rochester.edu/institutionalPublicationPublicView.action?institutionalItemId=32931&versionNumber=1.
[254] Ben Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, 16-20.
Fontanelli, *Casella, Parigi e la Guerra.* 16, 164-170.

particularly Debussy and Enescu, is clear. It is also the most enjoyable of Casella's works to play and perform.

Sonatina Op. 28 was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it is Casella's most avant-garde and original work. It is a collage featuring borrowed elements from Bartók and Stravinsky, demonstrating his expanding understanding of 'Modernism' beyond Paris. There are aural factors that make us think of war, machine guns, and artillery tanks through rhythmic motifs. The second *Minuetto* movement demonstrates the haunting atonal beauty that Casella was capable of. It is also one of two sonata-type works that he wrote (the other being *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op. 59). Secondly, the archival sources pertaining to this work shows Casella's three-step process most clearly. Originally, the work was to be a four-movement sonata, but was edited and published as a shorter, three-movement work. The *Sonatina* is also one of Casella's more difficult works to grapple with as a performer. It is such a challenge for the performer to build a cohesive interpretation of the work as one entity.

The *Undici pezzi infantili* offer a yet another facet of Casella: Casella at his simplest. Many sources argue that this work signals Casella's mature and third compositional *manièra*, and it is commonly used to label him as a neoclassicist. While the movements are all simple, they are more a midway point, rather than a final destination, in his compositional style. They are cute, quirky, and playful. But most importantly, they demonstrate Casella's ability to borrow from historical musical forms and traditions, rather than borrowing from specific composers. Each movement explores a form or structure briefly, using all the conventional elements of that specific form or genre. But they also present Casella's sound-world: parallel movement between chords and voices, repeated harmonic intervals as the foundations of harmony, and mixed tonalities that oscillate between diatonic, modal, and atonal.

One could not write a comprehensive stylistic overview of Casella without discussing *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op. 59. It is Casella's only overtly fascist piano work. The biographical and historical context of Casella writing this work is fascinating, coming in period directly after he was attacked in the press following the Anti-Modernist Manifesto 1932. It was written for the 1936 *Festival internazionale di musica contemporanea*. It is also Casella's second attempt at a piano sonata, directly referencing Beethoven's sonatas. The compositional process for this work is also unique. It was perhaps the most difficult piece to learn – there are so many notes. The sheer size and length of the work make it monstrous, but there is the added difficult of tonality, and wrestling with the continually modulating atonalism which is so hard to get one's ears around. Unlike other atonal and dissonant works by Casella, there is little obvious beauty.

Finally, *Sei Studi* Op. 70 was chosen as it is Casella's last work for piano. After the monstrosity of the *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata*, it seems like a return to normalcy in both compositional process and style.

Casella returns to the shorter form composition that he is more comfortable with. He returns also to compose a work that is pianistic and expressive, rather than just monumental and difficult. They seem to show Casella settled with his compositional style. Similarly to the *Undici pezzi infantili*, the studies are each based on a singular idea of motif that is repeated and developed throughout the movement. Each of them present different facets of Casella's sound-world. Being his last work for piano, and his penultimate work overall, also made them seem important to include. Casella knew he was unwell, and likely knew that these would be towards the end of his compositional output.

I have not included the performance history of these works.[255] For the majority of his works, Casella premiered them himself when touring and performing (excluding the *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata*, and *Sei Studi*). This thesis is not a study into historical performances of Casella's music, or Casella's performance style. Each case study tells the story of the works: how and when they were composed, and when they came to be published. It then details the stylistic features of the work, explaining where various features are borrowed from, and rationalising the various functional elements in the music. The character of each work is also presented, with discussion as to how performers might interpret the sounds and stylistic features. Each case-study has an accompanying recording of the work that presents this possible interpretation. This is one method of understanding Casella, and one way of interpreting and subsequently performing his works.

[255] This is partially because I was not able to access the Catalogo Critico di Fondo Casella when writing most of these case studies (due to the Covid-19 pandemic). There is a discography of Casella's piano works included in the appendices, where you can see a list of recordings of his various works. Yet it is also because this thesis is about my interpretation and performance, and a contemporary view on Casella, not a historical one. I did not want to focus on how other people had interpreted Casella's music, especially when I was not able to interview them and discuss their interpretive choices. Instead, I wanted the focus to be on Casella now: means and methods of how performers can respond to and interpret his music now, and specifically focus on the scores themselves, rather than the tradition of performance.

Case Study 1: Toccata Op. 6, 1904

Toccata Op. 6 is Casella's third solo piano work, and the piano concert-worthy piece he wrote. His compositional style is adolescent in this work, but does demonstrate a complexity indicative of a composer coming into his own. 1904 was the beginning of Casella's career both as a performer and composer. It was also the year Casella's mother Maria moved back to Italy, and he was finally free to be an independent young man.[256] The *Toccata* was also written during the last years of the 'Golden Age' of pianism, and Casella's own golden years in Paris where Impressionism was blooming.[257] It comes from a time in his life where he was a sponge to the music around him. Casella's time in Paris was undeniably important as to his compositional development.

Compositional Process of the *Toccata*

As noted previously, Casella scholars are unfortunate in that little archival material or sketches for works from before 1909. We have scant primary sources relating to the *Toccata* other than published editions.[258] Yet, there are three sources that help us hypothesise a narrative for the Toccata's creation. The first is Ricordi & Co's catalogue entry of the *Toccata* in their historical archive. This is a hand-written completed manuscript (nominally of the entire *Toccata*) housed in Milan. While we do not have access to the entire manuscript itself, the preview offered online offers various details (Figure 13).[259] There are also two different published editions of the work that we can access.

[256] Letters between Casella and Maria Bordino Casella, *Corrispondenti,* Fondo Casella, Istituto per la music, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia.
[257] Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 11, 12.
[258] Alfredo Casella, *Toccata* Op. 6 (Milan: Ricordi and Co, 1918), appendix 5, accessed 4th November 2019, http://ks.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/7/7b/IMSLP10557-Casella_(1910)_op06_Toccata.pdf.
[259] "Toccata | Archivio Storico Ricordi," Archivio Storico Ricordi, accessed 4th November 2019, https://www.digitalarchivioricordi.com/en/partiture/933.
I have contacted Ricordi and Co several times about getting copies of this score. From the last contact I had with them in October 2019, they were happy for me to come view the score in person. However, due to Covid-19 I was unable to travel to Italy as planned in 2020 or 2021, and so unable to access the entire archival source. Ricordi & Co. refused to give a digital copy of the score to me when requested.

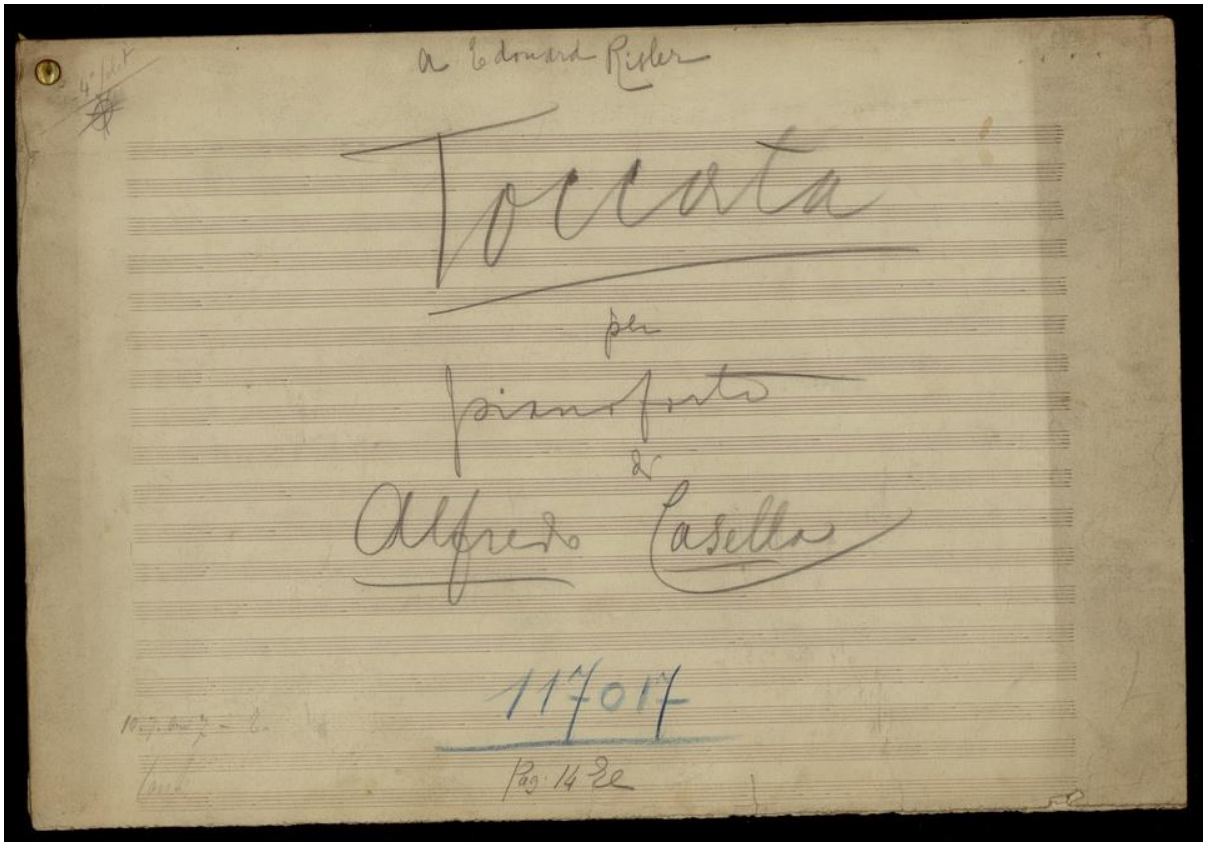


Figure 13: The online preview of the Toccata available through the Ricordi & Co Website

There are a number of things evident here. First is the date '4 Juliet' in the top left corner – presumably the date the work was either started or completed by Casella. We move across the top of the page and see the dedication to Edouard Risler. After the big title in Casella's hand is '117017', the plate number written in blue (nominally added by an editor, and not Casella), and underneath this is the number of pages of the score (14).[260] One final thing: in the bottom left-hand corner appears another marking that is extremely faint: possibly '10-7' followed by some other inscriptions. It is unclear from the digital reproduction exactly what this inscription is, but it could hint to either the opus number or the date the work was completed (especially if the date in the top left corner is a commencement date of composition). Although it does not offer much, this front page of the manuscript score does highlight two important details when compared with the published editions. Firstly, we can hypothesise that the dating in the top left corner refers to when Casella began composing the work, and that the '10-7' in the lower left hand corner indicates a completion date, at least of a first sketch or draft. When we look to the published score, we see that at the very end of score there is a sign-off saying 'Parigi, dicembre 1904' (Figure 14 below). Thus, we can hypothesise that between July and December 1904, Casella edited and revised the *Toccata*. The second thing we can observe is the plate number, present in both

[260] Interestingly enough, Ricordi & Co list the score as only consisting of nine pages in their archives, suggesting that pages have been lost.

the manuscript and published scores (Figures 13 and 14). The plate number was added by the editor. Although Casella dates the work as being completed in 1904, the plate number corresponds with a publication date in 1917-18.[261] In fact, when we look at Ricordi's archives and investigate the plate number, the work could not be published before early 1918, fourteen years after it was composed.

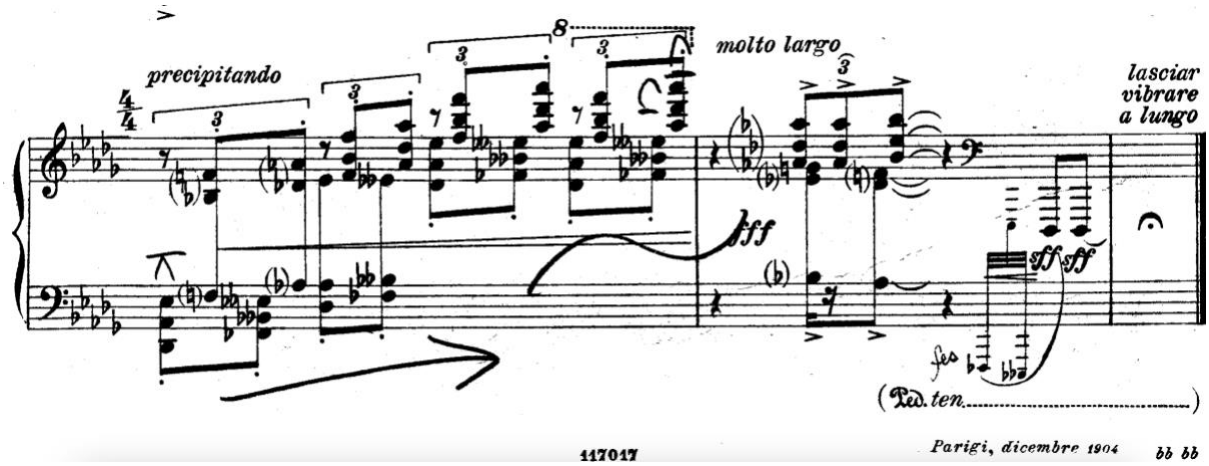


Figure 14: The date Casella completed the Toccata, and 1918 plate number in the published score

There are several possible explanations for why the *Toccata* was not published until 1918. The first and simplest reason is that Casella only sent Ricordi & Co. the score in 1917, or around this time, and thus it was only published then. However, one wonders why Casella would sit on a completed manuscript for fourteen years before sending it to a publisher. The second possibility is that Casella approached other publishing houses first who may have rejected the score. Casella, being disheartened that his work had been rejected, sat on the *Toccata* for several years, before finally sending the work to Ricordi in 1917 once he had an established relationship with them. This is more likely than the first possibility. Until 1912, Casella's piano works were mostly published and distributed by the French publisher AZ Mathot. Between 1912-1914, Casella had several works published by Universal Edition and Salabert, and it was not until 1915 when he moved back to Italy that Ricordi & Co. became his chief publishers. Yet this does not answer whether there were any revisions or major edits made to the *Toccata* between its completion in 1904 and its publication in 1918.

There is one other source worth noting regarding the *Toccata*: a *ripristino*, or restoration edition published by Ricordi in 1945. In this revised, restored second edition, Casella removed several bars (measures 67-74) and replaced them with a single bar. There are no other changes to the work. Simply, seven bars are removed and replaced with an entirely different bar (Figure 15 below). It is strange that

[261] "Ricordi & Co," IMSLP, accessed 2nd May 2021, https://imslp.org/wiki/Ricordi.

in a 'restoration' Casella would only remove bars, and only from one place in the score at that. There is no note or foreword in the 'restoration' edition as to why this change was made either.

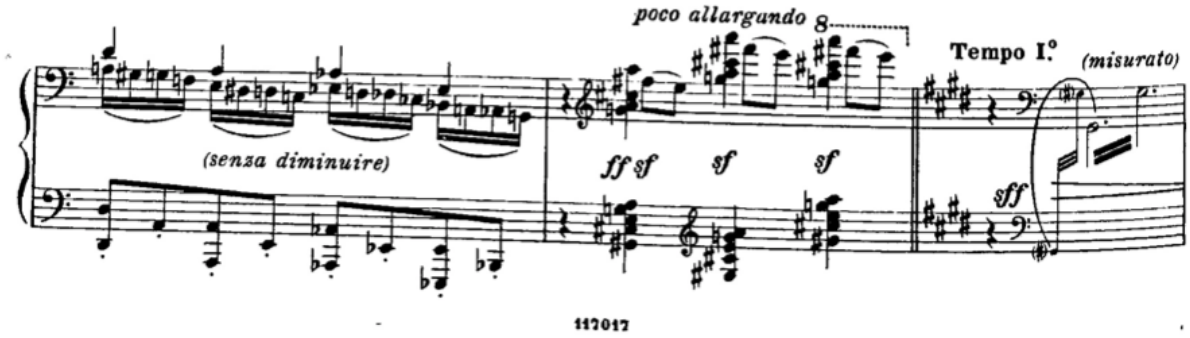


Figure 15: The replacement bar from the ripristino *1945 edition of the Toccata*

We can only hypothesise the evolution of the *Toccata* from three sources: a preview of the front page of a manuscript in Ricordi's Archives, the 1918 first edition, and the 1945 restoration edition. We know for certain that Casella began composing the work sometime in 1904, and that a version of the work was completed in December 1904. The next thing we can be certain of is that the work was first published in 1918 by Ricordi & Co., Milan. We can assume that Casella would have made revisions and edits to the work at some, but we cannot know when. We know that Casella was a borrower, and there are various moments that borrow block-harmonies commonly seen in various works by Bartók, and also in Casella's own *Sonatina* Op. 28, both of which post-date the *Toccata*, and suggesting revisions were made closer to 1917. After the work was published in 1918, Casella left the *Toccata* alone until 1945 when he decided to edit and 'restore' the work, where it was subsequently published again by Ricordi.

For the following discussion on understanding style and interpretation, and the recording, the 1918 first edition of the *Toccata* has been used. This is the edition used in all recordings of the work, and is the version of the work referred to and known by Casella scholars.[262]

What's a Toccata?

Toccata was a form used multiple times by Casella: he seems to favour the implication of speed and virtuosity that 'toccata' historically suggests, as well as the repetitive thematic nature of the form. As a musical form, Toccata comes from the Italian *toccare* – to touch – and originated in the late Renaissance

[262] When I discussed this with Ben Earle, and Fiamma Nicolodi, neither was aware of the 1945 restored edition of the *Toccata*. I myself only knew of its existence because that is the version kept in the Royal College of Music Library. Being unprepared for a piano lesson one day, I went to the library to borrow the score, only to find that in the middle of the work was a bar I had never seen before. Thus I discovered the *ripristino*!

period as a virtuosic keyboard form.[263] Frescobaldi – deeply revered by Casella – was one of the first composers to utilise the form. While it originated as an Italian form, it was adopted throughout Europe. Throughout the Baroque period, as well as being stand-alone single movement works, toccatas also functioned as preludes. Towards the end of the Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century, toccatas again became popular as virtuosic showpieces, whether as stand-alone or part of multi-movement works.

As performers, we expect toccatas to be virtuosic works, demanding fast finger dexterity and being highly decorative and ornamented. They have a lively tempo and showcase virtuosity and technique. The structure and form of toccatas is generally through-composed or ternary, featuring repeated motifs and harmonic structures. Early toccatas were light and dazzling, focussing on finger dexterity and speed. This evolved in the Nineteenth Century to include highlighting range and register of the piano as it too developed.

When we think 'toccata,' our minds also jump to various places in music history. One might jump to Frescobaldi and Bach, those first masters of the form, and particularly bring to mind Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor BWV 565. One may jump further forward in history to the Classical period and be reminded of the final movement of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 26. Perhaps one thinks only of French organ music by Franck and Saint-Saëns. Or perhaps movements from great suites such as *Pour le piano* and *Le tombeau de Couperin* are where our minds travel to when we think 'toccata.' There are many toccata moments in music's history, all with varying styles. Casella was aware of this rich history of the toccata, and would have performed many of the works listed above as part of his education at the Paris Conservatoire, and his work as a concert pianist.

When we look at Casella's *Toccata*, the opening key signature and harmonic structure are immediately reminiscent of Debussy's *Toccata* from *Pour le piano* (1901). We also see texture borrowed from Enescu's *Toccata* from *Suite pour le piano No.* 2 (1903). The three clefs, leaping octaves, wide pitch range, and fast tempo all suggest the work borrows from the nineteenth and twentieth-century style of toccata, rather than the more finger-dextrous Baroque tradition. Our expectations of the work being a virtuosic and technically demanding piece are also met at first glance.

There are two major works that Casella borrows from (both in a written and gestural sense): Debussy's *Toccata* from *Pour le piano* (1901), and Enescu's *Toccata* from *Suite pour le piano No. 2* (1901-1903). These moments of borrowing will be discussed in terms of the historical context – the story – of how

[263] John Caldwell, "Toccata" *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online, 2001* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 20th December 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.28035.

Casella borrowed, and what he borrows. Gestural and tactile moments of style will be interwoven alongside the references to elements in the score, both original and borrowed. This structural, stylistic and historical/contextual understanding of the *Toccata* will then facilitate a discussion of performing and interpreting the work, which will follow in the third part of this case study.

Casella's *Toccata* is written in sonata form. The exposition comprises two themes. Between the exposition and development is a bridge that moves chromatically, based on Bartók's block-movement (which would have to be added in 1917, when Casella would have been exposed to more of Bartók's piano music). The development has a tonal focus on the dominant (G#), and diminished dominant of the dominant (D♮). The recapitulation ends with a coda that is based on the tonic-major of the first theme. The work is written in C# minor, and modulates through various keys including C♮ major and D♭ major.

Influences and Borrowing in the *Toccata*

As stated above, Debussy and Enescu's toccatas from *Pour le piano* (1901) and *Suite pour le piano No* 2 (1901-1903) are borrowed throughout the *Toccata*. It borrows tonality and harmonic structure from Debussy's work, and texture and virtuosic scale passages from Enescu. While there are also moments that borrow from other composers (such as the bridge between the exposition and development), Debussy and Enescu are the two main borrowed sources.

Let us first look at the borrowed harmonic structure that comes from Debussy's *Toccata* from *Pour le piano.* Debussy's *Toccata* is written in C# minor, and modulates through the natural tonic major (C♮ major), the tonic major (C# major), the original tonic (C# minor), before ending on the tonic major (C# major). Casella's *Toccata* similarly begins in C# minor (Figure 4 below), before modulating to the tonic natural major (C♮ major) for the second theme of the exposition. Instead of then modulating to the tonic major (C# major) in the development, as Debussy does in the middle of his *Toccata*, Casella instead modulates back to the original tonic (C# minor) with dominant (G#) and diminished dominant of the dominant (D♮) pedal points. The recapitulation is strongly in the original tonic (C# Minor) like Debussy's work, and the coda finishes in the tonic major, although with a twist. Where Debussy ends in C# major, Casella uses the enharmonic equivalent (D♭ major). While not copying Debussy's harmonic structure verbatim, Casella does take the overarching key structure.

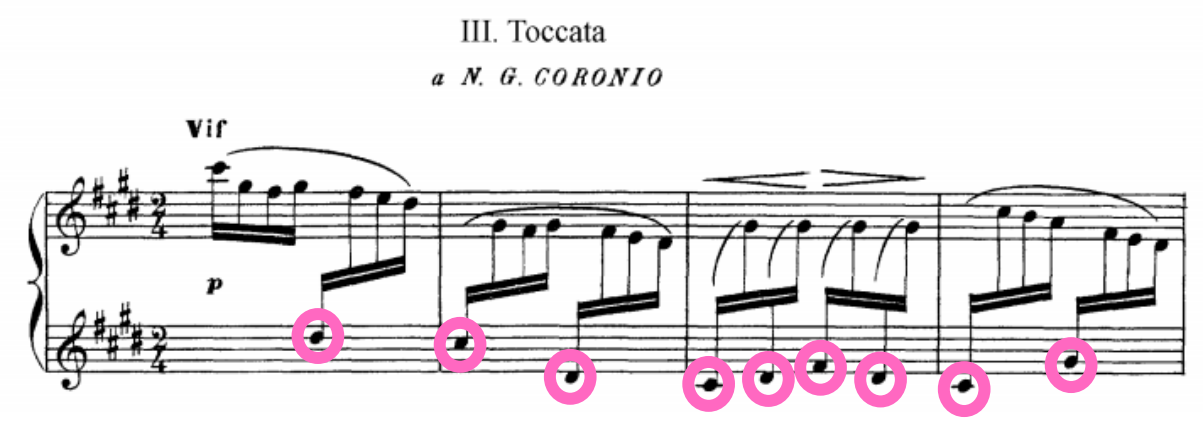
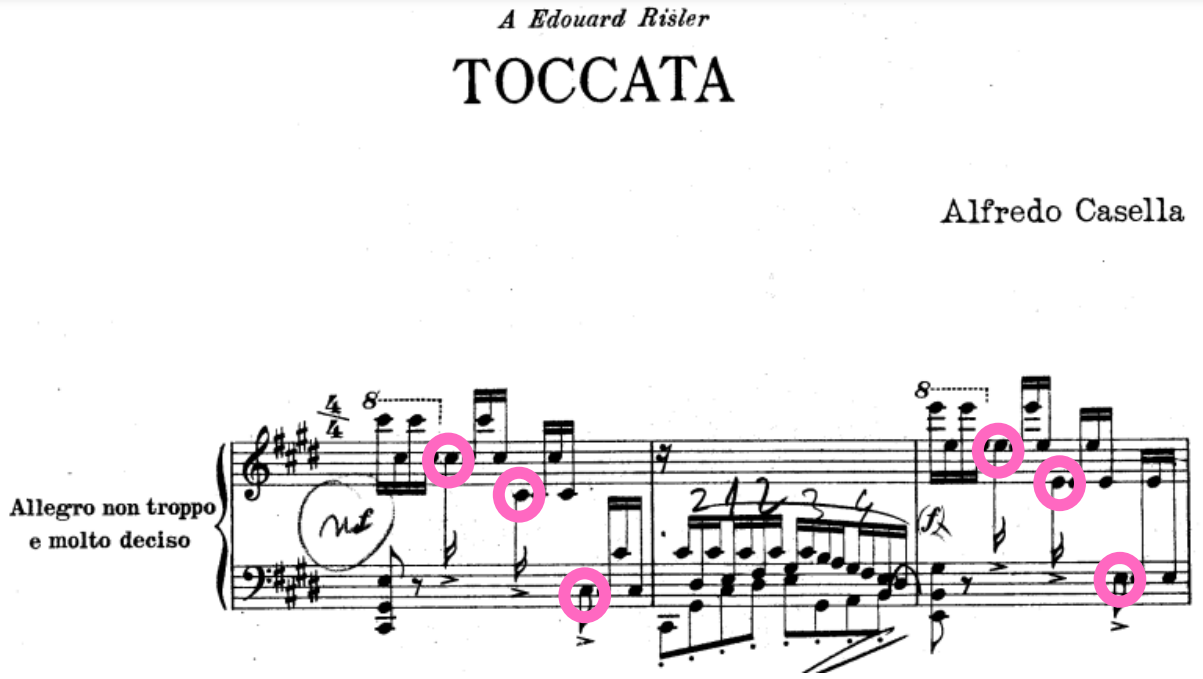


Figure 16: The opening of Debussy's Toccata from Pour le piano, and the opening of Casella's Toccata Op. 6, and the placement of melodic notes among the harmony circled in pink



There is also a secondary element that Casella borrows, placing melodic notes amongst semiquaver harmonic notes, that is also evident in Debussy's work. Just like Debussy, Casella's *Toccata* begins with a descending, cascading semiquaver motif, where the first note of each group of four is stemmed as a melodic note played with the left hand. This is highlighted in Figure 16, and appears as a feature of the melodic placement throughout Casella's *Toccata*. We can also draw similarities between the use cross-rhythm as well. These are the important, defining features that Casella borrows from Debussy.

Worthy of note here is that, although Casella idolised, and borrowed from, Debussy, he did not believe his own music was Impressionist. Instead of being preoccupied with textures and soundscapes, as he viewed Impressionism and Debussy, Casella's own music was more linear, focussing on the progression

of melodic lines and harmonic development.[264] While there are explorations of texture in his various works, including the *Toccata* itself, his music is ever-moving, and lacks stillness. Instead of developing and remaining on one musical idea, Casella quickly moves between ideas. But it is curious for Casella to say he was not preoccupied with texture and soundscapes when many of these within his *Toccata* harken to the textures and soundscapes in Enescu's *Toccata*. In the development, Casella borrows sustained harmonic textures from Enescu's *Toccata* from *Suite pour piano No. 2*, Op 10 (1901). Throughout Enescu's *Toccata*, there is use of sustained bass notes underneath busy semi-quaver passages, usually with the melody in the upper voices. This sustained bass harmony beneath moving semiquaver passages is common to both pieces (Figure 17).

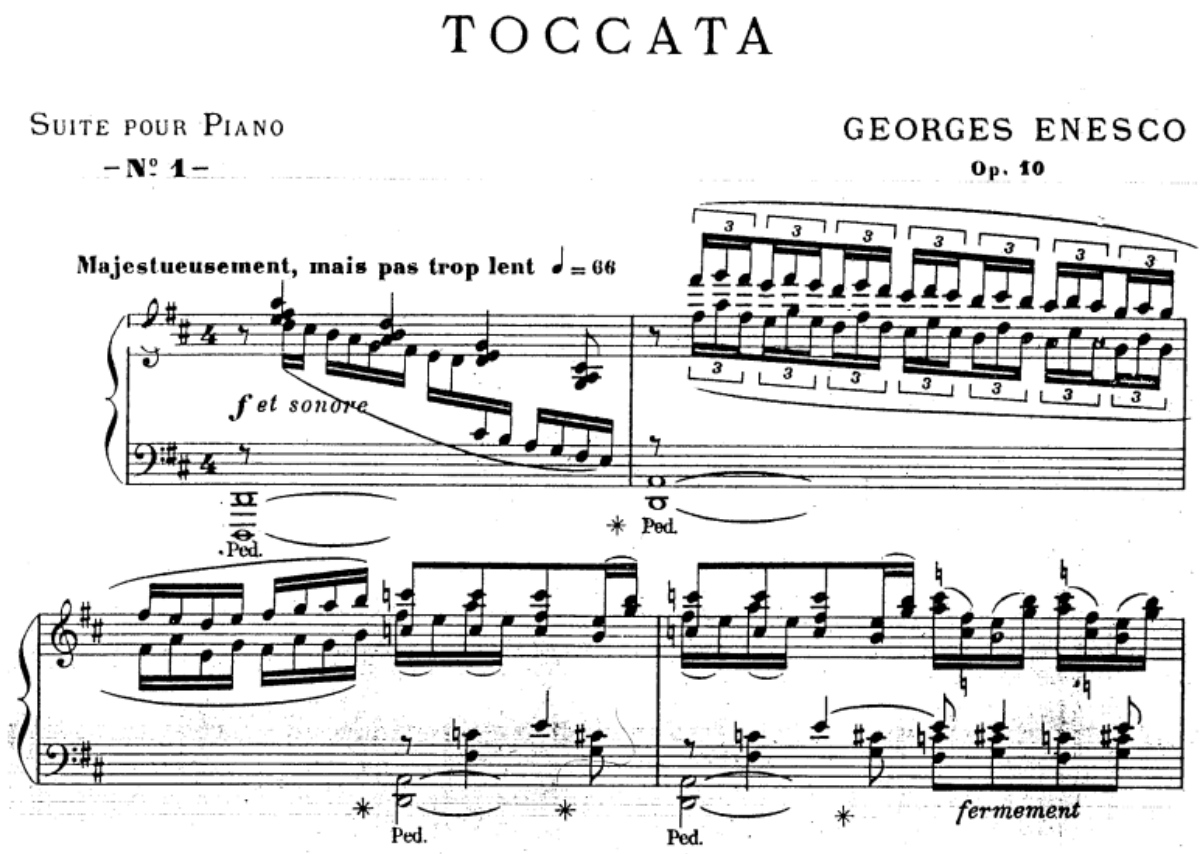
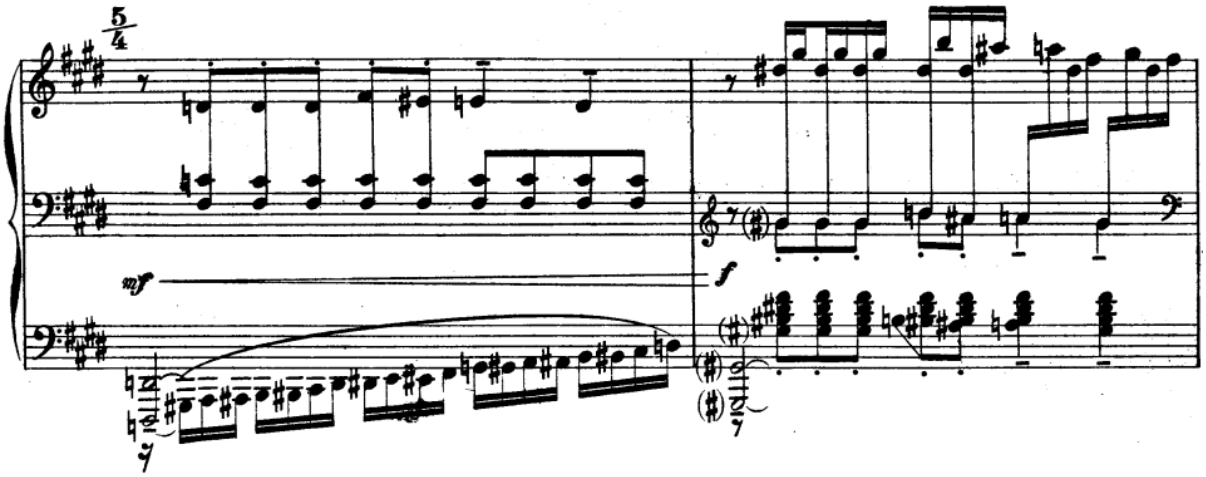


Figure 17: Sustained basses under busy semiquaver passages in both Enescu and Casellas' toccatas

[264] Ibid 95, 96.



Casella's *Toccata* similarly uses sustained voices beneath a busily moving melodic line, with the addition of an extra harmonic voice swapping between the middle and upper voices. Similarly to Enescu, the moving semiquaver voice is kept clear and crisp while the sonorous bass is held through the bar (thanks to the piano's middle pedal). While Casella does not notate pedal as Enescu does, one assumes a similar pedalling could – maybe even should – be used. More broadly, the texture is indicative of organ music, and suggests a borrowing from the tradition of toccatas generally.

The case study will now take a stylistic and gestural journey through the *Toccata* to understand what is in the music – both the score, and the journey of playing and hearing the work – to elicit the stylistic features therein, and how one might interpret the work's character.

The Music: The Score

Beginning with the dedicatee, Edouard Risler (1873-1929) was a German-born pianist who, like Casella, was a student of Diémer's at the Paris Conservatoire (although they were not classmates). Risler later became a piano professor at the Conservatoire. It is possible that Risler and Casella interacted, given that they were both students of Diémer and working in Paris as pianists at the same time. But there is no documentation other than this dedication of any relationship between the two. Risler's pianism is documented as being precise and extremely accurate, yet devoid of performance style, personality, and flair. He was a good pianist, but not a great interpreter.[265] We do not know why Risler was chosen as the dedicatee for this work, and cannot surmise as we might with other pieces.[266]

[265] James Methuen-Campbell, "Edouard Risler" *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 27th May 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.41406.

[266] For example, we can surmise that Casella dedicated his *Sarabande* Op. 10 (1908) to Gustav Lyon. Gustav Lyon was an acoustic engineer for Pleyel, and is accredited with inventing various instruments and being a pioneer of architectural acoustics. The *Sarabande* is an extremely resonant work that experiments and plays with sound, and pushes the resonance of the piano to its extremes. Thus, it makes sense why there may be a link between the two works: Casella is thanking, or acknowledging, someone who made such a composition possible, and who was important to the development of the piano.

We do not know at what stage the dedication was made, or if it was done merely to compliment Risler rather than celebrate him as a pianist.

Now to the music itself. We know that the work begins in C# minor, and can see the tempo marking from Figure 17 above, where we have the opening line of the *Toccata*, and the basic structure – both formal and harmonic – have been detailed above in the discussion on borrowed structure from Debussy. But we can go a little deeper into the structure and tonality. As stated above, the *Toccata* is written in sonata form. Each section begins with the same repeating heraldic motif of cascading, descending semiquavers. This announces the beginning of each section, new keys and modulations, and the bridge and coda. It aids modulation between themes and sections. In Figure 18 below, it introduces the A theme of the exposition, and the piece itself. It introduces every new section: at the start of the B theme of the exposition; at the beginning of the development to shift harmonic focus to the dominant (G#); at the beginning of the recapitulation; and finally at the beginning of the coda. Under the hands, this heraldic motif feels like a descending cascade. Importantly, it is not the only cascading gesture Casella employs in this work.

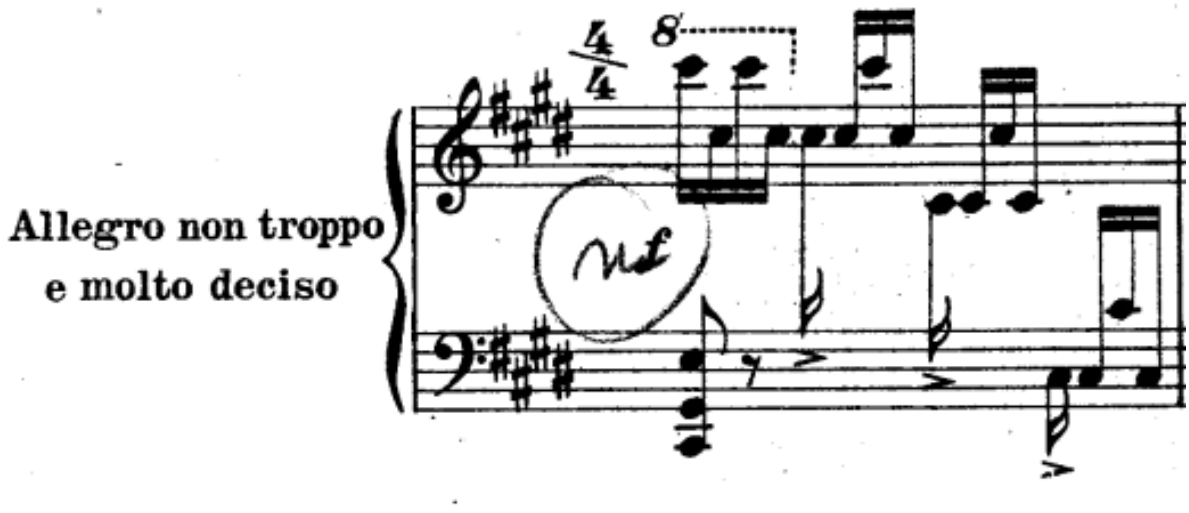


Figure 18: The repeating heraldic, cascading octave motif of the Toccata

This heraldic, descending cascading motif acts as a harbinger of change throughout the work – we know when we see and feel it that a new theme or tonal centre is about to arrive. Rather than using conventional cadences or relying on the listener to understand a change in theme or tonality, Casella signals any change with this motif.

Following our cascading heraldic gesture, Casella places the melodic notes amongst the harmony in every section of the *Toccata*. In the first theme of the exposition, the melodic is visually obvious, placed in the middle stave between the upper and lower accompanying voices (Figure 20 below). In this A theme, the melody is made of sustained crotchets between two continually moving voices. The resulting texture is a busy-ness against stillness. The rhythmic movement of strong crotchet beats in the middle, while the melodic voice is a point of calm for the listener and performer to focus on amongst the busily moving semiquavers of the upper voice and arpeggio sequence in the bass. The marking of *sempre molto marcato* further implies that this middle line should be the focal point, rather than the flurry of activity either side of it.

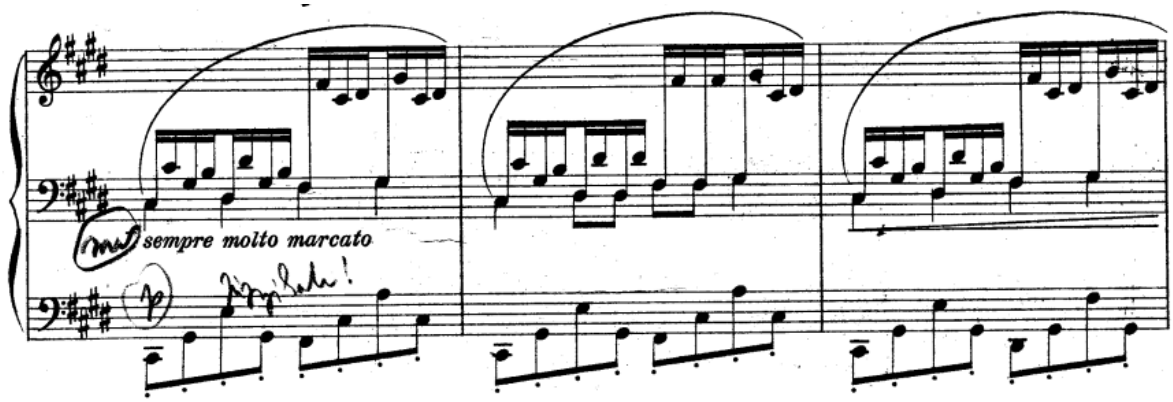


Figure 19: A theme of the Exposition: melodic middle voice amongst the busy harmonic voices either side

The feeling of this motif is right-hand thumb-heavy. In the *Toccata*, there are many right-hand thumb-heavy melodic moments. There is an obvious feeling of the melody being distributed unevenly to one part of one hand. Playing this results in an 'unevenly distributed hand' gesture: one part of one hand carries the melody. While this gesture is not unique to Casella's compositions, it is a defining gesture of how the melody is portrayed through the main themes of the *Toccata*, appearing in all sections.

When we come to the second, B, theme of the exposition (Figure 20), the melodic is repositioned to the bass and is presented as octaves occurring on the beat – similar to Debussy's *Toccata* from *Pour le piano*. Our descending cascading octaves gesture leads to a scrunch-like contracting gesture in both hands. The left goes from an octave to a single note, contracting the hand-shape, while the right does a more grabbing scrunch movement. The octaves and this recurring gesture maintain a continual steady melodic presence on the beat. Instead of the arpeggiated sequence in the bass that was present in the A theme, here we have a simpler accompaniment based on broken chords split between the hands.

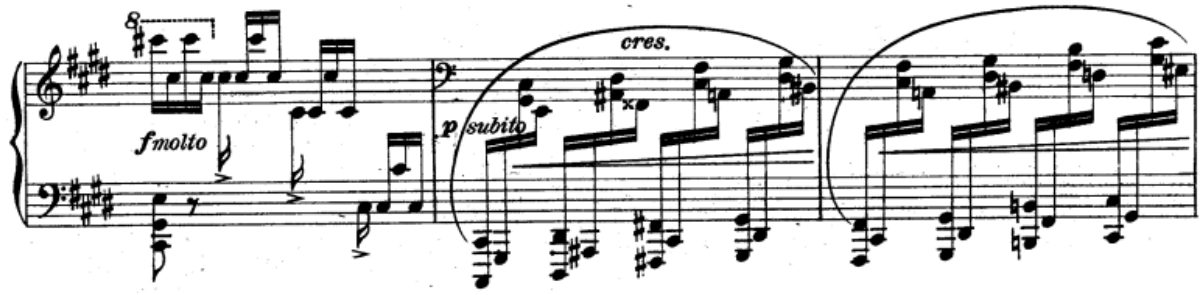


Figure 20 The beginning of the B theme in the exposition, opening with the heraldic motif

Throughout the B theme of the exposition, Casella modulates through sideways chromatic steps, with crab-like tactility. As can be seen in the figure below (Figure 21) when we come to the bridge that moves towards the development, Casella simply steps down chromatically to land us in our new key: C♮ Major. Instead of using conventional harmonic means to get from C# minor to C♮ major, Casella moves chromatically. Casella ends the B theme in D♭, and then sidesteps down to C♮. This use of D♭, the enharmonic, is not done randomly. Through continual chromatic movement from the start of the B theme, Casella modulates in a downwards direction to land at C♮. This use of chromatic side-step movement is similar to Bartok's polymodal chromaticism (although those works were not written until the 1920s). It also reminds one of Casella's other works – this chromatic movement based on block chords is similar to moments in his *Nove Pezzi* Op. 24 and *Sonatina* Op. 28, suggesting that this section was edited close to 1917 when the work was sent to Ricordi to publish. Each change of harmonic focus is descending, with the interval shrinking each time. It would not make sense to go from E♭ to C# (a diminished 3rd), when previously we moved from F to E♭ (a major 2nd). Thus, Casella retains the descending interval pattern, to that from E♭ to D we move a major 2nd, and then a minor 2nd from D♭ to C. Secondly, when we see *flat*, we think descending, and going down in pitch, which suits the descending motion down from C# minor through a series of modulations, all the way to C♮ major.

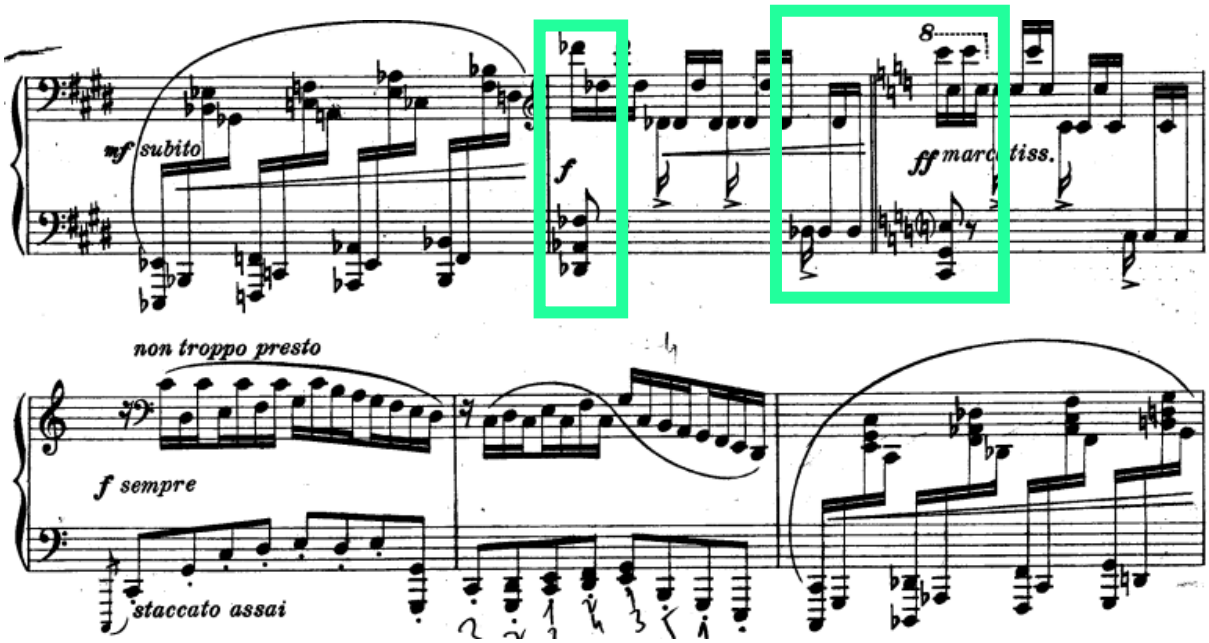


Figure 21: Downwards modulation from D♭ to C♯ at the beginning of the bridge

With this change in key to the tonic natural major comes a change in the presentation of the melody, and arrangement of the harmony. We see a combination of material used in the first theme (quavers against semiquavers, with the melodic voice in the bass), and the material seen in the first part of the bridge (melody on the start of each beat as an octave). This is a kind of hybrid of the A section and the bridge, and it continues until the B section arrives in bar 74.

We then come to the development (Figure 22). Again, Casella uses the heraldic, cascading gesture to announce the new section, but does so using G#s to iterate the tonal focus of this section is the dominant. We have returned to our original key of C# minor, and now revolve around the dominant as the tonal centre for this new section. The development oscillates (just as the hands do) between G# and D♮ pedal points as the underlying harmony. There is a complete change in melodic movement and texture. While the melody is again positioned between the accompanying voices, the melody is based on a new rhythmic motif, and, along with the sustained pedal points, we have a new texture as a result. We again have an unevenly distributed melody gesture in the right hand, and the scrunch-like contraction is again employed in the right hand, albeit reversed, and scrunching upwards to the 5th finger.

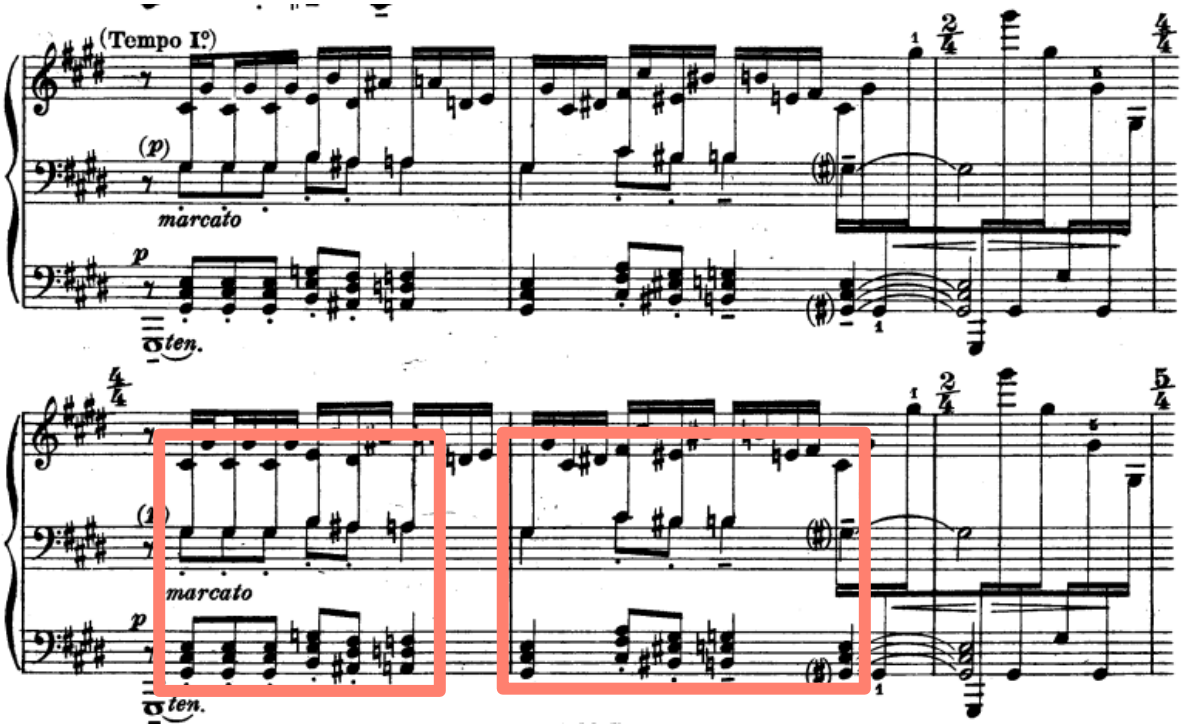


Figure 22: The Development: a new melodic rhythm and texture

Two things are worth noting from the above figure. First is how the three voices in the three staves interact with one another, particularly regarding chordal movement. In the exposition, the voices largely played different roles, each moving in their own way. The inner melodic voice intersected with the two accompanying voices, but moves in its own way. Here the melody moves in the same direction as the chordal accompaniment in the lower voice. There is still an uneven hand distribution gesture, but it appears in both hands, moving in similar, parallel motion. Other than the upper semiquavers, all the voices move horizontally together as a block. Thus, the texture is much denser, and there is a heaviness and closeness to the tactility. This kind of chromatic block-movement (marked in red in the above Figure 23) again harkens to others of Casella's works where chords move chromatically, and there is a similar heaviness in the tactility, and mirroring of gesture between the hands.

The other important thing to note in the development is the changing time signatures. As can be seen in Figure 23, within the space of six bars we have three different time signatures: 4/4, 2/4, and 5/4. One wonders why Casella does not stay in 4/4 and use phrase markings instead of bar lines to achieve a similar passage. The use of 5/4 is also unusual: this is an irregular time signature, and upsets the regular beat structure that has ensued throughout the piece so far. This frequent changing of time signatures would also become common in Casella's later works. As will be seen in the case study for the *Sonatina* and *Undici pezzi infantili*, Casella often upsets beat structure and beat groupings through changing time signatures.

The climax of the *Toccata* comes at the end of the development (Figure 23). It is built on a continually rising chromatic melody, with the melodic line in the middle voice, projected by both thumbs. The harmony moves as two contrasting arpeggio sequences in the outer voices – a kind of gestural striation in both hands that, like the rhythmic accents, is two-part. This striation is a frequently used gesture by Casella. We had it earlier in the bridge with poly-rhythms, and is used across his oeuvre, often occurring where Casella uses polyrhythms. The final bar of the climax descends via chromatic octaves, leading into the recapitulation. The climax rises, ever building in harmonic tension and dynamics, until it reaches the top and then thunderously clashes back down, eventually arriving at the dominant before it jumps to the tonic for the beginning of the exposition.

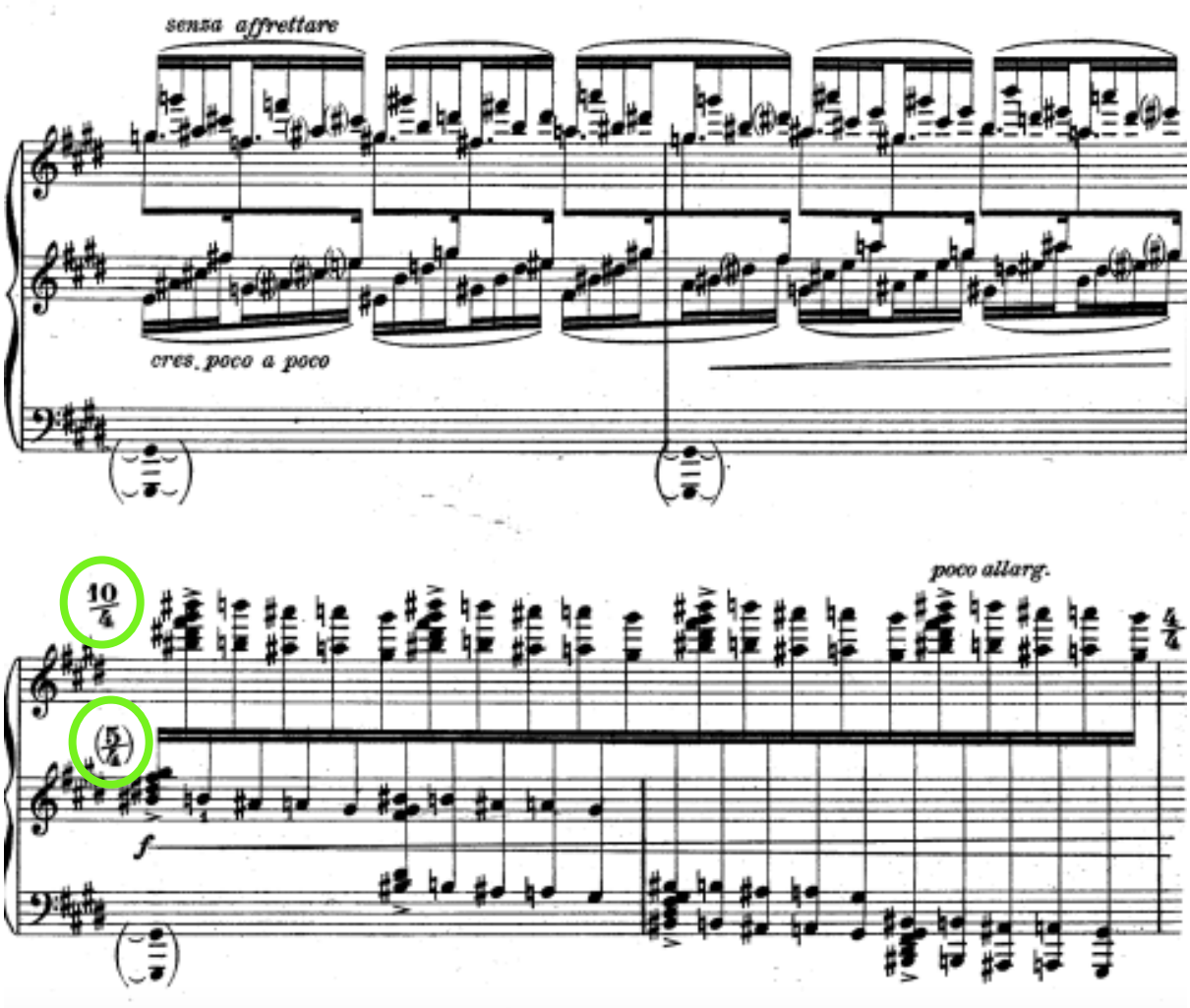


Figure 23: The climax of the Toccata, and the striation gestures in both hands.

The second line in the above figure is very interesting. It is written as being both a single bar, and two bars, with two different time signatures (circled in green in the figure above). We see the lower two staves written as two bars, while the upper voice is a single time signature. It is one long scalic passage with the pitches in groups of fives, and without rhythmic emphasis except for the first of every five

quaver beats (matching the pitch of the motif before it shifts down an octave). This is quite odd: why does Casella not simply use one time signature, especially when the two hands are linked together, rather than being entirely separate voices. Several questions arise: why not write the entire line as 10/4 rather than having two different time signatures? Why not write the section as two bars of 10/8, or two bars of 5/4, or four bars of 5/8 to match the quaver groupings? Should the performer maintain a *deciso* crotchet beat, as indicated at the beginning of the *Toccata*, thus upsetting the melodic grouping of the line? The answer is that it is dependent on the performer, and how they see fit to interpret it (which will be discussed shortly). However, it is indicative of Casella's sometimes bemusing notational style.

The recapitulation is a repeat of the exposition. The coda (Figure 24) is heralded by the cascading gesture but with an added 5th in the middle of each octave, adding some harmonic variety and richness to the texture and resonance. Casella modulates through another sideways chromatic, crab-hand shift to the tonic major, D♭ major. This modulation to major is a welcome tonal palette cleanser. It seems to make the rich textures and intensities, and harmonic tensions that have been building through the entire work, melt away.

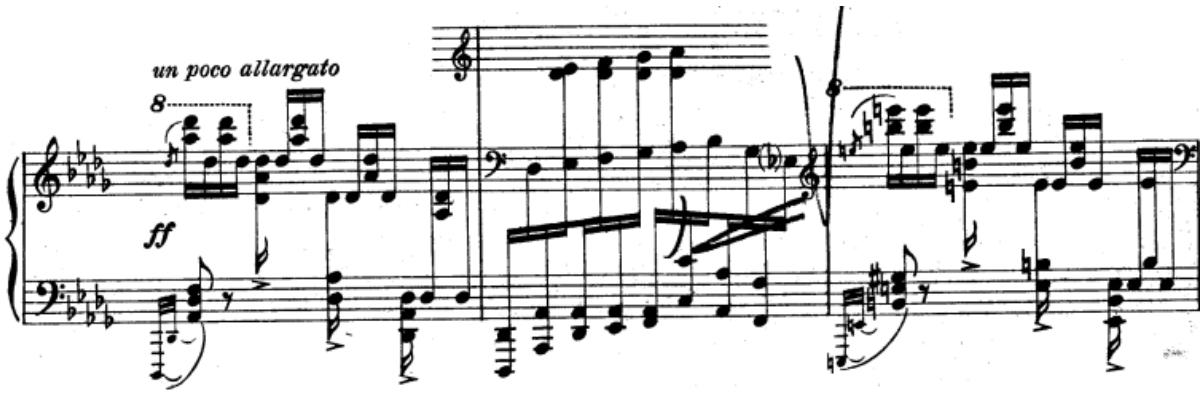


Figure 24: The Coda in D♭ major

After six introductory bars that are similar to the opening six bars of the work, Casella returns to the polyrhythm striation gestures of the bridge to build to the end. There is something in this use of broken chords played in both hands but with a polyrhythm that so wonderfully builds anticipation and excitement throughout the *Toccata*. The work finishes with a resounding crash.

The Music: Performing, Hearing and Feeling

We now have a relatively sound understanding of the structure of the *Toccata*, and the defining features and gestures of the work. But we still need to understand the character, and perform it.[267]

[267] Click here for the recording of the *Toccata*.

The character, or essence, of the *Toccata* is one of an angry, ardent young man, perhaps even Casella himself.[268] Throughout the work, we are taken through the struggle of this angry young character until he finally succeeds. The opening A theme with its uneven hand distribution tactility (Figure 25) demonstrates the anger and ardour within our hero character: the minor key setting, the perpetual movement across all three voices, and the strong *Allegro, molto deciso* tempo give a sense of a young man striving to prove himself through continual action. There are moments of beauty and sweetness in both sound and touch, offering glimmers into the vulnerability of the character.

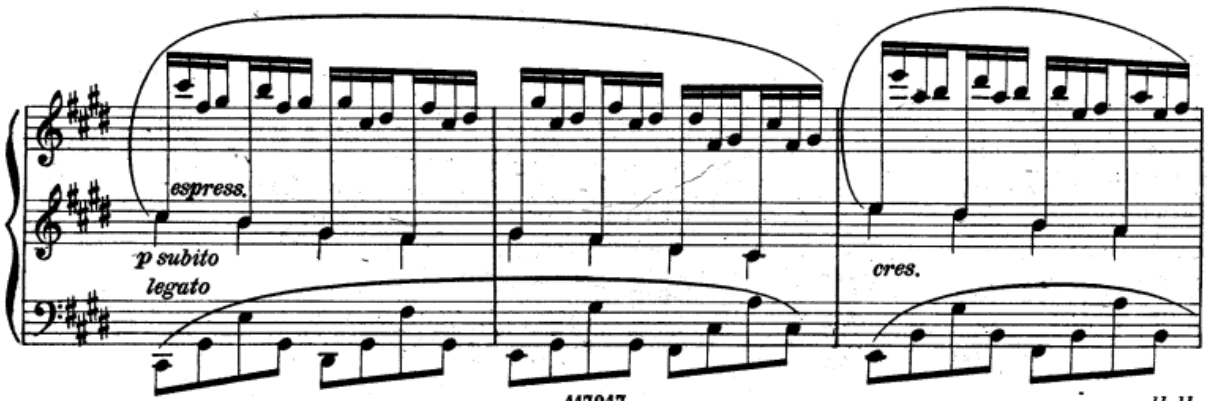


Figure 25: The sudden change in mood in the middle of the A theme

What has previously been a rising, loud, and almost aggressive motif now changes to a more plaintive, reflective, and vulnerable one through a change in articulation and volume, and by making the melodic line descend instead of rise. Yet this glimmer of softness is short lived, with a crescendo following soon after (as can be seen in the third bar of the above figure), and our hero quickly returns to his passionate, active mood. This passion seems to turn to aggression in the B theme (Figure 26). With the change in melodic placement against the melody, and the melody rising in the bass with a rumbling accompaniment, the sense of anticipation is high. Coupled with this is the more aggressive hand gesture of the contracting, inwards scrunch-grabs in both hands, also adding to the tension.

[268] One is reminded of James Joyce's *Portrait of the artist as a young man*, and the internal struggle of ego and intellect (and religion), and the awakening of the artist's true creative, craftsman identity.

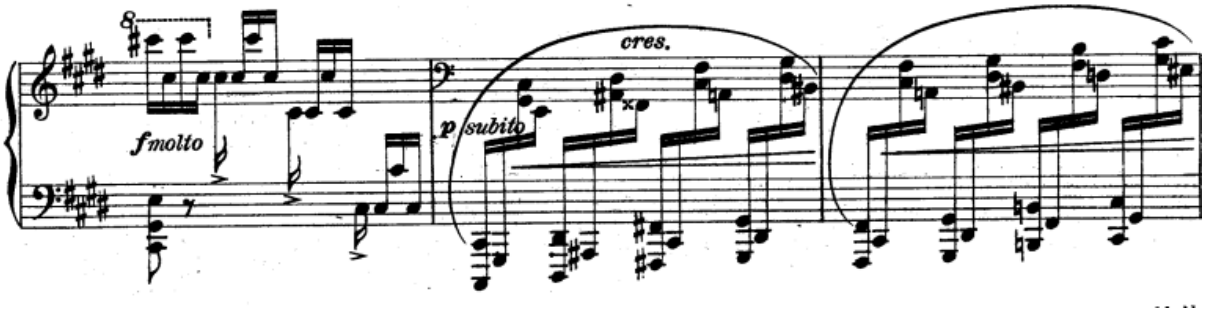


Figure 26: The rising bass melody of the B theme heightens our hero's tenseness and our sense of anticipation

Our hero (like our hands) is tense. With each rising sequence, the building of anticipation grows and grows, but we do not know where our hero is taking us, or what he is striving for until we reach the modulation into C♮ major. We are relieved for our hero: the strident major key seems to signal that something has been overcome, and a sense of stability has been reached. But this does not last long. Through the crab-like moving chromatic modulations, the striation pattern of cross-rhythms, we are back to the turmoil that began the *Toccata*. The development does nothing to quell this sense of turmoil, and in fact seems to only heighten the sense of dread or struggle that our hero is undergoing. The rumbling continues: the tremolo G# octaves, followed by the rising chromatic semiquaver scales, create a conflict with the descending chordal movement of the melody. It is almost like a battle between the voices – ascending and descending to meet one another in the middle register. Casella warns his hero not to fall too fast through expressive commands such as *misurato* and *senza affrettare*, but the tension still builds. This finally culminates with the climax, where the two hands rise and then fall together through cascading, chromatic octaves, as if at the end of a great conflict.

Our hero re-emerges at the recapitulation as before, although heavier and slower. While having overcome the struggles of the development, there is a sense he is weary, through the heavier volume of fortissimo and the return of the A theme being marked *un poco largamente*. This is similarly reflected in the tactility of the recapitulation: the louder, broader sounds are reflected in a heavier, thumpier weight required in the hands.We see his weaknesses and glimmers of vulnerability until in the coda he emerges victorious: whatever struggle or labour that plagued him is gone for good with the arrival of the tonic major. Everything is bigger and better: the dynamics are louder, the sound is wider, and the tempo is slightly relaxed. With the rising chords in the final bars (Figure 27), we can already anticipate the ever-lasting joy of our hero, supported by the *precipitando* marking above the chords: we know that great resolution and joy will end the work, and ring out strongly and for a long while. So ends the work: letting the success ring out: *lascair vibrare a lungo.*

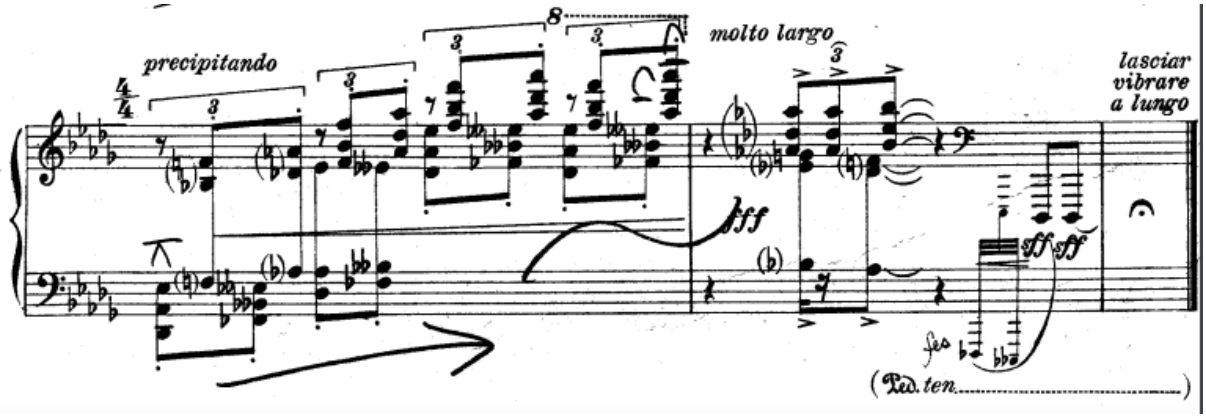


Figure 27: The final bars of the Toccata, letting our hero's success climb and then ring out

So how does one interpret and perform all this? There are several factors that have helped form this character reading of the *Toccata*, but which also are improved and furthered by knowing the essence of the work. One needs to consider tempi, texture, and pedal, and expressive language and markings in the score, and how possibly to interpret these various elements in the score.

Like all toccatas, Casella's is fast and lively, marked *allegro non troppo, e molto decisio.* The work is *vivante* and *vibrante*, but should be controlled in speed and beat. Just like our young hero, while there is anger and electricity brewing underneath, the beat and tempo should remain calm and in control. The *marcato decisio* implies that the speed must be strong and clear throughout. Our hero must remember who he is, and not lose control. Casella implies as much with various markings throughout the work: the various accents of beats that emphasise the crotchet beat, the various reminders of *marcartissimo,* and markings such as at the beginning of the development and throughout the coda where Casella reminds us to stick to our original speed. At the beginning of the development, Casella marks *stretto*, *precipitando,* and *misurato* in the opening two bars of the section (Figure 29).

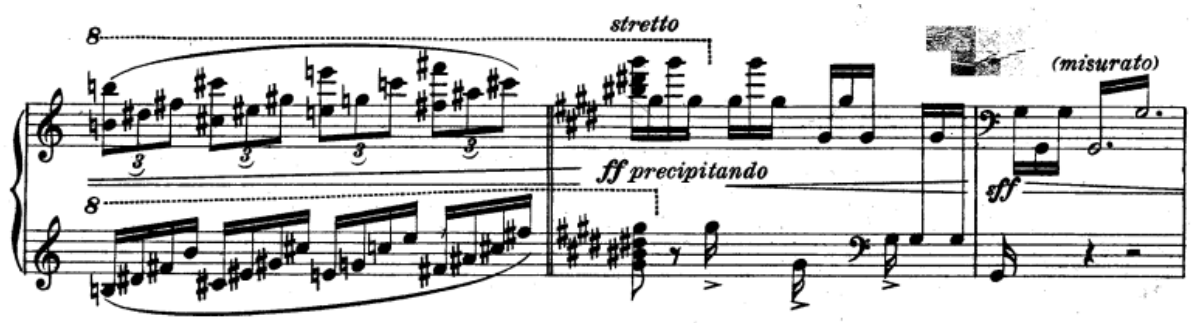


Figure 28: The striation gesture leading into the development, and Casella's commands as to speed and beat

With the marking *misurato*, one wonders if Casella is telling essence of the *Toccata* to stay measured, and not become frenzied. Of course, anticipate and prepare for the coming tumult about to erupt, but

maintain the decidedly strong beat to maintain overall cohesion across the work, and control of our hero. With the irregular and changing time signatures throughout the development we must keep this sense of control of beat and speed, just like our hero must if he is to overcome this struggle. The same diligence is demanded of the performer in the coda. With the marking *tempo guisto, senza correre* we are reminded that even in victory and resolution we must maintain speed and control. Those small changes to speed – the *poco largamente* and *poco allargato* are like moments of breathing space rather than fundamental tempo changes. They merely allow our hero, and the performer, to catch their breath and bask in the richness of sound, rather than truly slow the tempo of the work.

The next consideration for the performer is the texture: ensuring that our hero's character and melodic lines are not overwhelmed by the accompanying voices surrounding him. This comes down entirely to the discretion of the performer. Casella only marks pedal in the final bars of the work (Figure 27), and there it is extreme: *lasciare vibrare a lungo* implies letting the sound ring out until the piano has finished resonating. But as to the rest of the work, that is up to the performer. In the A theme of the exposition, we have several options open to us based on the staccati marked in the bass and the sustained crotchets played with the right hand thumb. One could choose to use no pedal at all, using finger legato to create this sustaining in the middle voice. One could equally choose to use the full weight of the pedal, creating a strong volume through resonance and texture. But perhaps the best use of pedal is light touches that correspond with the melodic notes. Given how much movement there is in each voice, and how heavy the attack of the hands can be, it does not make sense to have a heavy use of pedal. Yet, there is something hollow if no pedal is used. Thus, a compromise must be reached to give fullness and resonance to our hero's character. When we come to the more vulnerable, soft elements of our hero's character, more pedal can be used to support the *legato* marking in the left hand. Yet the pedal must be balanced and clear.

It has to be remembered that so much of texture is about the heard experience of the work, and the performer's aesthetic and interpretative choice. Yes, there are voices written on the score, but how this translates into sound is crucial for portraying the character of a work. So much of this discussion on texture can only be heard through the recordings. It is undeniably difficult to articulate in words the nuances possible through using the pedal, and the various possible ways of engaging the pedal. Those sustained notes in the bass voice of the development layered under the rapid rising chromatic scale could be interpreted in two ways. If we think back to Enescu and the opening passage of his *Toccata* (Figure 17), the pedal is notated as being put down immediately with the bass, and held throughout the moving semiquaver passage. This could be one interpretation of how to pedal and interpret texture in Casella's *Toccata.* Yet, one may instead choose to use the middle sostenuto pedal for the bass notes, thus only sustaining that single note and not blurring the semiquaver passage. It is a decision that only the performer can make, and which is dependent on hearing and aurally experiencing the work.

When we come to the coda, there is an obvious change in texture, not just because of the major tonality and wider tempo, but also through the use of the cross-rhythm motif, and the clamouring and jubilant chords building to the end of the work. Throughout this section, the harmony does not change as rapidly as it does in the exposition or development. Instead of harmony changing as a block, moving on each crochet beat, we have moments where the harmony is sustained throughout an entire bar. Thus, the pedalling can also change, and be held throughout the bar. Arguably more pedal can be used throughout this section to further build the sound and joyous triumph of our hero. But the performer must be careful to not overpedal.

Finally, a word on dynamics throughout the movement. There is nothing unusual or inexplicable within the dynamics of the *Toccata.* Perhaps the only thing needing mention is that the performer should pace themselves. Like our angry, ardent young hero who would not be able to succeed if he ran out of puff too early on, so too should the performer be aware of becoming too loud too quickly. There are several peaks and troughs before the major climax at the end of the development and recapitulation, and one must be sure to 'pace themselves' through the dynamics they use. While so much of the work is marked forte, and is loud, there needs be nuance within this, just as there are nuances to the shading and shape of our hero.

Ultimately, the *Toccata* is an intense and ardent work. Whether or not one sees and hear the angry young hero character or not, this interpretative discussion would still be valid. He is but a journey to follow to help make the work a comprehensive whole. The work is challenging: there are so many notes, the difficulties of the changing time signatures, and being able to pace dynamic and expressive growth throughout the movement are vast. It is indicative of works by Casella in his early life.

Case Study 2: *Sonatina* Op. 28

Sonatina Op. 28, composed in 1916, is Casella's most avant-garde work. The cut-and-paste nature of the first and third movements, along with the haunted marionette- and machine-like middle movement suggest slight influences of the Futurists and Casella's soundscape of the First World War (whether real or imagined). Although titled *Sonatina*, the work is arguably a sonata given its harmonic complexity, technical difficult, and length.[269] Borrowed elements from Bartok and Stravinsky are evident in all three movements. Yet, there are moments of similarity between this and the *Toccata* to situate that the work as firmly of Casella's style, demonstrating his maturity.[270] It is one of the few works of Casella's that we have extensive archival sources for that cover all three of the compositional process steps: drafts in the sketchbooks, copies of the completed manuscript, and easy access to the first published edition. It is a long and challenging work; the most difficult both compositionally and pianistically that Casella had written up until this point in his life.

This sonatina is exemplar of Casella's harmonic language maturing, and announces Casella's harmonic language as it would continue to be throughout the majority of his compositional career. It is a far cry from the predominantly diatonic tonalities demonstrated in the *Toccata*. Yet, there are still echoes of Casella's earlier self in the *Sonatina*: chromatic scrunched-hand semiquaver passages adding density to textures, block chords, and repeated rhythmic motifs in changing pitches. These features are typical of Casella, with the *Sonatina* signalling a maturity of a compositional style that employed atonal and dissonant harmonies grounded in classical structures and forms.

Perhaps the technical and harmonic challenges of the *Sonatina* reflect the upheaval and change simultaneously occurring in Casella's life. The work was drafted during the the First World War, a traumatic time for all living people. Having written *Pagine di Guerra* in 1915, and there being traces of war-like mechanic timbres and sounds in various works written between 1914 and 1919, we know that the war occupied Casella's thoughts and musical output. Similarly, 1916 was Casella's first full year living Italy. Casella – somewhat of a foreigner in his own country – would likely have not yet ingratiated himself fully into his new community. While Italian on paper, he was undoubtedly treated like an outsider, having lived and worked abroad for the past twenty years. This unsettled and uneasy period manifests in a work that is uneasy in its thematic structure and the sound-world therein.

[269] It is comparable to his *Sonata a tre*, two cello sonatas and his sonata for harp in length, and technical and tonal complexity.
[270] Casella's piano works until 1915 were relatively short in form and length. Even those more complex works such as *Nove Pezzi* and *À la maniere de…* contained relatively short movements, rather than being linked sections contributing to an entire work. Worth noting also is that the *Sonatina* was shortly eclipsed as Casella's biggest work for piano. When he wrote *A Note Alta*, Op. 32 in 1917, because of its sheer size and length, it quickly became viewed as Casella's 'greatest' work for piano.

The Compositional Process

Because we have so many sources accessible pertaining to the *Sonatina*, we can easily narrate the evolution of the work's creation in much detail. Simply: the work was originally sketched between March and May, 1916 as a four-movement classical-style sonatina. Casella revisited the work in September 1916, where large-scale edits were done. A movement was removed and movement titles were changed, the work became a smaller, three-movement sonatina, and various revisions and additions were made to the remaining three movements. A completed manuscript with further additions and edits was presented to Ricordi & Co in 1916, and the work was published in 1917. Yet, the dates noted as to when the extensive edits and revisions were done are a mismatch to the dates noted in the published scores. This shows us that, although we know Casella had a secondary editing phase from his sketchbooks, the composer himself does not always acknowledge this. In the diagram below , we can see the stemma of the *Sonatina* (Figure 30).

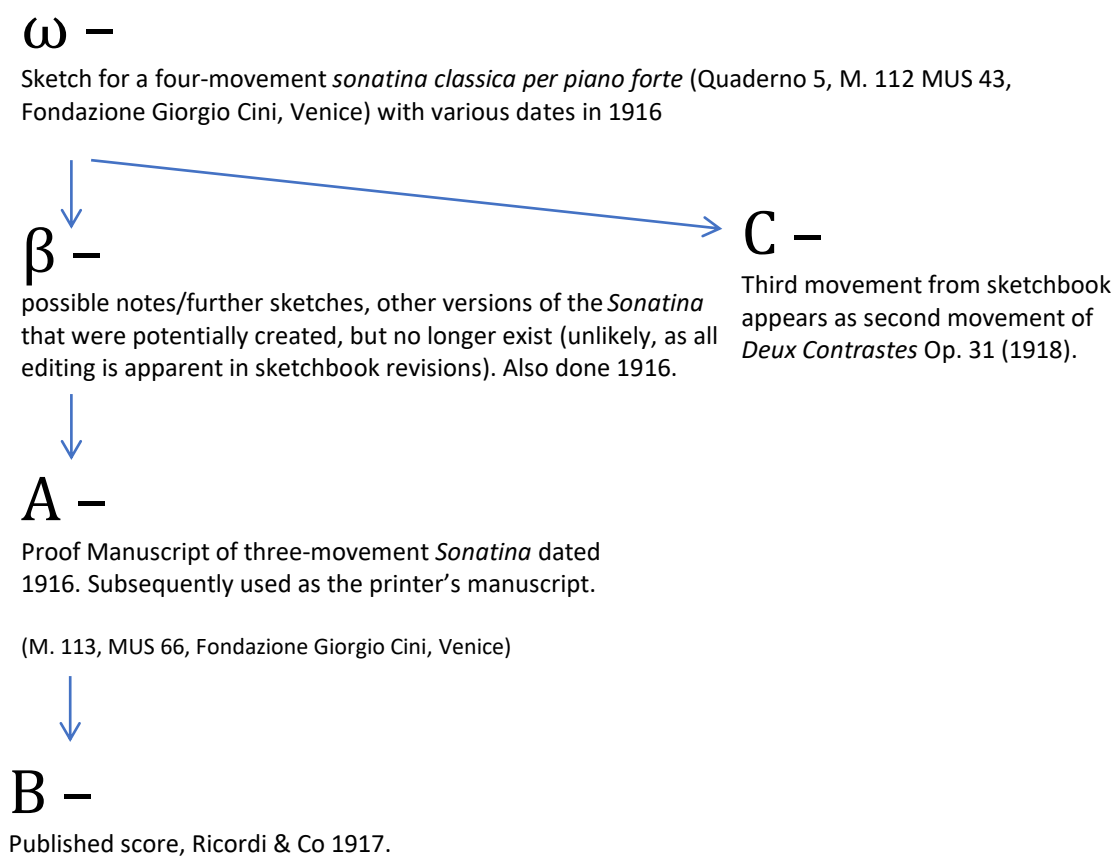


Figure 29: Stemma graph of the Sonatina

The first draft of the *Sonatina* appears in Casella's fifth sketchbook, dated between 1914-16.[271] The work was originally titled *Sonatina classica per pianoforte*, with a four-movement structure (i. *Allegretto indolente*, ii. *Allegretto molto moderato*, iii. *minuetto*, and iv. *rondo*). This can be seen in Figure 30 below.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 30: First page of the Sonatina sketch, with the work's movement list in the top left-hand corner

From the discussion on compositional process, we know that Casella always began with the title and tempo when sketching, with the *Sonatina* being no exception. The title of the work and movements therein are the first things written down. The movement title – indicating character as well as speed, *Allegretto indolente* – written directly above the staves under the movement list. It is clear from the scribbles and rewrites that the structure and format of this work underwent many changes, not just regarding titles but also the notes themselves. Across the page above we see copious scribbles, both for individual notes accidentals, and entire phrases. In the final line of the folio, Casella entirely rewrites 4 bars. As will be shown with the dating throughout the sketchbook, we must questions whether these edits happened immediately when the work was initially sketched, or in a later editing stage. We cannot know. However, the red coda sign, the purple-ink markings, and the fact that what has been scribbled out is relatively 'complete' underneath, all hint that these changes were done in the secondary editing phase.

There are many editorial markings throughout the *Sonatina* draft that exemplify Casella's shorthand. In Figure 31 below, we can see use of the repeat sign in several bars. *Come prima* notated in the first bar of the last line, referring to the harmonic material that has come before, and which is not written in the staves below. Using *come prima* and the repeat sign exemplify Casella's sketching shorthand for repeated notes and motifs.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 31: Signs of Casella's penmanship and sketching shorthand

Before we discuss more of the editing phase, let us turn to the dating marked at the end of each movement, and the third movement of the sketch that was not included in the published version of the *Sonatina.* At the end of each movement's sketch, a date, and sometimes a place, is marked. The first

[271] Casella, *Quaderno 5.*

movement, titled *Allegretto indolente* in the drafts, was originally completed on 20th March 1916, at 4pm in Rome.[272] There is also the note 'ritoccato il 22-23/9;' retouched 22nd-23rd September. The *minuetto* – second movement of the work, and second to appear in the sketchbook – is dated 31st March, but without a time or place. The third movement to appear in the sketchbook is the *preludio, allegretto*, signed off as being finished 25th April, Rome. Importantly, this movement does not form part of the work in the completed manuscript or published edition. The *finale* is dated 20th May, Rome, with a time stamp of 1pm.

From the 'retouched' marking at the end of the first movement, we can safely say that Casella had a second, editing compositional phase, at least for the *Sonatina*. What we do not know, however, is whether the other movements were similarly re-editing and retouched after their initial composition as well. Given that the third movement is removed entirely from the work, and that there are editorial scribbles and markings throughout the entire work's draft in different inks, we can surmise that yes, the other movements were similarly reworked at a later date, along with the first movement.

'Retouching'

In the case of the *Sonatina*, major edits were undertaken, which Casella dubbed 'retouches.' He rewrote entire lines of music, as evidenced in Figure 30 above, removed an entire movement, and added a coda to the *minuetto* movement. But what has yet to be discussed are the coda signs. In the sketches, they signal that new sections from separate folios be added in. These additional sections are not small, single-bar sections either. They are entire folios worth of material. If we think back to the first folio of the *Sonatina* draft, there is a the big red coda symbol in the middle of line 4 (Figure 30 above). This correlates with where new material should be inserted, specifically material from the folio below (Figure 32).

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 32: New material to be inserted into the Sonatina, correlating with the red coda symbol seen in Figure 30

When looking at the physical sketchbook, this folio is loose, and not bound in the sketchbook like the other pages. It is literally an extra page, physically and to be added to the work. This addition of an extra page of music also happens with the *minuetto* movement. On the reverse side of the above extra

[272] Why Casella notates the time and place is undocumented, and it is difficult to hypothesise why he includes these notes, as they are not done uniformly throughout the sketchbooks. However, it does further complete the narrative of the work's completion by offering a location.

page (Figure 32) is a *coda del minuetto* (Figure 33). Again, an entirely new section is added into the *Sonatina* that extensively extends the *minuetto*.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 33: Coda del minuetto - the other side of the added folio for the Sonatina

The Missing *Preludio Allegretto*

One final extensive editing made presumably in this secondary phase is the removal of the third movement, the *preludio allegretto.* It has been referred to as the third movement because it is third in sketch order, appearing third in the sketchbook. As stated in the chapter on compositional process, Casella was not wasteful with compositional material, and turned this movement (Figure 34) into another work altogether.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 34: The Preludio Allegretto movement from the original Sonatina sketch

Likely when Casella was editing the *Sonatina*, he decided to remove this *preludio* movement, transforming the *Sonatina* into a three-movement work. We can hypothesise two reasons as to why he may have removed this movement. First, it is possible that Casella decided to remove the *preludio* movement to adhere to the tradition of three-movement sonata form. Secondly, as can be seen from the sketch above (Figure 34), there are many edits, suggesting that Casella was not happy with the musical content of this movement. Yet, not wanting to waste his efforts, he kept the sketch. Later, in 1918, the movement was published as part of another work, *Deux contrastes* Op. 31. It appeared as the *anti-grazioso*, second movement, complimenting a *grazioso* movement that was an homage to Chopin and the A Major prelude No. 7 Op. 28. Thus, while this movement was removed from the *Sonatina*, it was not discarded, but recycled elsewhere.

The Polishing Phase

Few completed manuscripts are available that pre-date the *Sonatina*, making it one of the earliest we have access to. There are many edits and revisions in the completed manuscript. However, unlike the revisions in the sketchbooks, the edits in the completed manuscripts are polishes, and finishing touches

elating to expression, dynamics, articulation, and phrasing. We can see a wealth of expressive and dynamic markings in the first page of the completed score (Figure 35) that is not present in the sketches.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 35: The first page of the Sonatina's completed manuscript, detailing the addition of expression and dynamics

So much detail and information is added into the competed manuscript that was not present in the drafts. As well as dynamics and expression, there are details such as articulations, slurs and note groupings, accents, and even pedalling in the final bars of the page. There is the addition of instructions to the performer (such as the two notes at the very bottom of the page about tempo and rhythm) and the dedications to Blaire Fairchild and Yvonne Müller.

Casella adds expressive markings at the end of the compositional process, presumably done after playing through the work several times and editing it at the piano. Although he makes initial dynamic and tempo markings at the beginning of each sketch, this is only an indicator of the movement's expression. It is likely that his 'polishing' of a work is informed by the expression and interpretation that is inherent in his own performance style. His performing and performance style informs his compositional style: the two actions of performing and composing feed into each other, and the expression and character of a work in question.

One other addition in the final stage relating to expression and interpretation are those commands to performers. As can be seen at the bottom of Figure 35, there are two notes to the performer as to rhythm and beat grouping: how to maintain the quaver beat with changing tempi, and how to negotiate the triplet quavers in the open *ad libitum* sections of the *Sonatina.* There are also two dedicatees whom we will come to shortly. But most important is the forward to performers. At the very beginning of the *Sonatina* manuscript, Casella writes:

> Note: the execution of this little work can only be achieved by perfect connoisseurs of all the secrets of the modern pedal, and that, consequently, they know how to expect a wonderful and peculiar poem through a complex and refined registration: very "pedalled". For these indications are superfluous; they [the performer] will understand me without a doubt. However, here and there, it is useful to follow the performer, so I compromised certain sonorities that I hold dear.[273]

[273] Folio 2, Manuscript for *Sonatina* Op. 28; M 113, MUS 66, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

This note suggests two things. Most obviously is that the work is to use lots of pedal, with the performer playing and experimenting with the richness of sound that comes therein. Second to this is the address to the 'perfect connoisseurs' of the modern pedal. Casella is not writing this work for amateurs, but expert pianists who understand the nuances in sound and technique of the piano. It is interesting to note that the performer is addressed here, and being told by Casella that he – the composer – will follow them, and not the other way round. The performer is being addressed as if they are important for executing and completing the work through their use of sonority and pedal. Casella adds two other notes – dedications – in the completed manuscript: one to Yvonne Müller, and one to Blair Fairchild, Casella's 'dear friend,' although these do not impinge on the work's meaning, merely situate it contextually.[274]

One other thing that can be seen in the completed manuscript for the *Sonatina* are marks by the publisher as to the formatting and printing. On various pages throughout the completed manuscript is a selection of what appear to be fractions. As can be seen below from the beginning of the *Finale* rondo movement (Figure 36) there are various comma-like marks and numbers marked to indicate page formatting in the printed version: how many bars per line, and where to input line breaks.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 36: Editor's formatting marks on completed manuscript of Sonatina, circled in yellow

When we look at the completed score and compare this to the published edition, there is little difference between the two works, other than the missing dedication to Yvonne Müller. However, there is one interesting thing worth noting. The dedication to Yvonne Muller is marked as 30th October 1916. When we look at the published score, there is a different date given for the completion of the work. Just as with the *Toccata*, there is a date at the very end of the score – a sign-off with a place and date. For the *Sonatina* it is given as being 20th March 1916, Rome (Figure 37). We know from the sketches that this date is not the completion date, but merely when the first draft of the first movement was complete. One wonders why Casella would choose to use this date, and not the final completion date of October.

[274] Blair Fairchild was an American composer living in Paris between 1903-1933. It is possible Casella could have met Fairchild during his time in Paris. However, there is no correspondence between Fairchild and Casella from this period existing to support this argument, or detail why Casella dedicated a work to him. Again, like the *Toccata*, it seems that there is no obvious link between the work and the dedicatee. Yvonne Müller's dedication, however, makes more sense. In 1916, Müller was a piano student of Casella's. She would later become his wife in 1921, after having an affair with her. It is likely that Casella's affair with Müller began sometime in 1915-1916, although we cannot be certain. There are many works between 1915-1920, such as the *Sonatina,* where Müller is a dedicatee in the completed manuscript but her name does not appear on the published score. Here in the *Sonatina*, he notes that she is the 'conservatrice des manuscrits du soussigné' – the keeper of his manuscripts and music, and signs off to her with loyal affection on 30th October 1916.

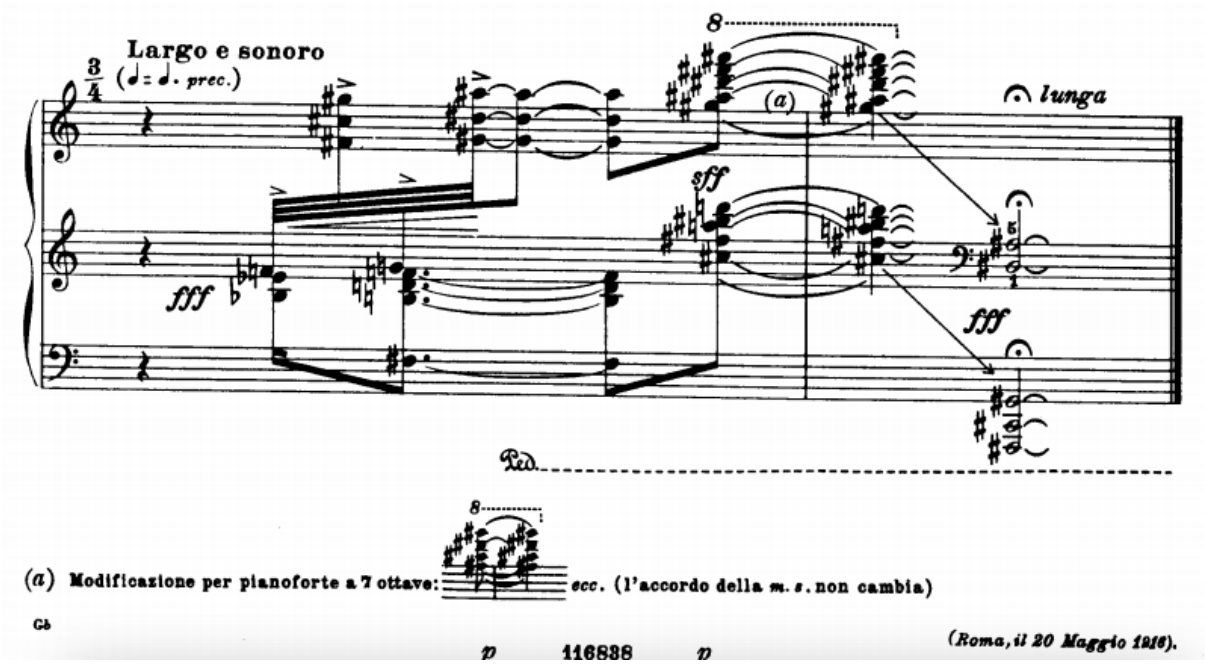


Figure 37: The sign-off at the end of the Sonatina published score

Completing the Narrative of *Sonatina* Op. 28

The *Sonatina*'s evolution is an interesting story of dates, places, and times. From the sources discussed above, the following timeline has been constructed. On 20th March 1916, Casella completed the draft of the first *allegretto moderato* movement, initially planning the work as a four-movement sonata. He then subsequently finished drafts for the *minuetto*, *preludio allegretto,* and *Finale rondo* movements on 31st March, 25th April, and 20th May respectively. In September 1916, he revisited the work and heavily edits it, removing the *preludio allegretto* movement and changing the structure of the work to a three-movement sonatina. He also added in two folios worth of new musical material, adding in sections to both the *Allegretto moderato* movement, which has now been relabelled as an *Allegro con spirito*, and adding a coda to the *minuetto.* He then began writing a completed manuscript, with articulations, phrasing, dynamics, pedal, and expressive markings all added in. This is completed by 30th October 1916. The *Sonatina* is published by Ricordi & Co. in early 1917, but dated as being completed in March 1916. One wonders why Casella bothers including the time of day or place when a movement was completed, just as one wonders why he would, in the published score, imply the work was completed on the same date that the first movement was initially sketched. Yet such is the nature of some unanswerable questions surrounding Casella's compositional process. We can now move on to discuss the style of the *Sonatina*, and the borrowed elements therein, and how performers and 'perfect connoisseurs' might interpret this work.

Style of the *Sonatina*

Being a single-movement work with a simple form meant that we could go through the stylistic elements of the *Toccata* in a structured, chronological manner. The *Sonatina*, however, is much larger, and not quite as straight forward. While the overall structure of the work borrows from the traditional three movement structure of sonatas and sonatinas (fast movement, slower triple-meter movement, fast movement), the movements themselves are not as conventional, being collages. The themes of each collage are incohesive. As will be demonstrated, the work ends with a completely random theme in the final coda, a grand *marcia solemne e grave* that suddenly emerges. Thus, each theme within the *Sonatina* will be discussed individually in relation to what it borrows. By discussing the themes individually we identify where they recur, and how they are modified. We can thus see what modifications Casella makes and how the character subsequently changes. Just as the *Toccata* had an overall character of an angry young man, the *Sonatina* has the character of a rambunctious, playful child. Each theme presents a different mood and insight into the child. The *Sonatina* is also demonstrative of Casella's use of expressive and harmonic language, using chromatic and horizontal harmonies. While still the influence from Impressionist composers, the *Sonatina* borrows broadly from Modernism, moving away from diatonic tonality. It contains elements of Stravinsky, Bartok, and Puccini, as well as soundscapes reminiscent of Casella's other works.[275]

The *Allegro* first movement has a rondo-type structure, comprising two main themes that return each time with some addition, variation, or expansion. The structure can be viewed as A B A* B* A- B- Coda. The A theme is a jumpy, jaunty, cheeky child; mischievous and playful. The B theme, *ad libitum*, is more wistful and plaintive. This oscillating between playful and plaintive occurs throughout the movement, until in the coda, it seems our child is ready for their nap, and seems to fall into sleep. While the child sleeps, they dream of a *minuetto;* a haunted marionette-puppet-like ternary-form dance. The *minuetto* is slow, calm, and ethereal and small in touch and gesture. When our child awakes, their boisterous character returns in the *finale*, veloce movement. This movement is typical of a rondo finale, being an A B A C D A* Coda structure. Each individual theme of the work presents a different mood of our child character. It is a collage of moods, moving quickly from theme to theme. While on the surface appearing incohesive, Casella creates an interconnected work through a unified, although multifaceted, character.

[275] Interestingly enough, the moments that sound 'like Puccini' came before Puccini's own works. As will be shown, the *marcia solemne e grave* referenced above appears at the very end of the *finale*. As Casella notes, it is taken from a scene in Carlo Gozzi's *Turandot*: the Chinese guard's march from Act 2, Scene 2. It was Casella who originally wrote this theme, and Puccini borrowed it from him in his own rendition of *Turandot*.
John CG Waterhouse, "Puccini's Debt to Casella." *Music and Musicians*, 13, No. 6 (May 1964), 18-33.

Allegro con spirito

The opening A theme of the *Allegro* movement (Figure 38 below) is very much characterised by two things: the markings *allegro con spirito* and *ironico ed indolente*, and the jaunty, staccato dotted rhythmic motif that opens the work in the right hand. While the left-hand accompaniment rhythm in this passage is little more than a steady pushing drum beat underneath, Casella quickly establishes a rhythmically-focussed recurring theme as the defining structure of the A theme. From rhythm, speed and momentum, the character is lively, spirited, and playful, confirmed also through the expressive markings. One easily imagines a naughty, precocious child making mischief with the hurried, darting, and jaunty nature of the theme.

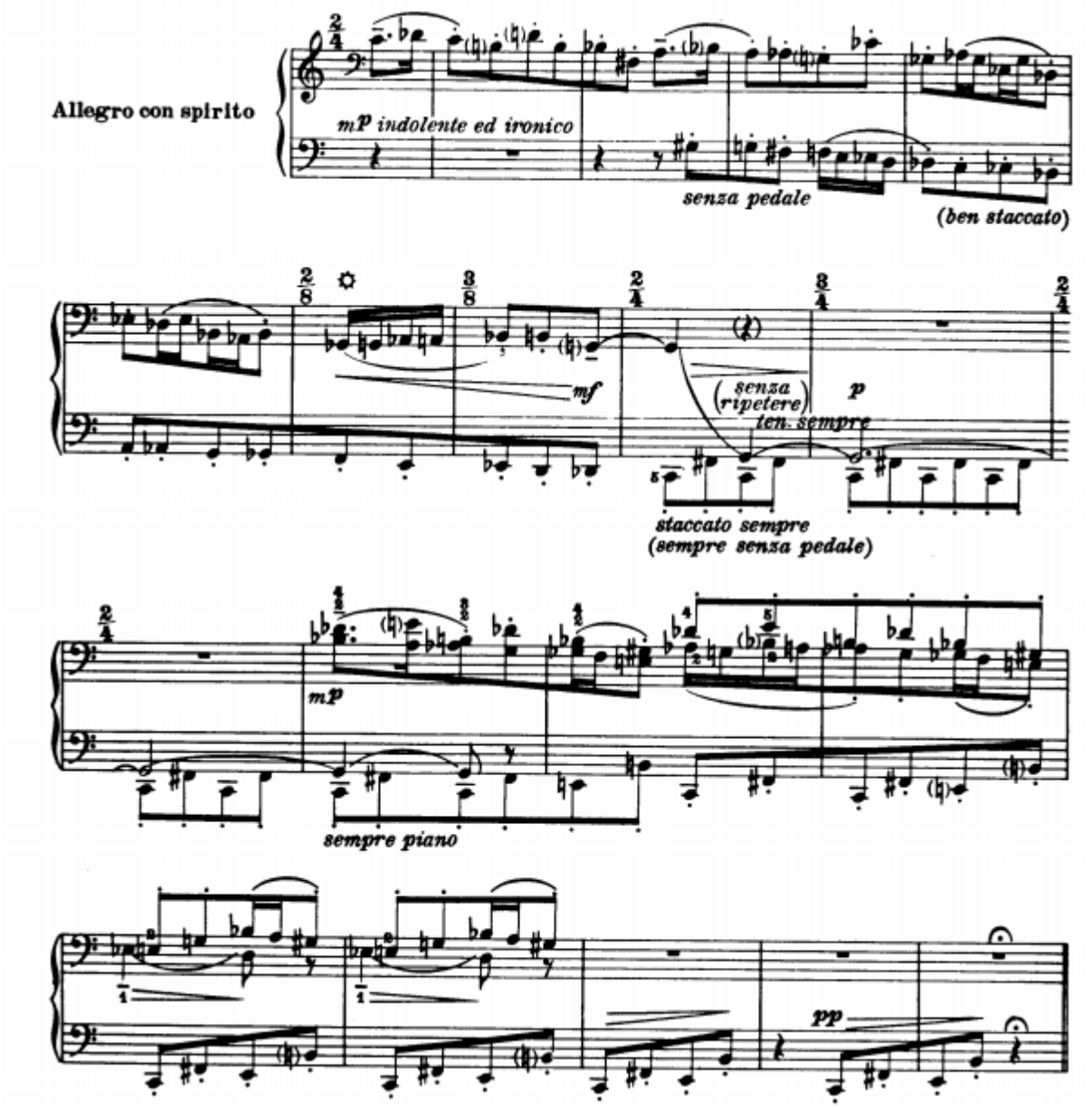


Figure 38: Theme 1: the A theme of the Allegro con spirito, first movement of Sonatina

The melodic and harmonic movement in both voices adds to the lazy, truant character. The melody moves in chromatic steps up and down, sliding up and down like a taunting, teasing voice. The harmony similarly moves downwards through chromatic; snakelike and almost lethargic except for the bouncey articulation. One other thing to note about this theme is that it is texturally quite sparse. While there are some suspensions in the middle voices, these are done with the fingers rather than the pedal. Similarly, those slurs in the upper right hand melodic line are to be achieved with good fingering and voicing rather than through any trick of the pedal. Contrastingly, Casella indicates a crispness in the accompaniment through use of staccati (*ben staccato*, *sempre staccato* are both used) and marking *senza pedale* twice throughout the theme.

Stravinsky's influence on this theme is obvious through in the ironic, indolent character. The bass voice of the A theme in Casella's *Allegro* movement is borrowed from two of Stravinsky's *Three Easy Pieces* (1914). As can be seen, the jumping, moving nature of repeated, alternating intervals in Casella's *Sonatina* above are similar to the bass voice in the *secondo* part of Stravinsky's work (Figure 39).

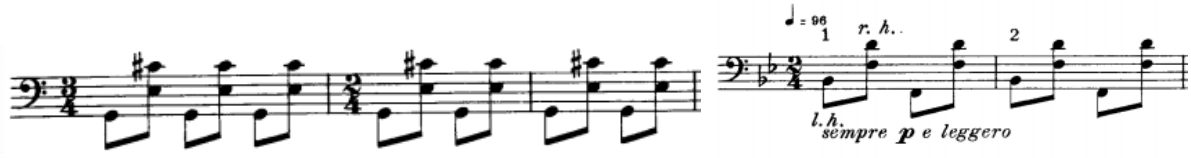


Figure 39: Bass secondo parts from Stravinsky's March and Polka (respectively) from Three Easy Pieces (1914), and the use of jumping, moving bass lines.

Just like Stravinsky's jumping, leaping jaunty accompaniment in his *March* and *Polka*, Casella's own bass voice jumps around, and keeps a march-like beat and tempo throughout the A theme. In Stravinsky's *Polka* (the second excerpt in Figure 39), we see the alternating interval between the bass voices.[276] One may also make inferences between Casella's work and the cropped and jumpy texture in the first of Debussy's prelude Book 1, No. 11 (*The Dance of Puck*).

The A theme begins and ends suddenly, and is a theme full of contrasts: a legato, slurred melodic line against a bouncy bass, chromaticism contrasted with leaping intervals, and commands for both a spirited yet lazy and ironic character. This contrast is furthered when we come to the B theme, heralded by a suspense-filled rest. The new theme is a complete contrast to what has come before What was active, spirited and bouncy is now *ad libitum, appasionata e rubato assai, con molta fantasia* (Figure 40).

[276] Interestingly enough, this *Polka* from Stravinsky's *Three Easy Pieces* was dedicated to Casella, and borrows from one of Casella's movements from *Pagine di Guerra*. It could be viewed that Casella using this figuration in his own work is, in fact, a direct tribute to Stravinsky, and a rather meta means of borrowing from himself.
Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, 1447.

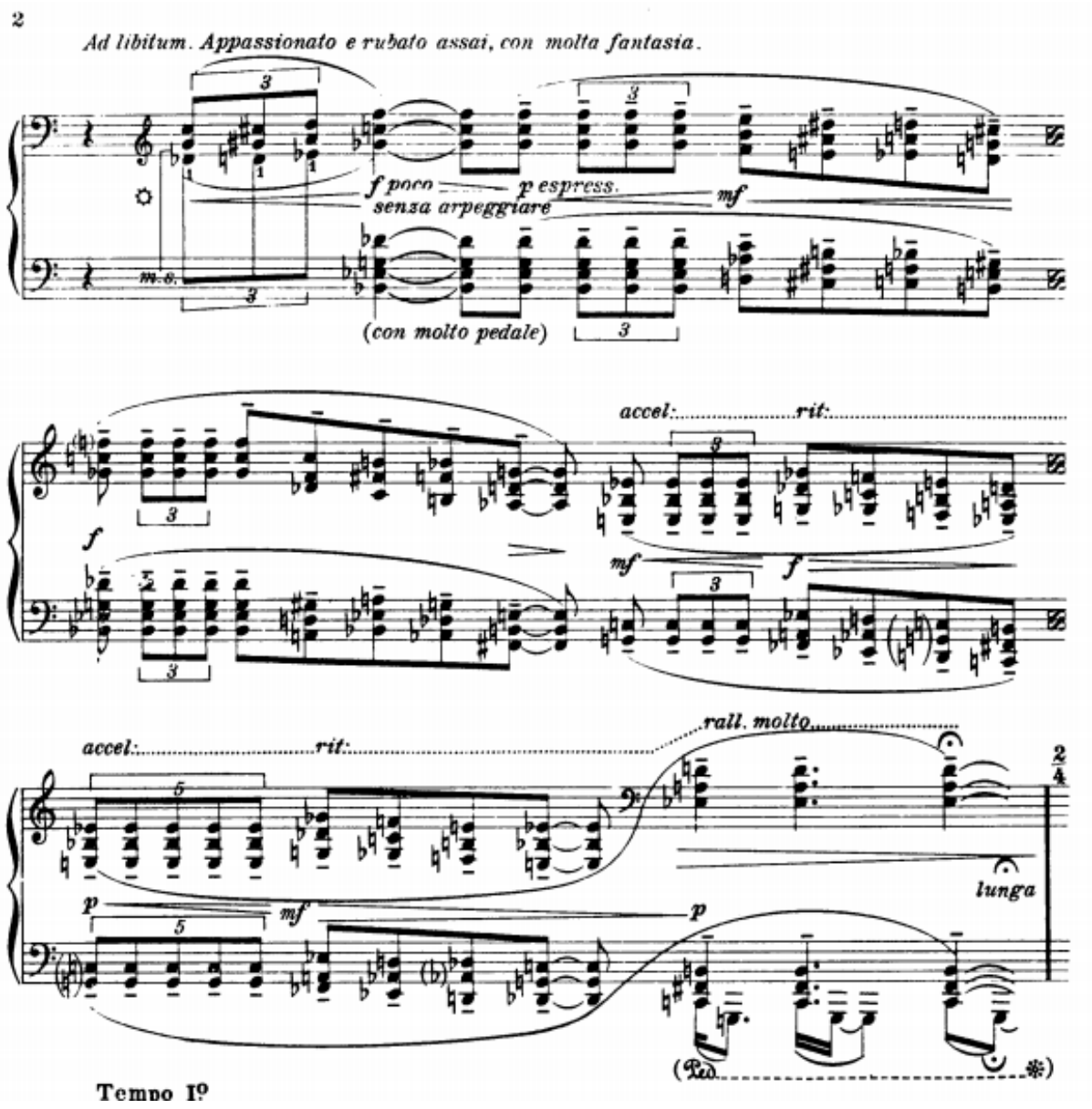


Figure 40: The B theme of the Sonatina

This second theme is more grand and free than the A theme. The child seems plaintive, or like they are daydream, imagining the most mystical, fantastical things possible. The thick texture of chords and pedal creates an undulating soundscape of resonance. Because of the continual block chords, varied dynamic range, and the single-bar open-measure, the texture and mood of the B theme is much heavier than the A, with swelling and swaying rampant. The dreaminess is portrayed through the slower tempo and dramatic change in texture, thanks to pedal. The large block chords, while not tonal (and which, in fact, are quite dissonant, being predominantly stacked 4ths) are rich and luscious. With these large, resonant chords we are reminded of Casella's statement that he was 'anti-impressionist' in his

compositional style.[277] This theme perhaps best defines what he means by that. While he happily exploits a rich and resonant texture that is indicative of Debussy's *Images* or *preludes,* and Impressionism generally, he rejects the whole-tone tonality, creating his own soundscape through stacked intervals. The stacked chords exemplify harmonic counterpoint: there are multiple voices stacked on top of each and moving in parallel motion to create a wall of sound, with no clear individual melodic line. Harmonic, or horizontal or linear, counterpoint is built on the idea of having many voices move together, but with no vertical connection between the voices, thus creating new or atonal chords. The harmony and tonality arises through layering, rather than through a typical chord progression.[278] Each horizontal line is equal in importance, necessitating the performer decide what to bring out. The performer's autonomy and expertise is further suggested through the expressive commands of the B theme. Where the A theme was rigorously in time with a drum-like accompaniment under the melody, here there is no strict beat, and not even a time signature. Rhythmic groupings of quavers that indicate where accent or emphasis might be placed, but freedom is implied through the instruction *appassionato e rubato assai*. The fantasy of the theme that can be stretched and luxuriated in. Pedal can, and should, also be used liberally and freely.

There are two sources that seem to influence the B theme: Debussy's prelude No. 10 Book 1, and Bartók's *Bagatelles* Op. 6. As noted above, there is an obvious textural and character similarity between this B theme and Debussy's work. The soundscape of stacked chords with rich pedalling is indicative of *The Sunken Cathedral*. The repetition of chords and textures is similar to both works, yet Casella uses an anti-impressionist, ironic, and dissonant tonality rather than a modal one. Casella also seems to borrow chord texture and movement from the *Fifth Bagatelle* by Bartók. In Bartók's work, the chords in both hands move in parallel motion, are slow (*grave*), and the movement is marked with extreme dynamic range. Bartók similarly creates a wall of sound dependent on how much pedal the performer chooses to include. Both borrowed-from works use stacked chords moving in parallel motion, suggesting a rich, resonant wall of sound. Casella takes this, and uses his layered, harmonic counterpoint and free meter to make the idea his own.

We then have another iteration of the A and B themes in turn, each building on the original ideas presented in the first iterations of both themes. This second iteration of both themes can be viewed as a development on each. When we come to the third reiteration of the A theme, however, there is a major change. This iteration places the jaunty staccato dotted rhythmic motif of the melody in the left hand, and has a chordal drum-beat in the upper voice: the voices are inverted. Instead of the accompanying

[277] Casella, *Muic in My Time,* 95, 96.

[278] Adele Katz, *Challenge to Musical Tradition: A New Concept of Tonality* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1972), p. 340. Interestingly, Katz claims that Stravinsky was the first composer to use linear counterpoint in 1923, in his *Octet*. However, this is incorrect, given that we see it in Casella, and his music from 1914 onwards, Bartok, and Stravinsky himself before 1923. Stravinsky even borrowed elements of Casella's harmonic counterpoint, borrowing from *À la maniere de…* as Taruskin notes.

voice being built on melodic intervals, it is here built on an inverted G^{maj7} chord. Importantly, this chord is almost a direct quote of Bartok's *Fifth Bagatelle*. As can be seen below (Figure 41), the opening line of Bartók's *Fifth bagatelle*, and the opening of the third A theme look very similar, from a similar dynamic, speed, texture, opening solo repeated chord and pitch placement of the hands.

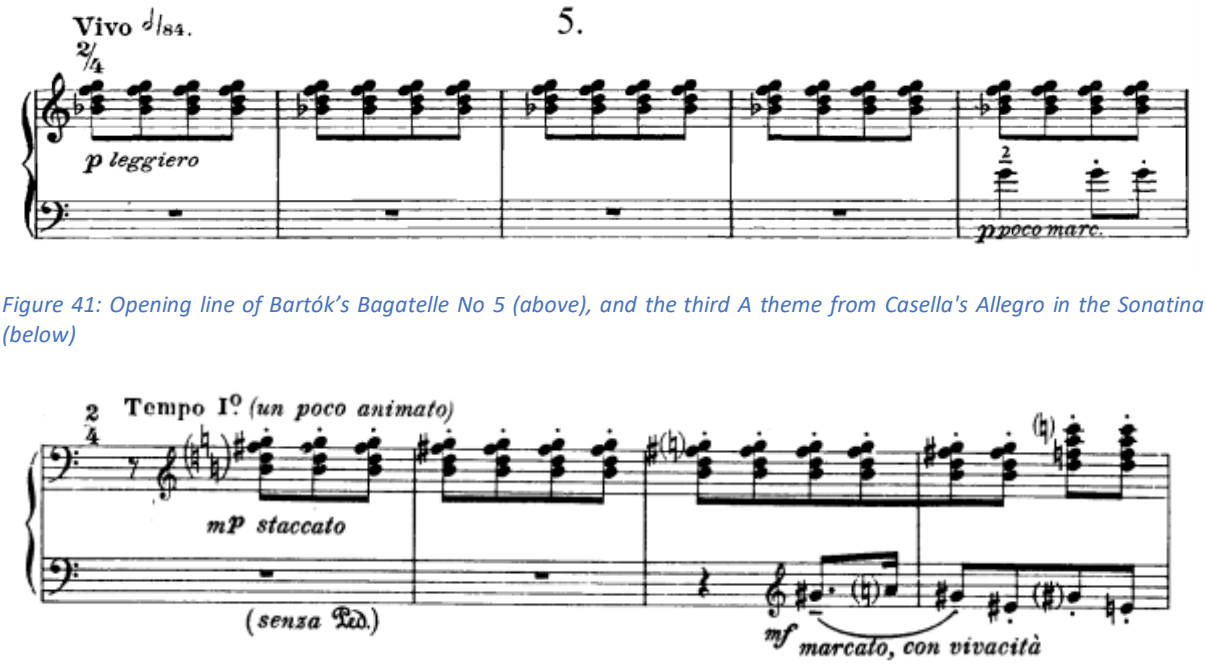


Figure 41: Opening line of Bartók's Bagatelle No 5 (above), and the third A theme from Casella's Allegro in the Sonatina (below)

The two different works are visually, aurally and tactilely similar. Even the character of the passages is extremely similar. Yet Casella quickly makes his work unique by developing the melodic line through a dotted rhythmic, and growing quickly out into large chords, and fast-moving chromatic chordal passages using the A theme's rhythmic motif. The theme then returns at the original A before leading to a final third iteration of the B theme before the coda.

The coda, while based on the A theme, is very texturally different – Casella again borrows from Bartók's *Bagatelles*. As can be seen below, there are again marked similarities between the opening of Bartók's 2nd Bagatelle and the coda (Figure 42).

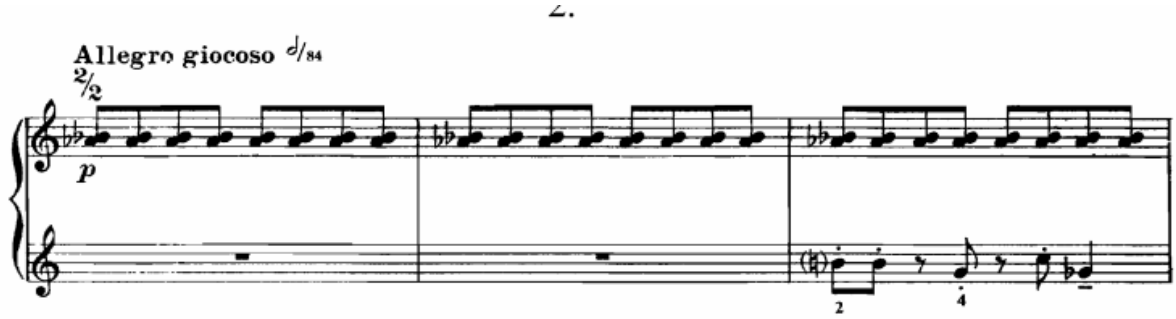
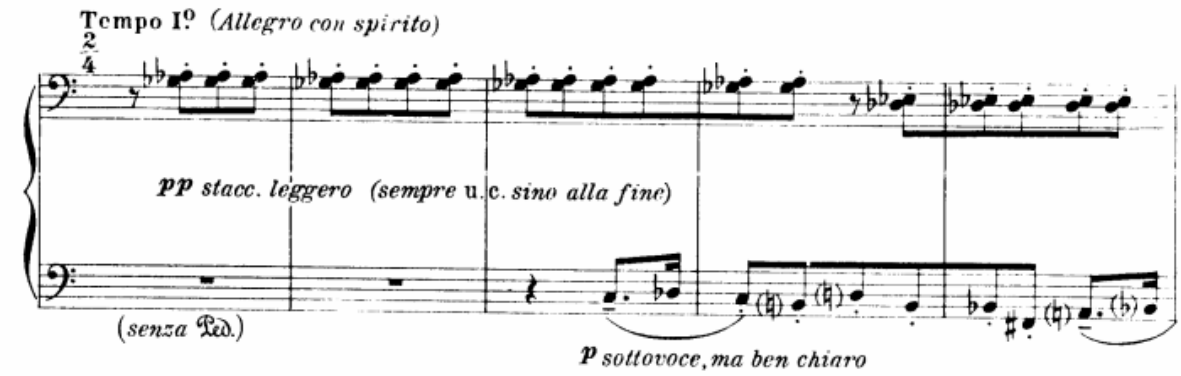


Figure 42: Opening line of Bartok's Second Bagatelle (above), and the opening line of the Coda in the Sonatina's Allegro movement (below)



We see the similar use of the major second, duple time and rhythmic pulse, and proximity of the melodic line to the harmony, also entering two bars later. The expressive language of both sections is similar, Bartok being *Allegro giocoso*, while Casella uses *Allegro con spirito*. The coda is a collage of A and B themes, alternating between a state of spirited cheekiness and passionate fantasy. Our unruly child-like character oscillates between active and stagnant, sparsity and richness throughout the movement until it winds up and away, preparing for the true dreamscape of the upcoming *minuetto* movement.

Minuetto

The *Minuetto* movement is reminiscent of a haunted marionette, and exemplifies the avant-garde in Casella's compositional style. It is the most lyrical of the *Sonatina* movements, and presents the dreamscape of our sleeping child. The *minuetto* is written in ternary form, borrowing from the tradition of minuets within sonatas.[279] Throughout Casella's *minuetto* we see chords moving by chromatic step up and down, and the melody similarly moves as a chromatic scale, without many large leaps. This small-stepping – and the resultingly snake-like unfolding character this creates – continues throughout the movement.

The entire movement is based around a repeating rhythmic motif used throughout the movement as the basis of the A and coda sections. This pattern can be seen here (Figure 43).

[279] Meredith Ellis Little, "Minuet," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 28th May 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18751.
Alfredo Blatter, *Revisiting Music Theory: A Guide to the Practice*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 28.

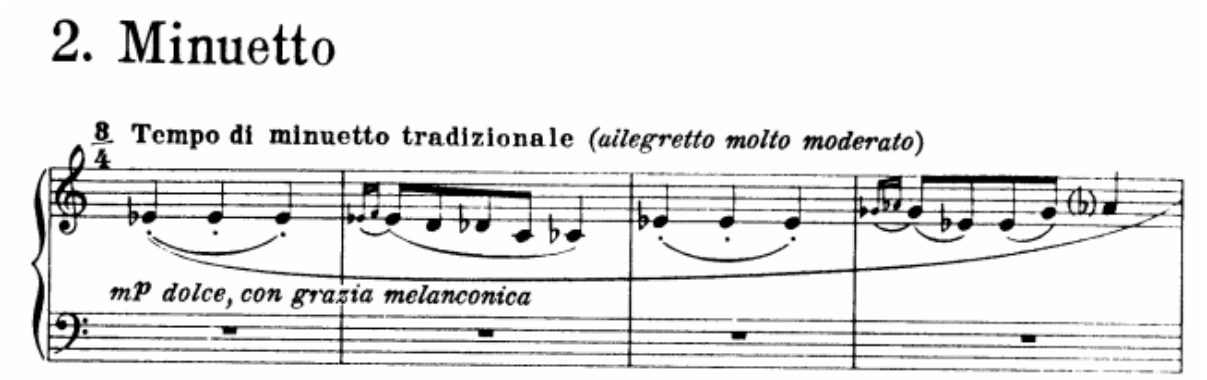


Figure 43: The opening of the Minuetto, and the rhythmic motif that forms the basis of themes within the movement

The pitch-structure of this motif is similarly reused throughout the movement. As can be seen above, there is a repeated note, following by an ornamented chromatically descending passage. This two-bar motif is then followed by another repeated note, and then a hopping ascending motif. When we come to the B section, the rhythmic motif is the same (although without the ornamentation), but the melodic pitch-structure changes. As can be seen below (Figure 44), the B theme uses chromatically descending notes in each of the upper voices, and the descending melodic chromatic sequence in the second bar is replaced ascends. Harmonic counterpoint is again utilised, though only in the upper voices rather than both hands.

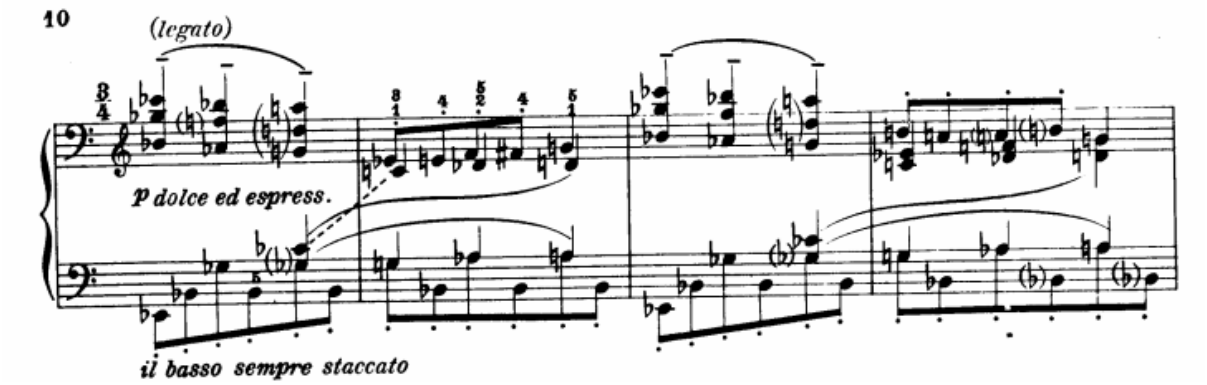


Figure 44: The opening of the B Section of the Minuetto, with a change in melodic contour and harmony

In the B section, the harmony also changes. What were previously chords changes into a broken arpeggio sequence in the bass. The lowest voice offers a textural contrast through staccato, arpeggiated chords. This bass voice is evocative of Casella's earlier style, reminding us of the bass voice in both his his *Pavane* Op. 1 and the *Toccata* Op. 6. There is also a contrast of textures presented, just as in the A theme of the *Sonatina's* first movement. We have *sempre staccato* marked in the bass, and *legato, dolce*

ed espressivo marked for the upper voices. This contrast of crisp and smooth chords against arpeggios further conveys the haunted, ethereal character of the movement.

The coda of the *minuetto* is similar to the coda in the *Allegro* movement, being a stripped-back version of the A theme of the movement. The coda leads to the very lowest pitches of the piano, and the very softest dynamics possible through sneaky, stealthy means. *Tenere a lungo* is marked after the final chord, implying that the sound must ring out until the piano stops resonating (Figure 45 below).

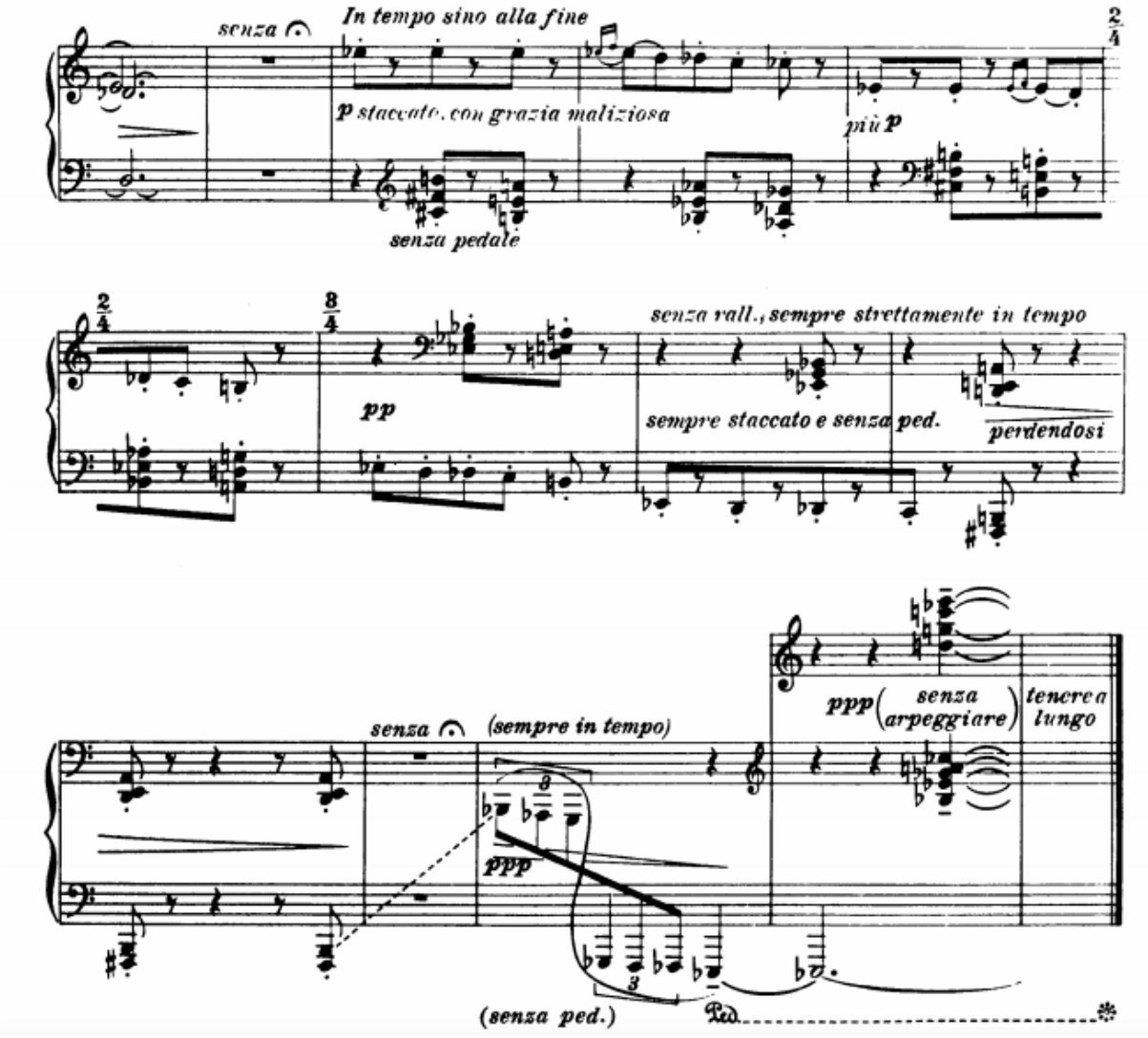


Figure 45: The coda del Minuetto

There are two points for consideration regarding the *minuetto* that should be made before moving on to discuss the *Finale*: the pedalling and expressive commands, and the similarities between this movement with various other works by Casella. If we look first to pedal, we have only to look at the above figure (Figure 45) to see how important texture is in this movement. *Senza pedale* is marked at several points, demanding a crisp and light texture, and further evidences through staccati. Throughout the movement,

Casella marks at various points when he want no pedal. When we thinking of preface to the *Sonatina*, commanding performers to be very 'pedallistic', is seems a strong command when there it to be no pedal.

The expressive and tempo commands of the Minuetto are also important. The tempo marking *tempo di minuetto tradizionale (allegretto molto moderato)*, and the expressive command indicating the mood of the movement *dolce con grazia melanconica*, are strong and specific directions for the perfomer to follow. *Melanconica* commands the character of the movement. Throughout the movement are also commands for *espressivo, leggero, triste*, and *misterioso*: it is not a joyous, jubilant and active movement like the *Allegro*, but light, delicate and ethereal.

There are obvious similarities between the *Minuetto* movement and two movements of *Pupazzetti* Op. 27 (1915) for piano four-hands, also by Casella. The second movement, *Berceuse*, and the fourth movement, *Notturino* both evoke a haunted, delicate, and melancholic soundscape similarly present in the *Minuetto*. Casella uses the same soundscape in these pieces, a symptom of his melancholic expressive and harmonic language employed in slower movements.

Finale: veloce molto

We now come to the *Finale:* an extremely fast and lively rondo movement that returns to the cut-and-paste nature of the first movement. It is bursting with energy: our child has awoken, and is again truant and loud. Unlike the *Allegro* movement, the length of each theme in the *finale* is inconsistent, adding to the cut-and-paste nature of the movement. These cut-and-paste themes cement the work as being avant-garde, and the extreme and sudden changes in texture, tonality, and character solidifies Casella's sense of humour and irony throughout the work. While it is dazzling and technically challenging, the *Finale* is not a glorious finale typical of many sonatas. It is also comic, ironic, and dissonant. Gesturally, this movement is also typical of Casella demands of the performer. The *finale* requires dexterity, speed, and agility of the fingers to successful play the work, yet also needs a keen understanding of resonance and collage to make a convincing interpretation and a cohesive performance of the work.

Similarly to the *Allegro*, the A theme of the *Finale* is repeated throughout the movement, each time with a change or extension made to it to complicate and diversify it. The structure of the movement is A B A* C D A~ Coda. Unlike the first movement, however, in the *Finale* there are many different interluding themes interspersed between the A theme. We this of a rondo movement. Yet Casella bends the structure of rondo even further, including the final *ad libitum* B theme (listed as D in the structure

above) from the *Allegro* movement as a bridge between the C and A~ theme, before finishing with an extended coda. The main theme of the work is an irregular 10-bar structure shown below (Figure 46).

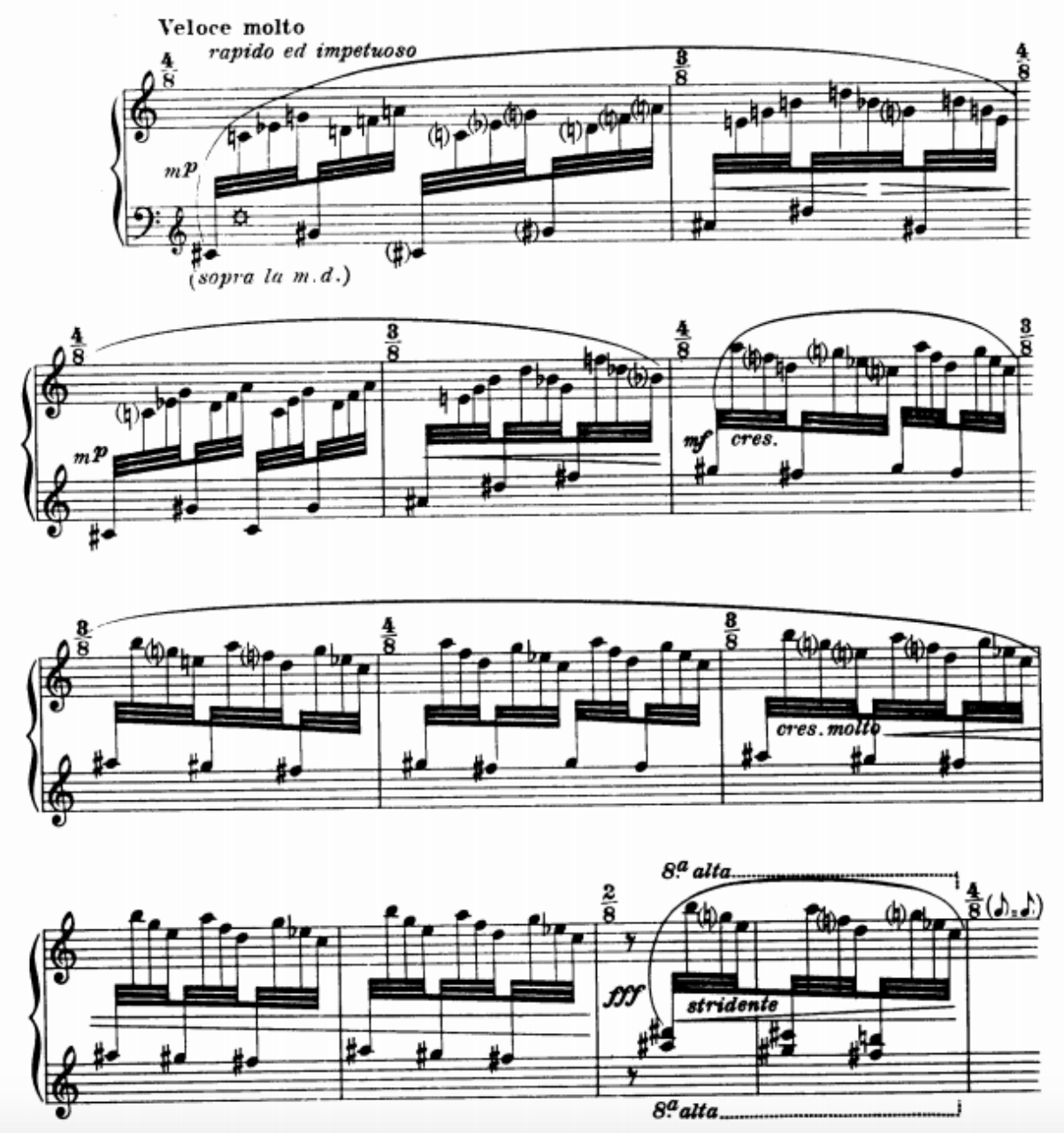


Figure 46: Opening 10-bar A theme of the Finale that rccurs throughout the movement

There are features in the above figure (Figure 46) that introduce various recurring elements that appear through the movement. First is the expressive tempo command: *veloce molto, rapido ed impetuoso.* There is no doubt that this is a very fast movement. Casella wants speed and haste throughout. Yet the *impetuoso* adds a tempestuousness and impetuousness to the child character. Being suddenly awake, our child is shocked at being awake, flinging toys and yelling loudly. The movement is not only fast, but without care, flinging notes out, away from the fingers as they are played. Similarly, the constantly

changing time signatures and growing dynamics throughout the phrase support this upset impetuousness. The *stridente* and *fortississimo* support the growing tantrum that seems sure to erupt from our child, continually building through intensity of dynamics and pitch, and irregularity of beat. The A theme is rather odd in its beat structure, alternating between 4/8 and 3/8, and then finally ending in 2/8. We must wonder why Casella does not simply use 7/8; he has demonstrated previously that he is not afraid of using irregular time signatures. It creates an unbalanced irregularity, already unsettled due to an oscillating tonality between diminished and minor. While the melodic line, played with the left hand, moves largely in perfect or major intervals, the accompanying arpeggios in the right hand are largely descending and minor, thus creating a diminished effect to the tonality.

There are several aspects in the A theme that appear to be borrowed from other works. The placement of melodic notes at the beginning of semiquaver groupings is similar to Casella's *Toccata* Op. 6, and Debussy's *Toccata* from *Pour le piano*. Yet Casella also borrows from another of Debussy's works. When the A theme reappears in its second and third iterations, there are obvious borrowings from Debussy's Prelude No. 1 Book 2, *Brouillards.* As can be seen below (Figure 47), Debussy's Prelude uses demisemiquaver motifs not dissimilar to Casella's in the *Finale*. While in the first A theme Casella uses groups of four demisemiquavers, this quickly develops into groups of five in the second and third iterations of the theme. The similarities between the two works can be seen below.

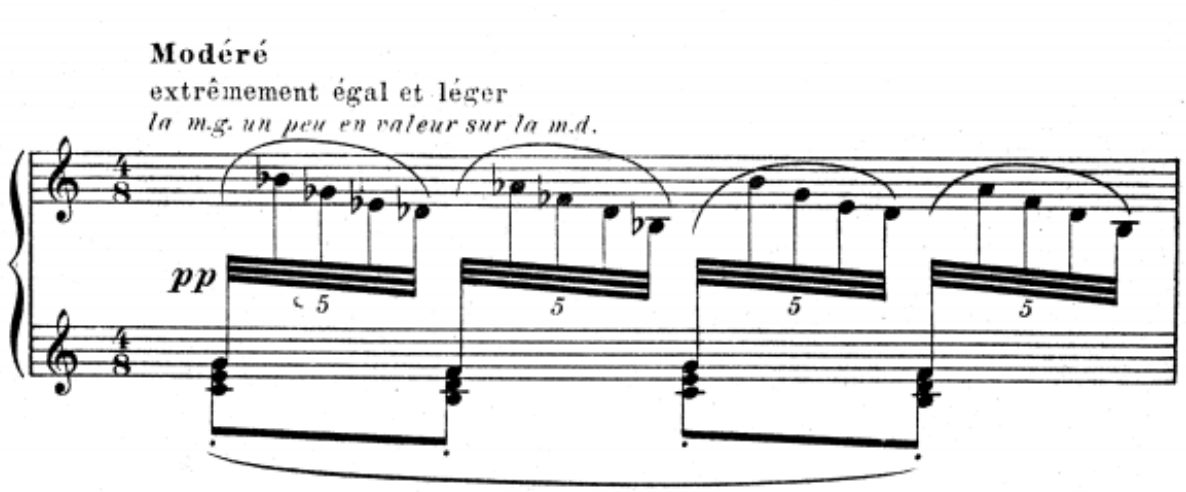
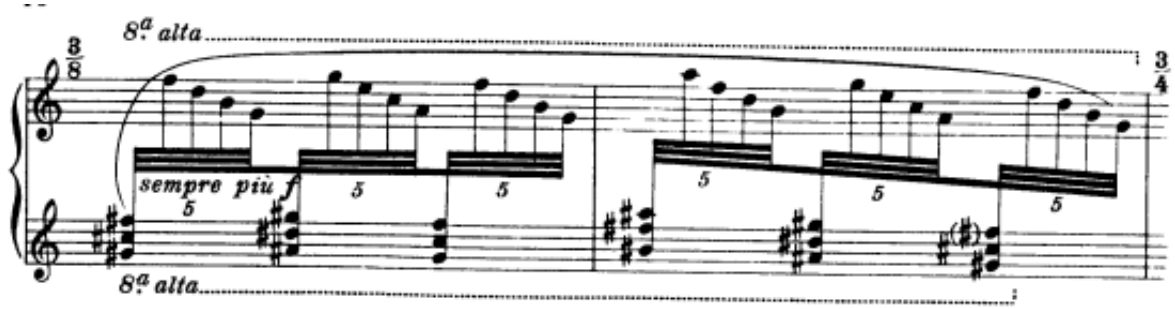


Figure 47: The opening bar of Debussy's Prelude No. 1 Book 2 compared with the second iteration of the A theme in Casella's Finale, both using quintuplet demisemiquavers



As can be seen, Casella places the melodic notes at the beginning of each beat, similar to both Debussy's work above, and the B theme in Casella's own *Toccata*. After the first iteration of the A theme, he moves towards Debussy's quintuplet grouping for the second and third iterations. Both works feature a contrast in tonality between the melodic chord at the start of each demisemiquaver grouping and the following arpeggio sequence. While in Debussy's work, the chord is all white notes and the arpeggio is black notes, Casella inverts this, using black-note chords and white-note arpeggios.

When we come to the B theme of the *finale*, the character of our tempestuous child morphs into a more sulking, angry tone. No longer is the child confused and startled upon waking, but angry and impatient. Similarly to the third entrance of the A theme in the *Allegro* movement, there is an entry of several bars of repeated chords (Figure 48), stomping and thumping in the bass.

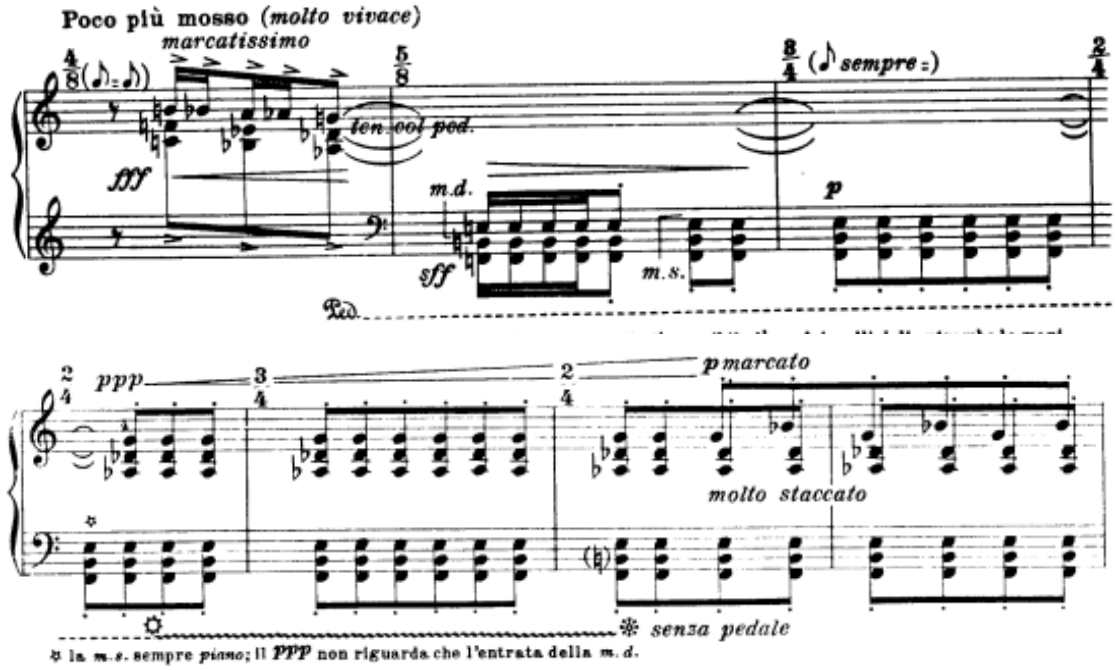


Figure 48: The opening of the B theme, and the stomping, march-like pounding that grows throughout the theme

There is no relenting in speed or intensity. While the dynamic volume drops suddenly, there is still much intensity through the rich wall of staccato chords, the use of pedal, and the staggered addition of voices to the accompaniment. While the harmony and texture shifts away from the sparser, rapid movement of the A theme, the mood of our impetuous child is still growing, still angry, and becoming markedly more aggressive. In this theme, Casella again draws on Bartók's 5th *Bagatelle* Op. 6, and the repeated chords that build in intensity and dynamics. Yet Casella is much more aggressive, intense, and rich compared to Bartók. While the idea of the repeated dissonant chord is borrowed, the resulting texture and character is novel.

Our child seems stunned into silence at the end of the B theme before the second appearance of the A theme, where the tempestuous mood returns. While very similar to the first A theme, is it extended and incorporates the quintuplet demisemiquaver pattern mentioned before, showing a borrowed idea from Debussy. Like the original A theme, the work continues rising and building in pitch and tension until culminating in another *stridente* rising motif. We then come to the C theme (Figure 49): a joyous march, in contrast to the stomping aggressive one of the B theme. This march reminds us of the cheeky, joyful nature of the child's character heard in the *Allegro* through the use of a strict rhythm and staccati.

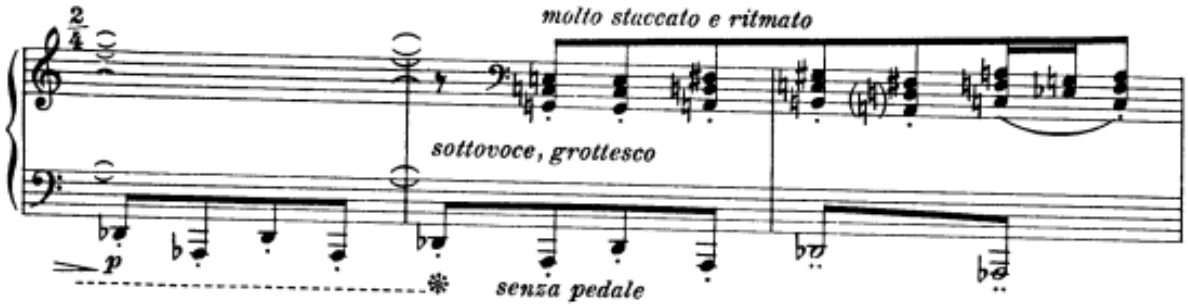


Figure 49: The opening of the C Theme, Finale

The accompanying motif in the C theme seem to borrow from the A theme of the *Allegro*, although inverted to a descending jumping harmonic interval. There is a sense of anticipation and excitement building, perpetuated with the ascending melodic chords in the right hand. Just as in the *Allegro*, this leads us to a dream-like *ad libitum* theme, verbatim taken from the first movement to act as the D theme of the *Finale* (Figure 50).

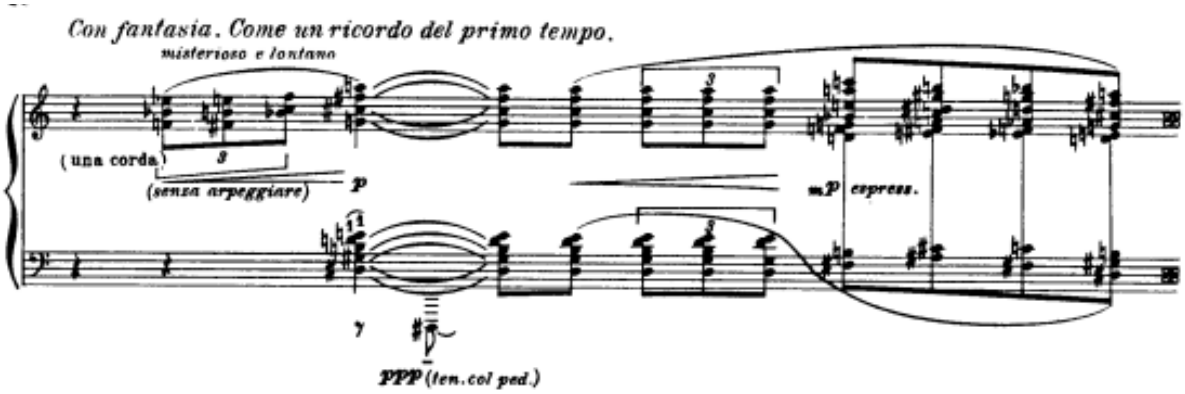


Figure 50: The reappearance of the Ad libitum B theme from the Allegro movement, here used as the D fourth theme in the Finale

This stillness and dream-like soundscape is only short lived, before quickly returning to the tempestuous and agitated A~ theme, building to a point of tension. Casella hints to moments in the coda throughout the final iteration of the A~ theme, interspersing the rapid demisemiquaver patters with undulating chordal passages (Figure 51).

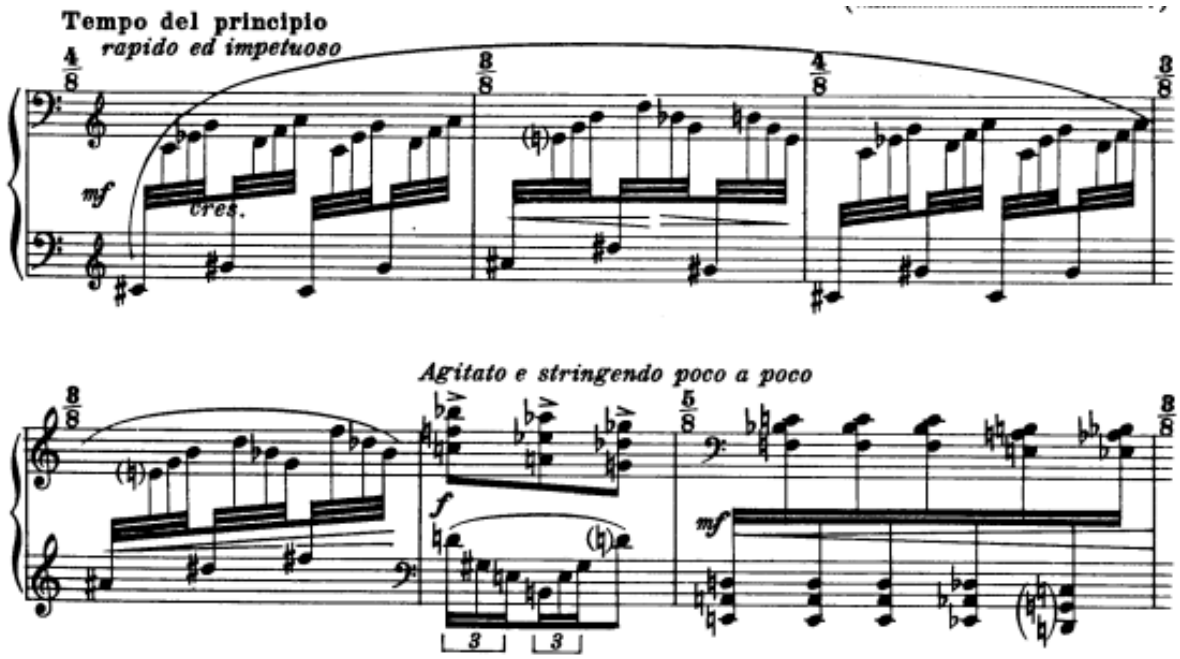


Figure 51: The final return of the A theme before the coda, interspersed with undulating chords to hint at what comes in the following section

These interrupting chordal passages between the demisemiquaver runs are reminiscent of the B theme in the *Minuetto* movement. Just like in the *Minuetto*, these stacked chords descend by, with an arpeggio-like accompanying pattern underneath (bar 5, figure 51). They are then followed by a shimmering, oscillating pattern of chords between the hands that grows in intensity and volume, foreshadowing similar chordal, shimmering moments in the coda. While he maintains the *agitato* and *rapido* aggressive nature of the A theme, the texture burgeons to include dense chords, leading to the coda. This is a bridge to a new register of the piano, and a radically new tempo. Above a C# pedal point, Casella offers gradually ascending chords, steadily moving the right hand up to the highest register of the piano. This *confuse e misterioso* bridge leads to the coda: *tempo di marcia grave e solenne*, which is marked *pianississimo, sordamente, tenebroso*. It is a dark and mysterious mood that is eerily spooky in the silent deafness of the rich chords that span the entire range of the piano (Figure 52).

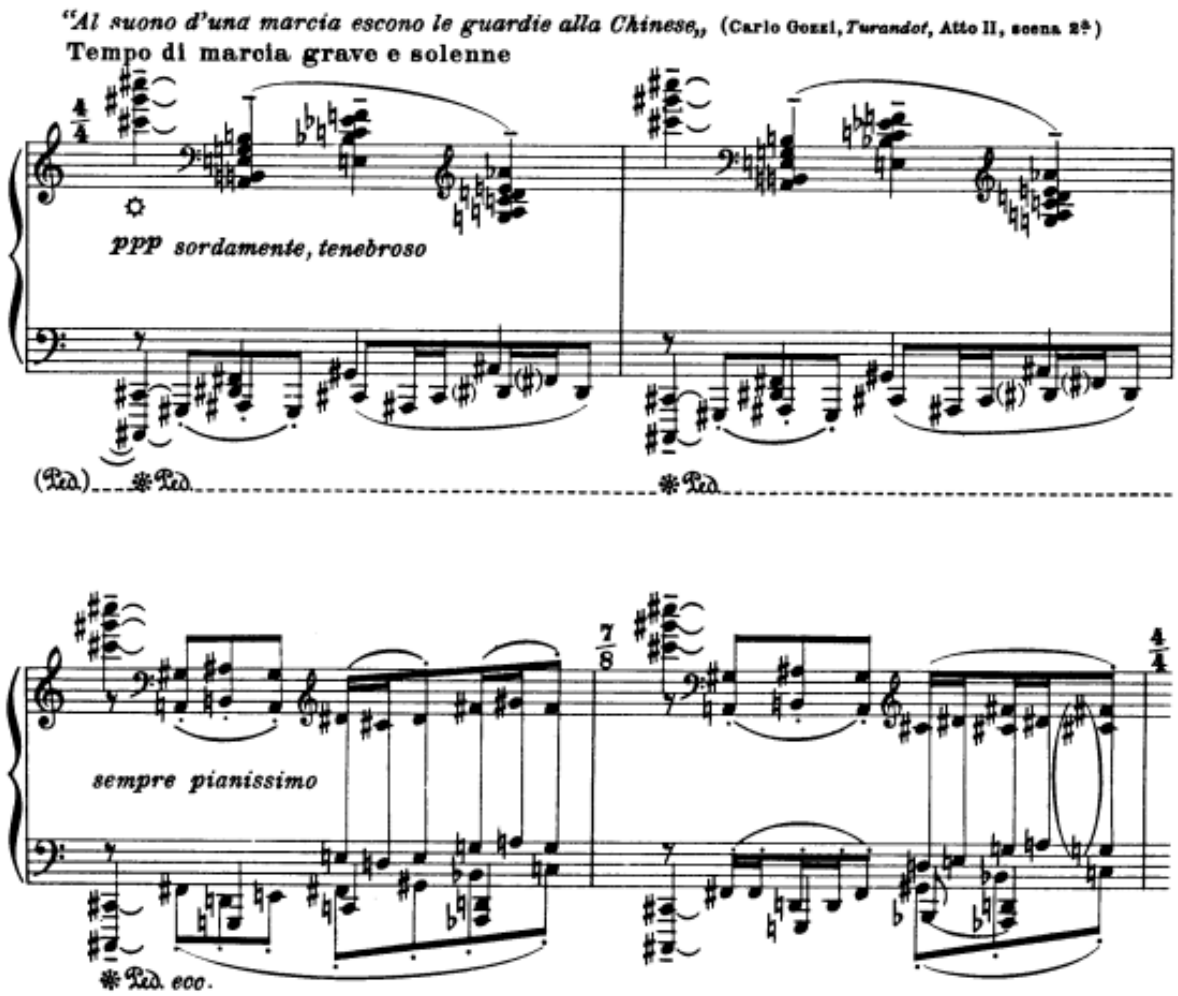


Figure 52: The coda of the Finale, with massive chords spanning the piano's entire range

Casella notes where he draws the inspiration for this coda: Gozzi's *Turandot*, and the *marcia escono le guardie alla Chinese* from act 2, scene 2. This *marcia chinese* is apparent through the moving bass melodic line, and the stepping major thirds that move around the lowest register of the instrument in the upper voices.[280] Yet there is an eeriness and a darkness that comes from the slow speed, the density of tonality and texture, and the change of melodic line to being in the bottom register of the piano. Our child is no longer boisterous, but entirely enraged and stomping in a black fury. The mood is serious, rather than a playful, and continues throughout until the final bars of the work where our child's mood shifts. The darkness lifts and is replaced by a dazzling brightness, like the child has found joy again (Figure 53).

[280] One is reminded of Casella's saying that 'all "modern" music sounds alike, as do the Chinese and Japanese languages to those who do not speak them … This [misconception] exists not only in the camp of the modernists, but also, and not less deplorably, among the enemies of modernity.' (I segreti della giara, 232). Other than this quote, it would seem there is little programmatic significance regarding his reference to Gozzi's work in the *Sonatina.*

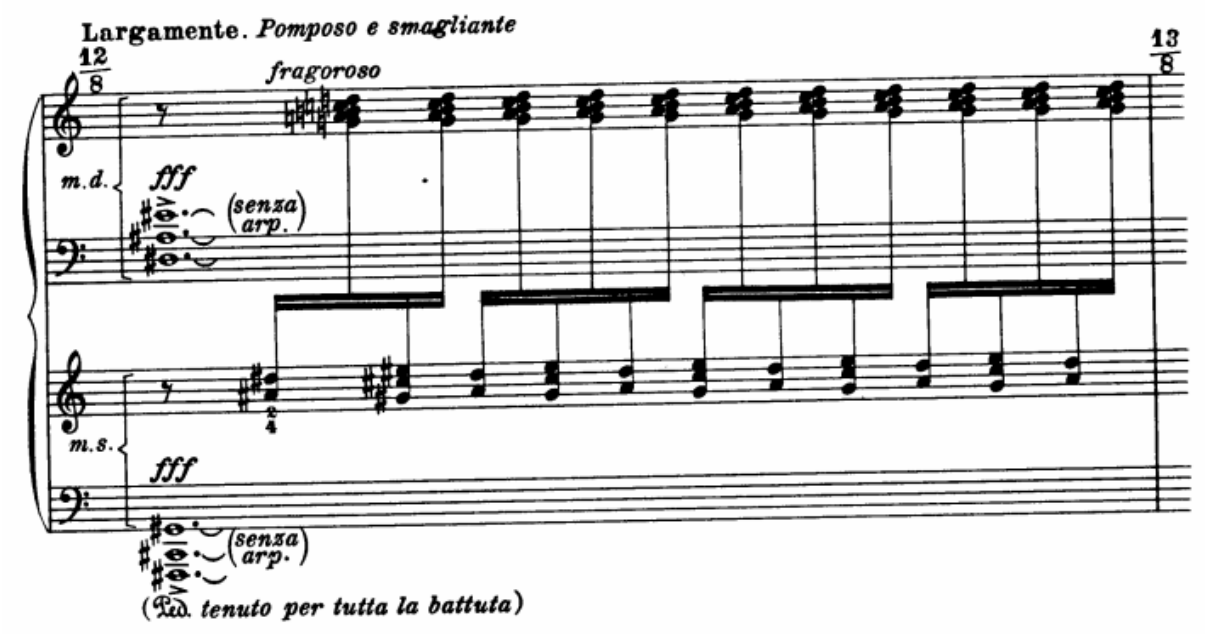


Figure 53: The final mood of the Finale: a dazzling, shimmering, and once more joyous theme

This final, dazzling moment in the coda also seems borrowed from moments in Scriabin's *Vers de Flamme* (1914, Figure 54 below), such as the middle section of Scriabin's work that is marked *eclatant, lumineux*. The inner, shimmering alternative semiquaver voice is similar to both works, with a rich chordal accompaniment. As Scriabin marks in his work, it is a joyous, luminous, and dazzling section that should be played proudly and jubilantly like a fanfare. This character is similarly reflected at the end of Casella's coda, through a new tempo marking of *Largamente. Pomposo e smagliante*. The same shimmer and dazzle is evident through the semiquaver texture and loud dynamics of both works.

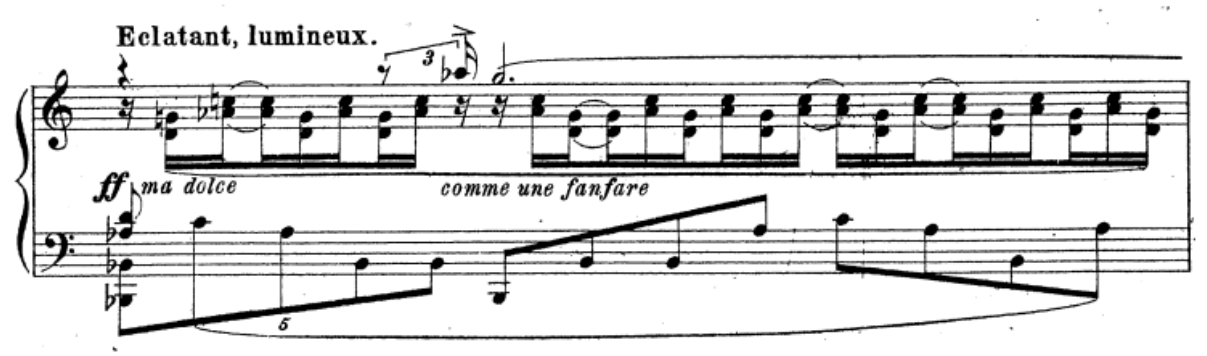


Figure 54: Scriabin's Vers la flamme and the similar texture to the coda of Casella's Finale

With the final bars of the *Sonatina*, our child's mood lifts once more to one of jubilance, excitement, and energy. The coda itself is cut-and-paste in nature, rather than thematically linking to other sections of the work. It is so unrelated to everything else before it in terms of melody, texture, and even character. The *Sonatina* exemplifies Casella's borrowing, both from himself, history and individual works. It is

perhaps the best work of his oeuvre to demonstrate the balance of borrowed and original present in all his piano compositions. It is a classical form, borrowing from Debussy, Bartok, Stravinsky, Scriabin and Casella himself. But there is also Casella's unique tonality and soundscape present throughout the whole work, and an individual style evident through the cut-and-paste themes.

Performing and Interpreting the *Sonatina*

A possible character reading of the *Sonatina* has been given through the stylistic discussion of the child-like character. This character has been ascertained using expressive language notated in the score, and the building and diminishing of harmonic tensions and dynamic intensities throughout the work. But there is one other consideration the performer, at least, must make, which is how to make sense of the structure of the work, and the cut-and-paste nature of the themes therein.

We know that Casella believed, at least later in his life, that to correctly interpret a work, the performer needs to make sense of the entire work: the elements, the different themes, and various gestures and motifs within a work. Everything needs to be made sense of, and seemingly fit together in the mind of the performer to be able to correctly interpret the work, regardless of what that interpretation might be. Yet with the *Sonatina*, this is extremely difficult. There is no overall sense of cohesion across the work. While within movements there is a semblance of interrelation between themes, there is little to link the movements together other than the quotation of the *Allegro* within the *Finale*, and the use of harmonic counterpoint in all movements. Due to the many themes across the entire work, is disjointed and chaotic structurally and interpretively. This is before one even considers the technical demands of the work. Does one try to make sense of the work by creating a character reading that incorporates every theme in a tenuous way? Or, alternatively, does one ignore Casella's instruction to 'understand the whole work', and lean into the incongruous nature of the themes, exacerbating the cut-and-paste nature of the work?

The answer is both. Conceptually, the performer must have an overall understanding of the *Sonatina*. It is too challenging and demanding of a work – both technically and musically – to perform convincingly to not have an overarching structure in one's mind. Simultaneously, however, the performer must also understand the contrasts and differences in the themes, and accentuate this in their performance and interpretation. And what being is more incongruous yet understandable and predictable? A toddler, or young child. Hence creating a child-like character to aid interpretation. The music itself is intense to read: the length and sheer number of notes, not to mention the use of three and four staves at times, is arguably intimidating. But when broken down, there is simplicity and repetitiveness in the score. The tonalities and soundscapes within the work, while beautiful at moments, are aggressive, and show an intensity in character. The technical demands on the performer are intense

and continuous throughout the movement. The *Sonatina* can be seen as establishing and cementing Casella's pianist compositional style: what was foreshadowed in the *Toccata* is firmly present here, and his sense of tonality and the technical demands he makes on the performer are strikingly evident from the outset.

Case Study 3: *Undici pezzi infantili* Op. 35, 1920

> The *Undici pezzi* mark my final liberation from uncertainty and experimentation and my secure and knowing entry into a creative phase now fully personal and clarified. This set of pieces represents the attainment of harmony between the creator and his art, a peace in which he could travel his road without distraction and give definitive style to his own invention.[281]

This collection of short pieces is signalled as a turning point in Casella's compositional career. The composer himself retrospectively noted these works as a coming of age, turning point in his compositional style.[282] Similarly, his critics and reviewers labelled these works as his first mature compositions that signalled a settled compositional style and voice.[283] Yet there is nothing new in the compositional style, or compositional language, of the *Undici pezzi infantili*, other than their relative simplicity. Undoubtedly, they are more mature than previous works, being more refined. There is none of the cut-and-paste collage heard in the *Sonatina*, and all borrowed elements are used conspicuously. Similarly, the tonality is less aggressively chromatic, and incorporates modes and diatonicism.

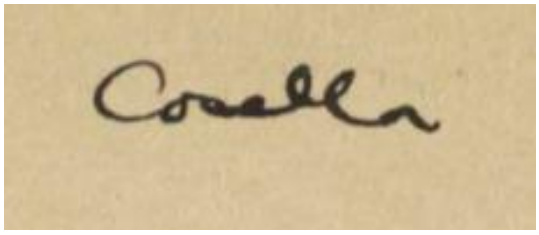
The pieces are much more simplistic than anything Casella had written for piano up to this point in his career (excluding *Pavane* Op. 1), both structurally and harmonically. Each movement is short and repetitive, based on a single motif. Longer movements, such as *Valse diatonique* and *Gigue*, are written in ternary form, and shorter movements like *Canone* are, as the title suggests, written in the form indicated by the title. Each movement offers a snapshot as to how Casella treats a specific form or structure. Harmonically, there are none of the large, dense, rich chords seen in the *Sonatina*, or the *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata.* Most pieces are written with single-line melodies, and sometimes a two- or three-part accompaniment. The resulting textures are light and simple. These are not grand, complex pieces, but still offer an insight into the interpretative challenges of Casella's music, and a snapshot of his sound-world.

The Compositional Process

Undici pezzi infantili was written during 1920, and published by Universal Edition (UE) in 1921. The only true archival source we have for this work is the completed manuscripts supplied to UE, which is

[281] Casella, *Muic in My Time,* 151
[282] Casella, *I segreti della giara*, 121.
[283] Gatti notes in his article that 1920 was the beginning of Casella's new, third compositional phase, and that the works from this period were of a new 'neo-modern' style. Gatti, "Alfredo Casella," 188, 189.

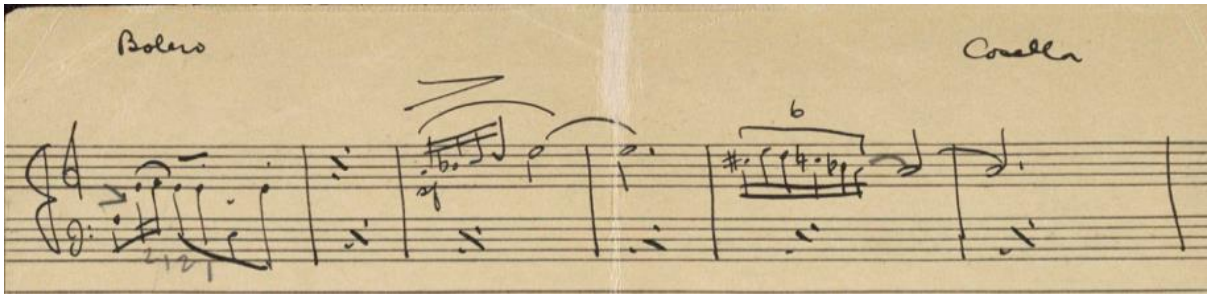
missing the *Preludio* movement, and the first page of the *Valse diatonique*.[284] There is nothing in Casella's sketchbooks relating to the *Undici pezzi*, although it seems unlikely that there would be no sketch or draft material, given the number of movements alone would require some planning. There is one other archival source that makes no sense: an autograph score of the fourth *Bolero* movement in the Piers Morgan Library and Museum, New York.[285] The Morgan Library manuscript does not seem to be actually written by Casella. If we look closely at the two manuscripts, the penmanship does not look the same, especially in Casella's signature (Figure 55).



[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 55: Casella's 'signature' in the Morgan Library Bolero, and his signature at the end of the UE manuscript

The two signatures are different. Casella also never signed his name as simply 'Casella,' always using 'Alfredo Casella' or 'AC.' One other odd thing about this signature is that it appears at the top of Casella's manuscript, near the title of the work, rather than at the very end of the movement, as is normal in other archival sources. There is also no date anywhere on the Morgan Library *Bolero* manuscript, nor is a tempo marking. We know that Casella always included a tempo marking at the beginning of all works: sketches, drafts, and most definitely completed manuscripts. As can be seen below (Figure 56), there is no tempo marking or time signature in the Morgan Library manuscript, where the UE edition is marked *allegro spagnuolo*.



[284] Alfredo Casella, *11 Pezzi infantili* Op. 32, 1920, manuscript, WBR, MS, Dauerleihgabe UE, Casella 018, Musiksammlung, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus. Appendix 9.
[285] Alfredo Casella, *Bolero* from *Undici pezzi infantili*, op. 32, 1920, manuscript, Cary 465, Record ID: 114316, The Morgan Library and Museum, New York. Accessed 20th May 2019, https://www.themorgan.org/music/manuscript/114316. Appendix 10.

Figure 56: The opening line of the Morgan Library manuscript (above) compared with the opening line of the UE manuscript (below)

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Finally, the use of repeat signs for repeated material in the bass are written differently, and the bass clef is distinctly different. It does not seem possible that the Morgan Library version of the manuscript was actually written by Casella: there are too many elements in common with his other drafts and manuscript scores that are missing from this score, and the penmanship of various elements is markedly different from his usual style. It is likely that the Morgan Library has incorrectly labelled this score as being an autograph by Casella, and as such, this archival source will not be used for the following discussion.

Now let us discuss the narrative and evolution of *Undici pezzi*. As stated before, there is nothing to suggest that any sketch or draft material exists for these works, other than the UE manuscript.[286] As we can see from Figure 55 above, the manuscript was dated on 2nd December 1920, in Rome. The work was then published by UE in 1921. We do not know anything else about the work's evolution for certain. Yet, we can surmise from this manuscript that all three phases of Casella's compositional process were done on the one manuscript, and in quick succession. Given the number of revisions, scribbles, and blackouts throughout the manuscript, it suggests the drafting, editing and polishing were all done on one source. On the very first page of the manuscript, halfway through *Valse diatonique*, there is an inserted section of music (Figure 57) written above the staves and looped in a red bubble to indicate where it should be placed.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 57: The first page of Undici Pezzi manuscript, and the insert section for Valse diatonique circled in red ink

This style of editing and adding musical material is similar to the sketches for the *Sonatina*, where extra musical material was similarly added in using this kind of editing notation. There are also several small blackout scribbles across the page made to dynamic markings and notes that can be seen in Figure 58 above. This happens throughout various movements: notes are neatly blacked-out (rather than scribbled), and some have entire sections added. The majority of movements are largely unedited. Some movements have extra bars added in, such as *Valse diatonique* above, and the *Siciliana*, and some have their final bars blacked-out and rewritten. There are no major edits like the *Sonatina*, where entire

[286] Sketch material may exist that scholars and archivists are unaware of, or it may have been lost. Between 1919 and 1921, Casella toured and travelled throughout Europe and the Americas extensively. Thus, it is possible that he sketched the work, but not in one of his sketchbooks, and thus it has been lost or archived elsewhere.

sections or codas are added, and no sections are entirely taken out. Thus, it is that *Undici pezzi* was compoased in short space of time, and was not arduous to complete.

Style and Interpretation of *Undici pezzi infantili*

Before discussing the individual movements within the work, it is important to understand the possible inferences of the title *Undici pezzi infantili*, and also various places where it may borrow from. Firstly, the work was not written for Casella's daughter, Fulvia. Fulvia was not born until 1928, years after the work was published, and so there is no chance that she was the inspiration or consideration behind the work.[287] There is then a question as to what the title means: are they 'children's' pieces, or 'childish' pieces? Both translations into English would be acceptable, and the music itself supports the possibility of these being pieces for children to learn, or pieces that are childish in nature. It is thus up to the performer to decide if they are for children, or childish in character.

The technical challenges in *Undici pezzi* are simple, yet the work does test technique relating to speed, repetitive motifs, and tonality. Several of the works are poly-tonal, while others are non-diatonic, modal. The *Preludio* is poly-tonal, with the left hand in a white note mode, and the right hand in a black note mode. The *Carillon* is the opposite of this, with the left hand written on black notes, and the right hand only on white notes. *Valse diatonique* and *Canone* are quasi-studies on white and black notes, respectively. Many of the movements are cute, ironic, or playful, suggesting a childish character. Similarly, the manner in which they are written is childish in a way through the simplicity of structure and repetitive nature. Importantly, they are not immature and unrefined compositions, but the character of the works is childish, or child-like, and playful.

Within *Undici pezzi infantili*, there are references to specific works and composers' styles in various movements, but the suite itself also fits the tradition of children's pieces. There are various works that spring to mind within this genre: Schumann's *Album for the Young* (1848), Debussy's *Children's Corner* (1908), and Stravinsky's *Three easy pieces* (1914) are just some of the many that come to mind. Similarly to these works, Casella's children's suite is simplistic in various ways. It is more similar to Stravinsky's work, or even Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* (1926-39). They are small movements that can be played as an entire set, or individually. Each movement presents a snapshot of a form or structure. They range in mood and character, and present a delightful insight into Casella's ability to create sound-worlds with short-form structures.

[287] Lanfranchi, "Casella, Alfredo."

The suite is dedicated to Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Casella's friend and fellow Italian composer. Casella dedicated these works to Tedesco before he had reached recognition within Italy as a composer. These works are possibly dedicated to Tedesco because they were written when he was in the infancy of his own compositional career. They could also be a sign of respect and admiration from Casella, who promoted his work throughout his various musical initiatives and festivals within Italy when he could. Each movement of the work will now be discussed, in order, detailing the character and mood therein, and the various elements within the work that contribute to this.

Preludio, allegretto moderato ed innocente

The *Preludio* opens with a strange rhythmic accent and tonality. The accompanying voice, made of parallel alternating perfect fourths on white notes, begins on the half-beat of the first bar, and is the same throughout the entire work. When the melody enters (2¾ bars, or 6 ½ beats, later), it is written entirely on black notes, with a whole-tone tonality. The left hand is written as one continuous phrase throughout the movement, while the right hand theme recurs in varying lengths, and, while built on the same opening motif seen below (Figure 58), grows with each iteration.

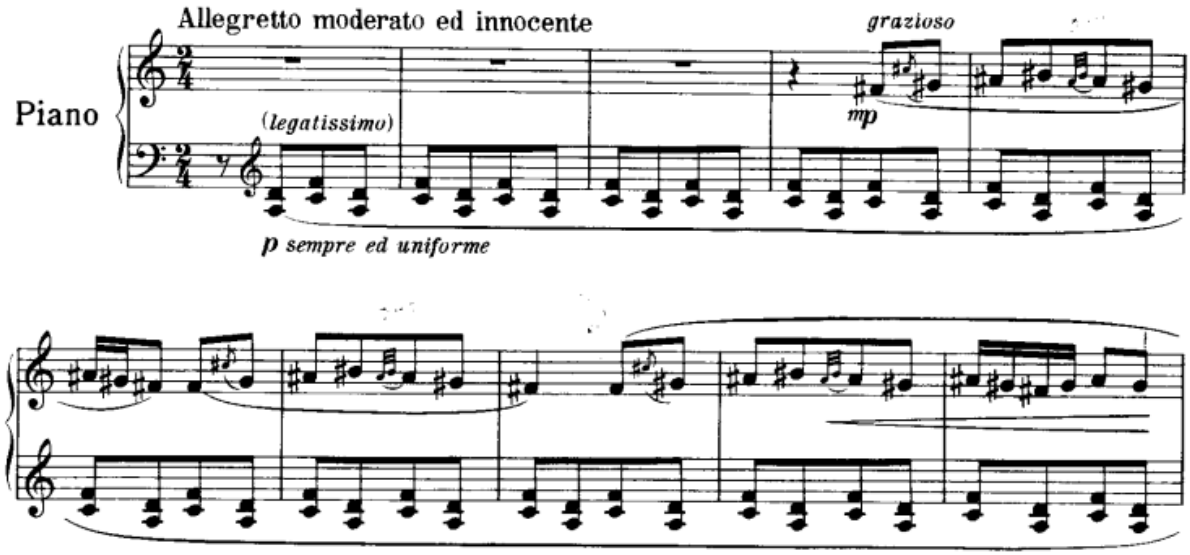


Figure 58: The opening phrases of the Preludio, and the contrasting tonalities of the hands

The technical challenges of the movement are indicated through the expressive markings above both hands. The left hand must be *legatissimo* and *uniforme* throughout, like a steady march underneath the melody that does not undulate in dynamics or accents, but is uniformly smooth. The right hand is marked *grazioso*, like a graceful, lyrical voice swaying and swelling above. Then there is also the tempo marking: *allegretto moderato ed innocente*. *Allegretto moderato* is a straightforward command: a

moderately brisk speed. But the *innocente* suggests a character, rather than tempo. One must question how a piece of music can be innocent

Similarly to the *Sonatina*, there are moments in the *Preludio* where Casella moves in and out of the original time signature, without apparent need or reason. The work begins in 2/4, but moves in and out of 3/4 during three passages (Figure 59 below). It is as if Casella is trying to avoid new phrases starting at the beginning of the bar, purposefully placing them on the second beat of bars, and changing time signatures allows for this.

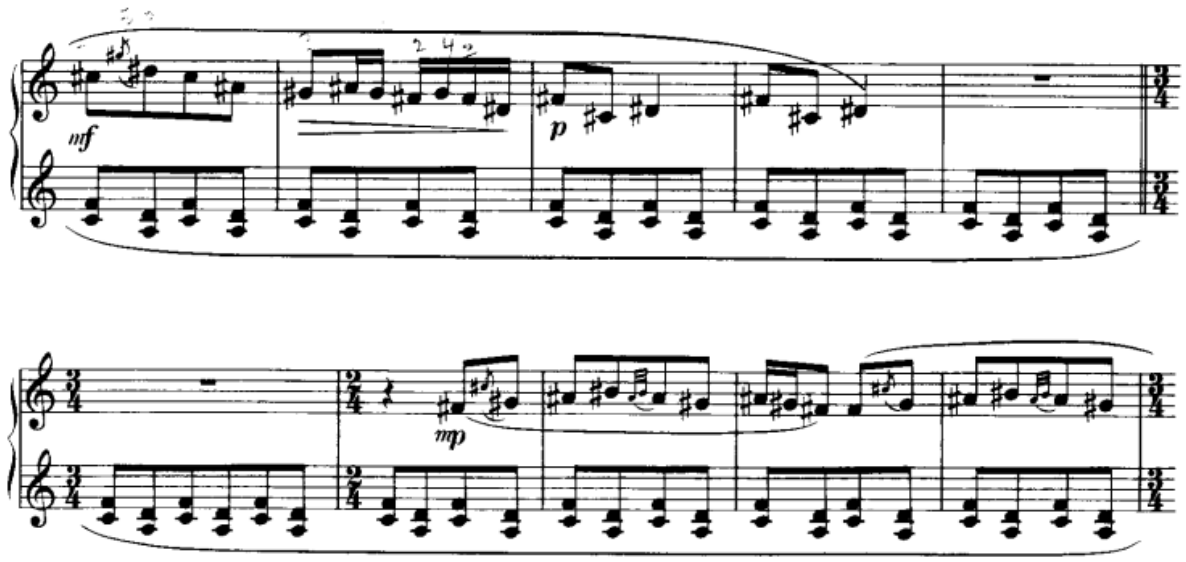


Figure 59: The changing time signatures in the Preludio

This changing time signature convolutes the simplicity and innocence of the work. While it makes no difference to how the performer might interpret and perform the *uniforme* accompaniment in the left hand, it does beg the question as to why Casella would not just have three bars of accompaniment, and stay in a single time signature. The movement ends in typical Casella fashion, archetypal for most of movements in *Undici pezzi*. The final bars are marked *diminuendo senza rallentando*. The final chord is marked *lunga*, with slurs over the top suggesting that the pianist hold the notes (either with pedal or the fingers) until the instrument stops ringing (Figure 60).

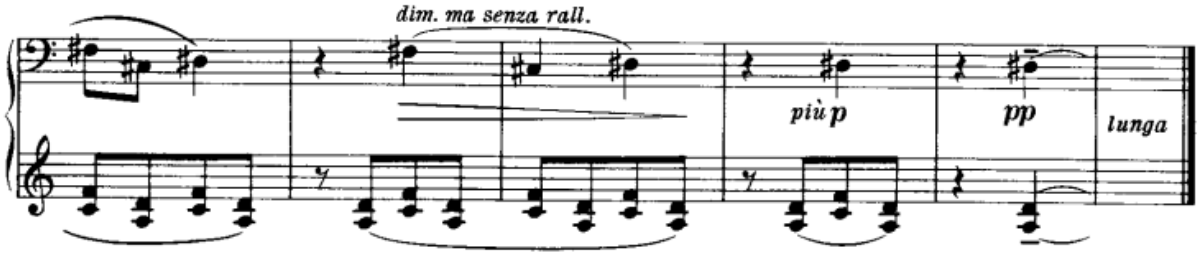


Figure 60: the final bars of the Preludio with the concluding chord marked lunga

The character of movement could be construed as one of innocent, calm exploration. There is continual movement and growth throughout the *Preludio*, through the oscillating left hand and rising and falling melodic line. Yet there is a calmness as well. The *uniforme* and *legato* left hand is stable and calm, like the soft pattering of rain. The melody, despite moments of dissonance, is uniform in its repetitiveness. With the command *innocente*, we must take this continual movement, dissonance, and unsteady beat groupings to negotiate the stability with the upset.

Valse Diatonique (sui tasti bianchi), vivacissimo (in uno)

After the long pause and resonance at the end of the *Preludio*, we are suddenly interrupted with the bouncy, playful *Valse diatonique*. This movement is a complete turn from the innocent calm of the *Preludio*. The *valse* is *brilliante* and fast, moving in five-finger scalic passages in the melody, and jumping around in 5ths and octaves in the accompaniment (Figure 61).

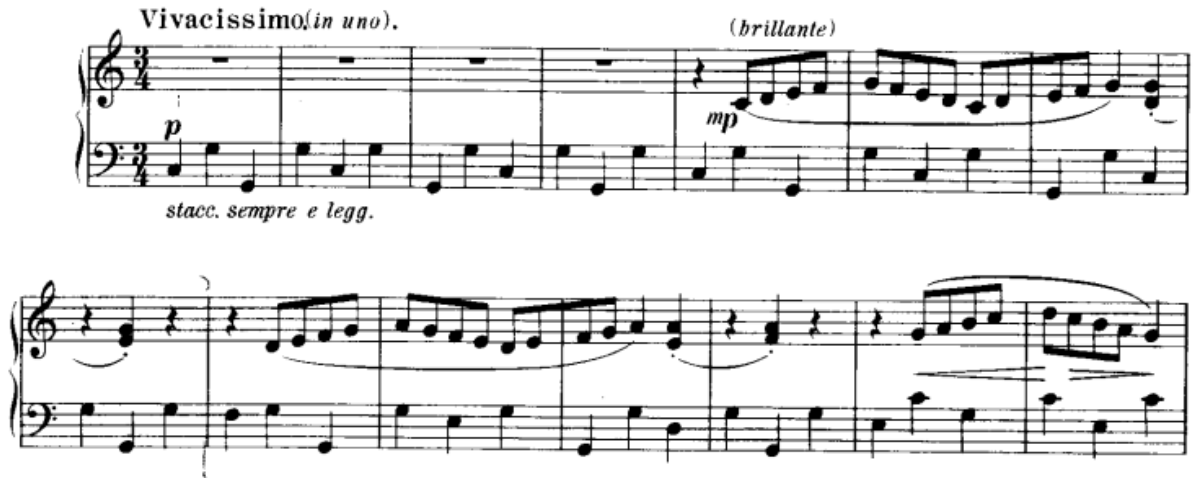


Figure 61: the opening phrases of Valse diatonique, a lively and vivacious movement

The tonality is much simpler than the *Preludio*, being written for the white keys (*sui tasti bianchi*). The movement, written in ternary form, is tonally structured as being in C major in the A sections, and A minor in the middle B section. There is none of the dissonance between the hands or in the aural experience of playing the work, as there is in the *Preludio* movement. Yet, where there is tonal and textural simplicity, Casella makes up for this with speed and rhythm. As can be seen above in Figure 62, the speed of the movement is *vivacissimo, (in uno)*. Not only is the speed exceptionally quick, but Casella wants there to be a sense of only one beat per bar, rather than three distinct beats. This is somewhat unusual for a waltz, typically an 'oom-pah-pah' type rhythm. This rhythmic grouping is

further complicated by the left-hand jumping accompaniment, seemingly grouped in twos (similarly to an alberti-bass), rather than threes. Thus, our natural inclination as pianists would be to accent every second note rather than emphasise the first of each three. Similarly, the melody enters on the second beat of the bar, seemingly syncopated with the implied rhythm of the left hand and at odds with the *in uno* direction. The performer must grapple with these rhythmic considerations.

Other than the opening expressive instructions seen above (Figure 61), the *Valse diatonique* stays in a similar character for the entire movement. While in the minor-tonality B section there are moments of melancholy, this results from the tonality and our connotations therein, rather than any expressive change. The section is still marked *sempre staccato*, *sempre molto vivace*, and there is the same excited, energetic, and playful character. When the major tonality returns in the A section, the work continues in this jolly, cheerful character that keeps moving until the final chord; another suspended *lunga* until the piano stops ringing. The *Valse* is playful, light, and fun, through its tonality, rhythmic movement, and the expressive commands written in the score. It presents and excited, delight and playful character.

Canone (sui tasti neri), moderatamente mosso

The *Canone* is exactly as the title suggests: a canon written on black notes. Like the melodic line of the *Preludio*, the tonality centres around a whole-tone scale. The two voices are identical, separated by an octave, with the right hand beginning a bar before the left hand. Each phrase is eight bars long, with four phrases comprising the work.

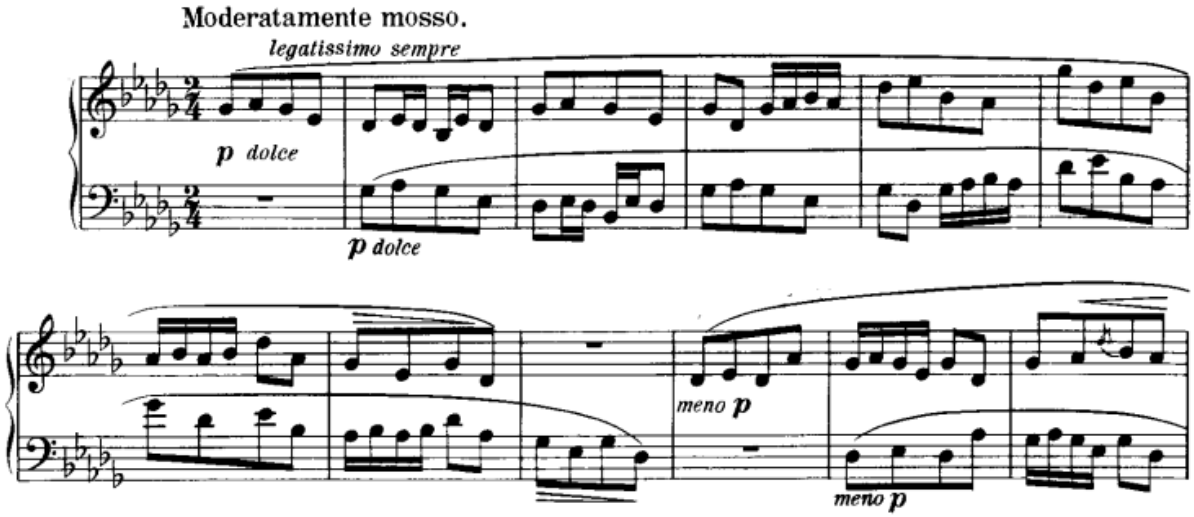


Figure 62: the opening of the Canone, and the entry of both voices in the first and second phrases

The movement, written on the black keys, is the opposite to *Valse diatonique*. The *canone* is solemn, calm, and stationary. The melody moves largely by steps. Similarly, the textures are quite contrasting.

What was staccato and buoyant throughout the *valse* is here smooth, *legatissimo,* and *dolce*. There is a complete change in character to something more reflective, tranquil, and serene.

There are obvious technical challenges associated with playing only on the black notes, made more difficult by the closeness of the hands at various points in the movement. Little expression is marked throughout the movement, other than the reminder to remain in a *piano* dynamic range, with some contours to volume, and the *senza rit.* at end. The main command we are given is the *moderamente mosso*. This is an easily understood command: play with movement, but negotiate the rich tonality and resonance. Thus, the performer must negotiate speed and resonance. Any combination of tempo and pedal could result in a wildly different interpretation by another performer. There is a marked difference when pedal is used (or not), regardless of tempo taken. Thus, this is the challenge for the performer, and should be decided upon by the kind of serene and calm character they aspire to.

Bolero, allegro spagnuolo

The character of the *Bolero* is obvious from title alone: it is a Spanish dance characterised by quick turns, rhythmic accents, and sudden pauses and halts to sound. All this is evident in Casella's *Bolero*: the movement in the accompanying voice jumps and turns quickly, while the melodic movement is expressive, lilting, and contains sudden suspensions. The work is through-composed, centring around an eight-bar phrase (marked in pink, Figure 63 below). It centres around a minor tonality, with moments of chromaticism hinting at Casella's idea of Spanish flair.

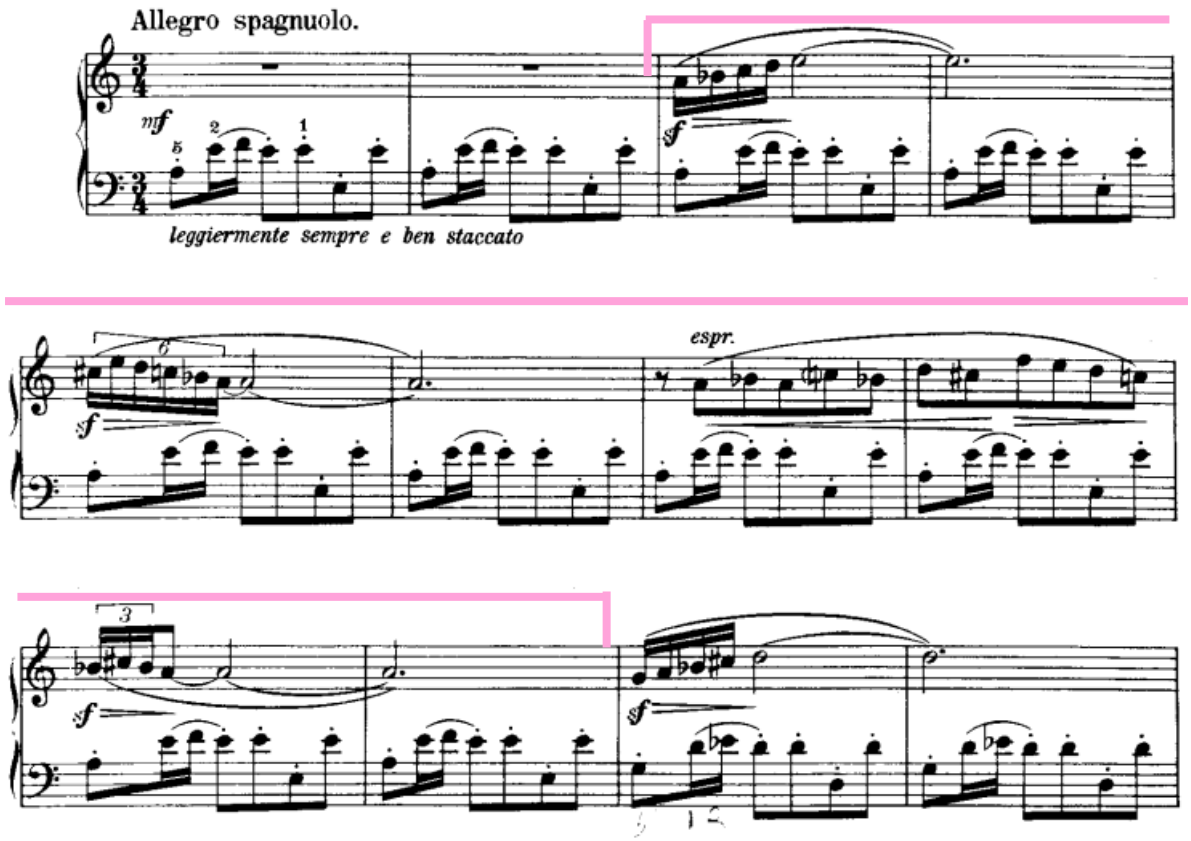


Figure 63: The opening passage of the Bolero, and the main eight-bar phrase marked in pink

While the tonal centre shifts throughout the movement, it has the same rhythmic pattern throughout until the final phrase. The melody uses the same four 2-bar motifs (all seen above in succesion in Figure 63) as its basis for movement. There is the ascending or descending semiquaver grouping, the rising and falling semiquaver pattern in both a sextuplet and triplet, and the rising then falling quaver pattern that is spread over two bars.

While there are moments of technical challenges within the movement, such as when the motifs for both hands begin on black notes, or require different fingering, the real challenge of the *Bolero* is maintaining the energy and exoticism of the movement. It is a much more exciting movement compared to the previous three, snaking and writhing, with dramatic pauses and suspensions in the melodic line. The *Bolero* is playful, but in a very different way to the *valse*.

Ommagio a Clementi (esercizio per le cinque dita), allegro vivace

This movement borrows most obviously compared to other movements within *Undici pezzi*, given that it is both an homage and a five-finger exercise. The title tells us this is an homage to Clementi, referencing the *Gradus ad parnassum* and those very early études that many pianists learned to play

with. The title and opening bars also reminds us of other famous five finger exercises, such as those by Hanon and Czerny. When we look at the score, there is also the visual reference to Debussy's first étude, book 1: *Pour les cinqs doigts, d'apres Monsieur Czerny* (Figure 65).

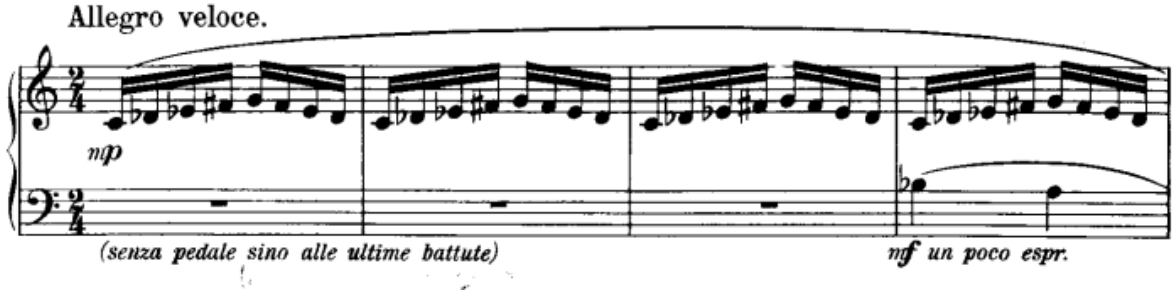
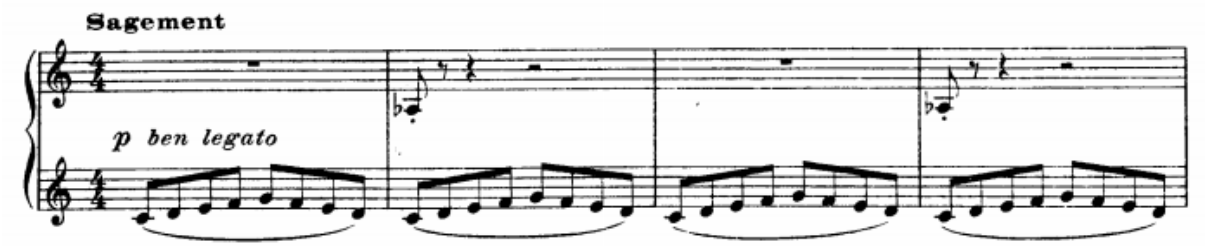


Figure 64: Casella's Omaggio a Clementi (above) and the similarity it has to Debussy's étude Pour les cinqs doigts (below)



The entire *Omaggio* contains up-and-down five-finger semiquaver pattern. While it alternates between the hands, it is predominantly in the right hand for the majority of the movement. The scale pattern that Casella chooses for this right hand is an odd one, being based on a C diminished whole-tone scale, or C Phrygian mode with a raised 4th. It is an odd tonal centre for the work, and presents the most severe dissonance within the entire *Undici pezzi*.

Casella uses side-stepping chromatic modulation to shift between the hands. After the right hand takes the melody, Casella uses chromatic side-steps to arrive with the accompaniment back in the right hand an octave lower than the opening motif (Figure 65 below). This is a similar kind of sideways modulation that he uses in the *Toccata* Op. 6.

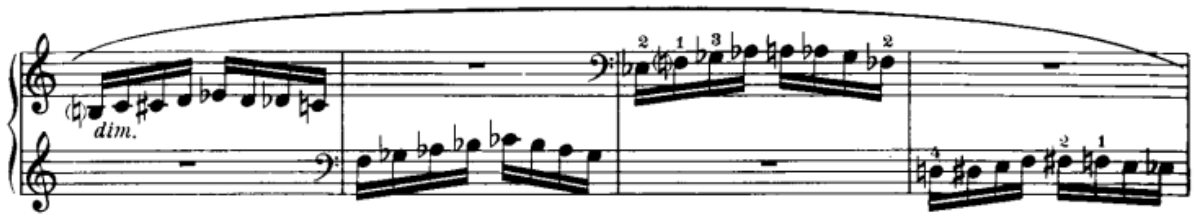


Figure 65: The side-stepping chromatic modulation downwards, similar to modulations seen in the Toccata Op. 6

The technical challenge of the work is easily identifiable: making the continuous semiquaver line smooth and soft throughout the entire work, silky and velvety, so that the changes in the hands are

completed indiscernibly. The interpretive challenge is to make the rather simple melody expressive and interesting. It is not melodic or lyrical, and, when placed above the quite dissonant and upset accompanying five-finger scale pattern, seems quite jagged and aggressive. Casella even marks the melodic line as *un poco espressivo*, as can be seen in Figure 64 above. How does one make dissonant chromaticism expressive? It is not an easy movement to make beautiful – there is great temptation to motor through the *allegro veloce* movement, and have it over as quickly as possible. Yet, similarly with many of Casella's more dissonant moments, there is beauty once the performer comes to terms with the soundscape and character therein.

Siciliana

The *Siciliana*, along with the *Giga*, *Minuetto,* and *Berceuse* movements, all borrow from the tradition of the form suggested in the title. These movements are much less abstract in terms of the character or mood reading they offer the performer, and instead present a snapshot of a traditional work set with modern tonalities. We have seen this in his previous works, such as the *Toccata* Op. 6 and the *Sonatina* Op. 28; using traditional structures and forms with modern tonalities, experimenting with atonality, non-traditional harmonic structures, and chromaticism. Here in the *Undici pezzi*, it is done much more securely and convincingly: the technical and expressive challenges seem more considered in how tonality and conventional form are negotiated. By the time he came to compose *Undici pezzi*, Casella had refined and developed this balance of modernity and tradition, further supporting the idea that he had one compositional style that matured throughout his career.

Various connotations arise from the title *Siciliana*. The term evokes dance suites typical of the Baroque period that incorporated *siciliana* movements. One may also think of Sicily, and the place where the dance derives its name from. Sicilianas are typically lilting, melancholic movements in compound duple or compound quadruple time. The character of Casella's *Siciliana* fits this, borrowing heavily from the siciliana tradition. It is a lilting, rocking tune that, as he states himself, is based on a popular melody featuring simple dotted rhythms, resembling a slow tarantella with a pastoral flavour (Figure 66).

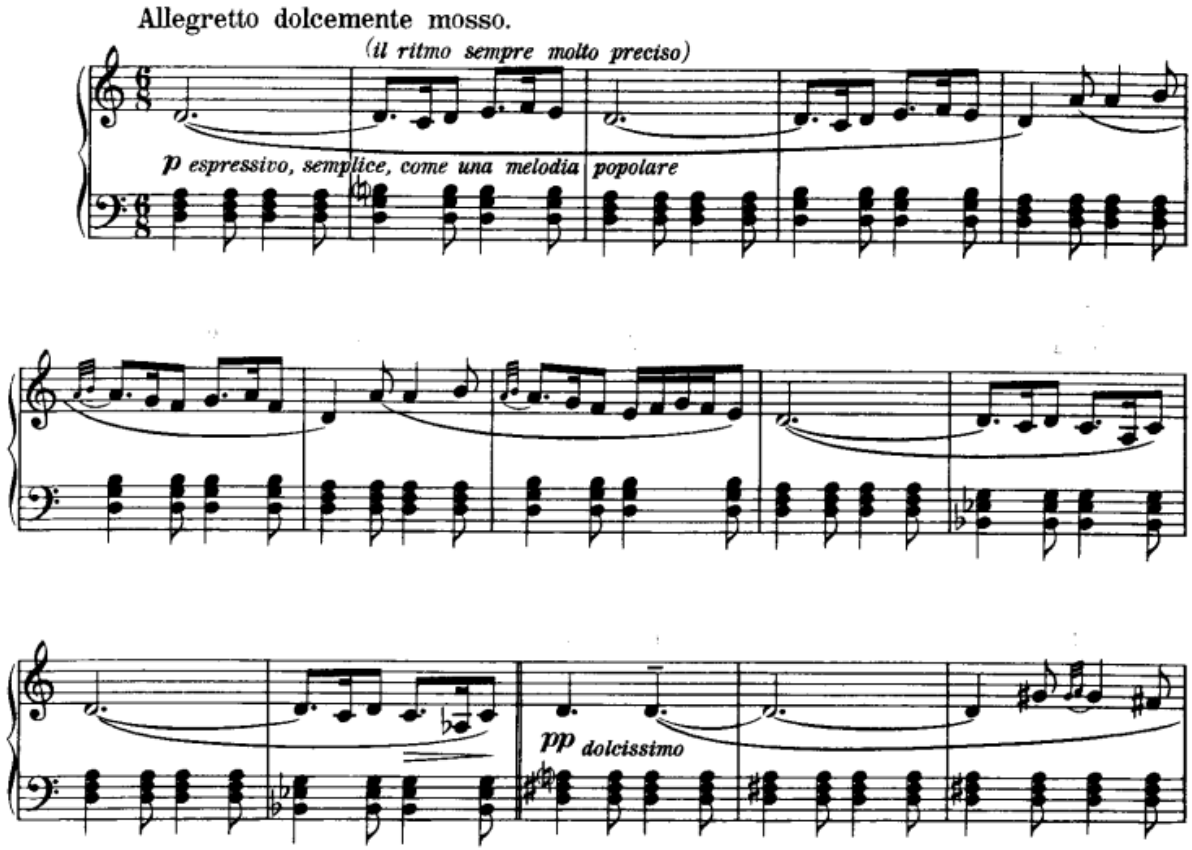


Figure 66: The first section of the Siciliana, and the first bars of the second section, in the tonic major

The work is conventional and simple, written in short ternary form. The A section is in D minor, and the B section is in D major – the tonic major. It is surprising to have such a tonally and structurally normal movement from Casella. There is no use of unexpected key signature, or irregular beat structure. Everything is *semplice*, like Casella indicates in his expressive language.

Giga

The following *Giga* is another classic dance movement. After the melancholic lilting nature of the *Siciliana*, this is lively, merry, and rambunctious. There are many elements of the *giga* that are conventional and tradition of a giga: the use of ternary form, it is lively and dance-like in character, and has rhythmic accents on the second beat of the bar from the placement of the accompaniment.

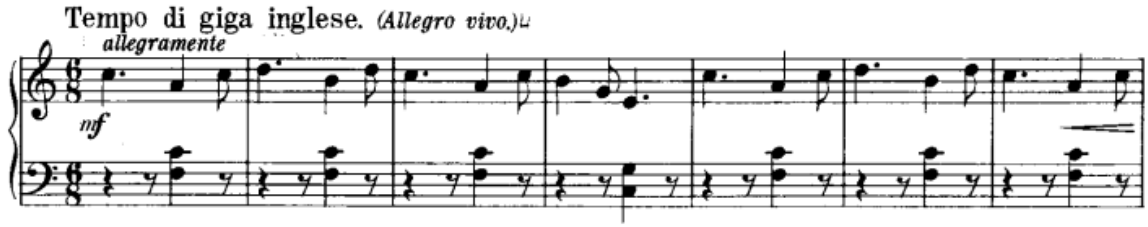


Figure 67: The opening of the giga, and the rhythmic motif used for the A section

As can be seen in Figure 67, the rhythmic pattern and accompaniment in the left hand are both relatively simple. This same pattern is used throughout the entire A section. Also evident from the figure above is the sparse texture and diatonic tonality. Yet, unlike the *Siciliana*, the B section of the *Giga* does not stay in this tonal space. It moves to a poly-tonal soundscape, similar to the *Preludio*. The left hand, as can be seen below (Figure 68), is written on the black notes, seemingly in D♭, but with no median to define if it is major or minor. The right hand – the melody – is firmly in D minor.

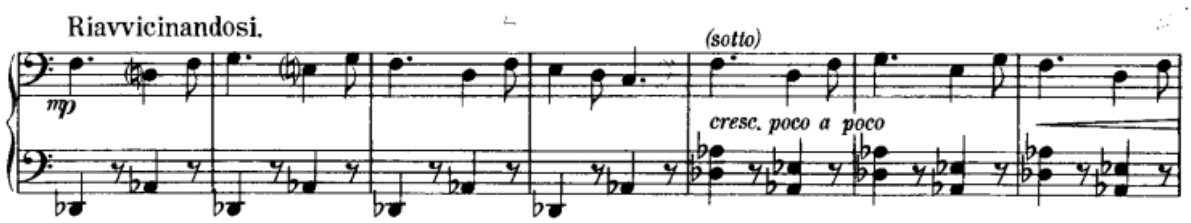


Figure 68: The B section of the giga, and the poly-tonality seen and heard in the different hands

This movement is much more expressive and complicated than the *Siciliana*. There are many markings that imply this is a more boisterous and complex character. In the opening bars, Casella marks *allegramente*, and *tempo di giga inglese (allegro vivo)*. The indication that this movement should be played fast is obvious. Instead of the French or Spanish style giga, the performer should take this movement to be more dance-inspired rather than from the tradition of instrumental music. One should think instead of the fast and light-footed jigs and reels of folk music.

When we come to the middle of the B section, there are also two strange markings *allontandosi* and *riavvicinandosi* (the second seen in Figure 68 above). These literally translate as moving or stepping away, and getting closer, or reconnecting. This is a strange instruction for a performer. Given that Casella marks for there to be no rallentando, these instructions must be taken as commands for dynamics and articulation, rather than speed. Usually, a performer would expect soft dynamics, and markings such as *leggero*. This 'moving away' type command is quite unusual, and presents the idea of sound as being spatial and involving the space, rather than just our traditional vernacular for discussing volumes.

Minuetto

After the liveliness of the *Giga*, Casella returns back to a melancholic mood. The *Minuetto*, like the *Siciliana*, is written in ternary form, with a *musette* middle section. Similarly also to the *Siciliana* is the tonal structure of the work. The A section centres around A minor (Figure 69 below) with many suspensions of 4ths and 7ths, while the B section is in E major (the dominant major).

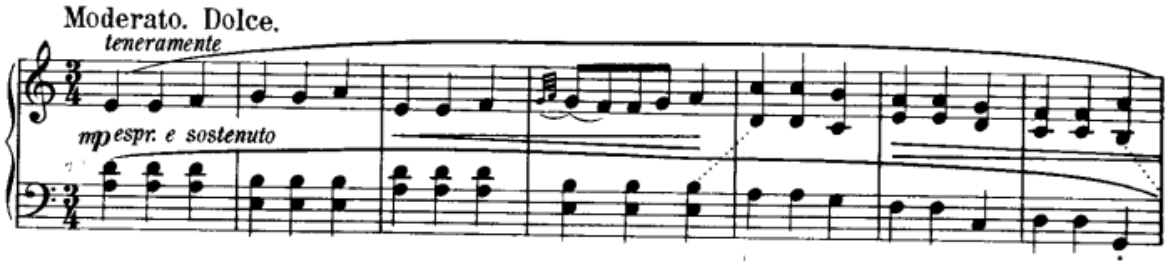


Figure 69: The opening of the minuetto, and the predominantly crotchet-based rhythm (not traditional of a minuet)

The middle B section, titled *musette*, *alquanto puì mosso*, uses a completely different tempo, texture, phrase structure, and rhythmic emphasis when compared to the A section. As can be seen above, the A section is typical of minuets, comprising 8-bar phrases that start on beat 1 of each bar. In the B section this changes. We can see below (Figure 70) that the phrases shorten to four bars. Similarly, the rhythmic emphasis of the melody shifts, with phrases beginning on the second beat of the bar. There is also a contrast in texture. Instead of moving vertically in unison as in the A section, the B section has two distinct voices: melody and accompaniment, in the right and left hands respectively.

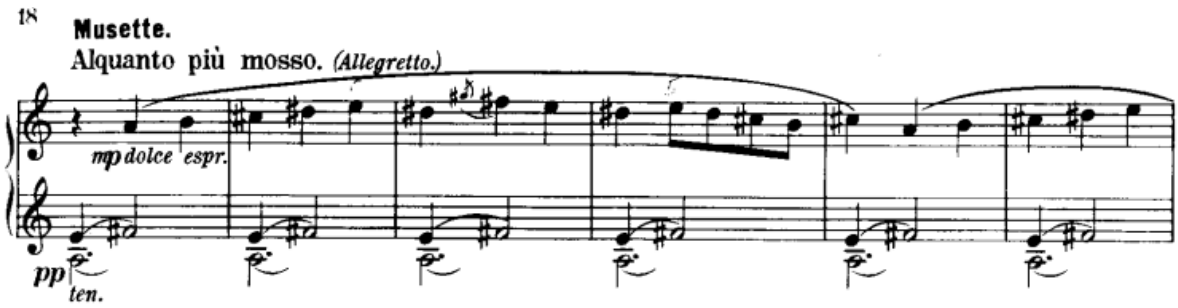


Figure 70: The opening of the B musette section, and the complete contrast in phrasing, texture, and tempo

As mentioned above, there is also the change in tempo between the two sections, which, along with the expressive commands, gives two quite different characters. The A section is marked *moderato. Dolce, espressivo e sostenuto*. It is sweet, expressive, and pedal should be applied liberally to create a rich, sustained, and resonant tone. These commands, coupled with the minor tonality and the unison

movement of accompaniment and melody create an almost tragic, heart-rending character that yearns for resolution. When we come to the *musette*, the section is still marked *dolce*, but the type of sweetness changes. The shift to major key, along with the new *allegretto* tempo, suggest that the *espressivo* nature of this section should be one of joy, hope, and delight. However, this optimism quickly changes back to the melancholic and doleful mood of the A section. Yet the concluding character of the movement is one of hope and elation once more, with the work ending with a tonic chord that includes a suspended major 6th – a sustained, positive note.

Carillon

The *Carillon* is whimsical and childlike, and the most playful and yet coy movement from *undici pezzi*. The title is an odd choice by Casella, suggesting that, instead of coming from any musical form or traditional like all the other movements, this one is based on the instrument. It is unclear if Casella means an actual carillon (the giant bell-based keyboard instrument) or chimes, such as a child might play on. There is a third possible meaning behind the title: Casella may mean the actual sound of chiming, to chime, rather than the instrument. Regardless of which he means, it is clear that the inspiration for the movement is bells and chimes.

The pitch setting and tonality of the movement significantly contribute to the bell-like nature of the movement. Both hands are written in the very upper register of the piano. This exploits the most delicate range of the instrument. This – along with holding both pedals throughout the entire movement – creates a crystalline sparkling sound. Casella states this, marking *cristallino* above the right hand. There is some pollution to this *cristallino* through the use of polytonality. As can be seen below, the right hand is written entirely on white notes, and the left is written on black notes (Figure 71).

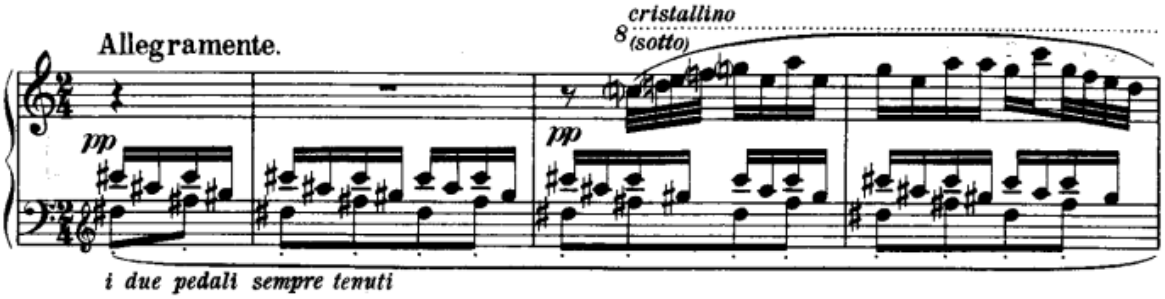


Figure 71: The opening passage of the Carillon, and the cristallino instruction for the right hand, plus the command for both pedals to be held for the entire work

Many of the phrases begin on half-beats instead of at the start of bars. As can be seen above, the left hand begins on the second beat of the bar, as an anacrusis, rather than at the beginning of the bar. The melody similarly enters part-way through a bar. Casella plays with beat in a strange way, challenging the performer as to where the accents and emphasis within bars should fall.

The movement is written in ternary form, with the A section being based on the theme above, and the B theme shifting the right hand up a major third, and the left hand up a major second. It is an extremely short movement, although not fast. While Casella marks *allegramente*, the performer needs to be careful not to perform too quickly. Time must be taken to allow for the resulting resonance from holding the sustain pedal for the entire movement. Similarly, there is the marking for both hands to be played *pianissimo*, which is the dynamic marking for the entire movement. Not only does this suggest a lightness of volume, but also a softness in touch and character. Thus, the *allegramente* cannot be too fast, otherwise this crystalline, line, and delicate character will shatter.

Berceuse

After the perpetual motion and delicacy of the *Carillon*, Casella returns to a traditional form with the *berceuse*. This movement is calming and lilting, like a rocking-chair lullaby after the energetic and enigmatic *Carillon*. The *Berceuse* is mediative and tranquil, and we are rocked and soothed by the continual and steady beat of the accompaniment in the left hand. Like most berceuses, including Casella's own *Berceuse triste* Op. 14 (1909), this movement is a lullaby in compound duple time, oscillating between tonic (A♭) and dominant (E♭) chords as the harmonic centres of the work. As can be seen below in Figure 72 there is no certainty as to whether the work is a major or minor tonality through parallel 5^{ths} in the harmony. One would think with the use of C♮ in the melodic line that it is in A♭ major. Yet there is an undeniable melancholy present throughout the movement.

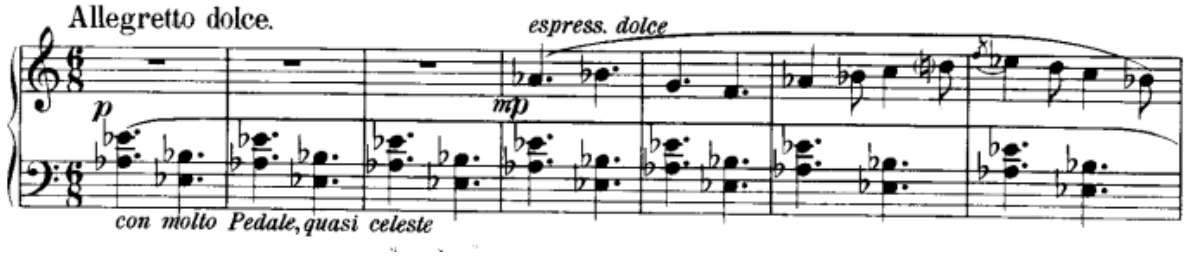


Figure 72: The opening line of the Berceuse, and the repetitive oscillating chords in the left hand

This melancholy character is exacerbated in the B section of the work. The movement, written in ternary form, changes to a more sorrowful and soft character with the B theme. While the rhythmic movement

of both voices stays relatively similar, there is something more solemn in the character of this section of the work (Figure 73 below).

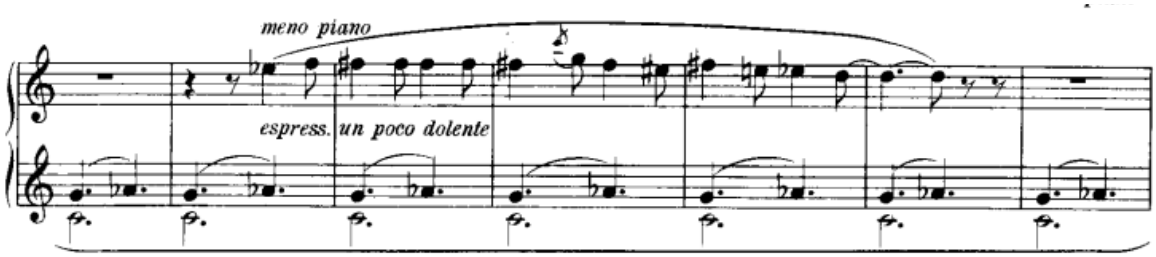


Figure 73: The first melodic phrase of the B section, and the command for the performer to play un poco dolente

Casella himself notes this sadder character in the B section, marking *espressivo un poco dolente*. With the droning bass note, there is a sustained sense of gloom throughout this section. When the A section returns towards the end of the work, there is more hope, and we move away from the depressive nature of this middle section.

There are some interesting expressive commands throughout this movement. If we look back to the A section (Figure 72), we can see the command for the left hand to be played *quasi celeste*, with lots of pedal and resonance. The phrase marking for the left hand is also interesting, comprising one phrase mark for the left hand per section. Given that Casella also marks *con molto Pedale*, one wonders whether this phrase marking should be taken as a pedal marking, and that the pedal should be continually half-held or fluttered throughout each section. The melody is marked *espressivo dolce*, as can be seen in Figure 72. Both voices are marked *espressivo* in the B section (Figure 72). When the A section returns, there is a reminder to the performer to keep playing expressively. How this *espressivo* is interpreted depends on the individual performer. Yet, given that this is a lullaby, perhaps the best interpretation is one that is lyrical, sweet, and soft, as if rocking a babe to sleep. The texture is rich, resonant and thick, like a warm embrace. Although markedly different to the *Carillon*, the *Berceuse* is also sweet, and should be softly sung out.

Galop Final

The last movement of *Undici pezzi infantili* is the most exciting; the extremely lively *Galop*. Based on the galop form of the country-style dance, this movement signals the work racing to its end. The tranquillity and serenity of the *berceuse* is burst by the jumping, frolicking movement of the opening left-hand solo bars. Marked *prestissimo*, the movement is not only indicative of a galop dance, but a horse in a steeplechase. The *Galop* draws on many of the elements present in the *Valse diatonique*: the repetitive accompaniment, accentuated by the alberti bass figuration; the diatonic tonality of C major,

and – for the majority of the work – being in *sui le tasti bianchi*; the up-and-down five-finger scalic movement of the melody, seen in the *valse* and in the *Omaggio a Clementi*.

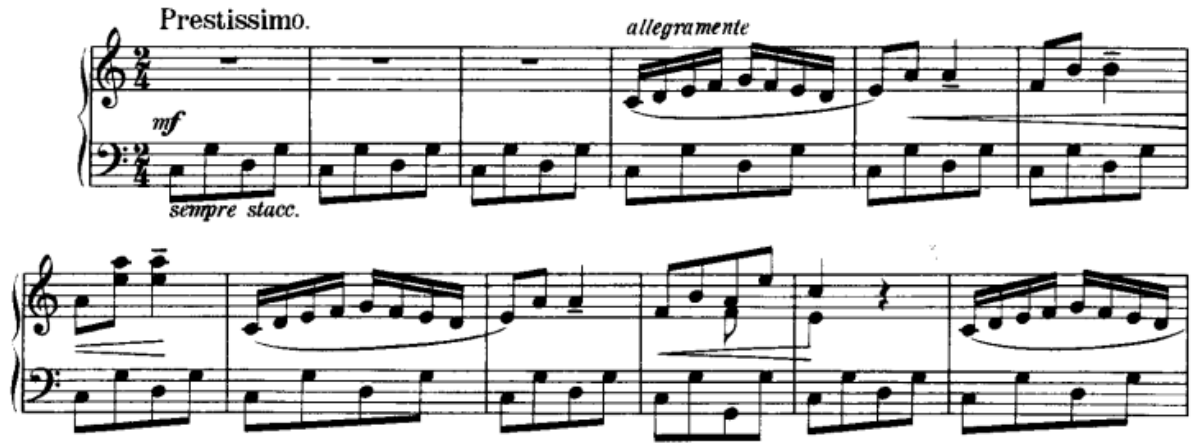


Figure 74: The opening of the Galop

The *galop* is written in strophic form, with two A sections, each comprising two themes; one seen above with rising and falling semiquavers, the second being built around descending quavers. In the second section, Casella modulates the second theme up to the sharp 4th – instead of the tonal centre being C major, it shifts momentarily for a single phrase to F# major (Figure 75 below). Arguably this is done primarily so that Casella can continue to move the melody up in pitch and register. When the theme returns following this modulation, it is an octave higher than the previous.

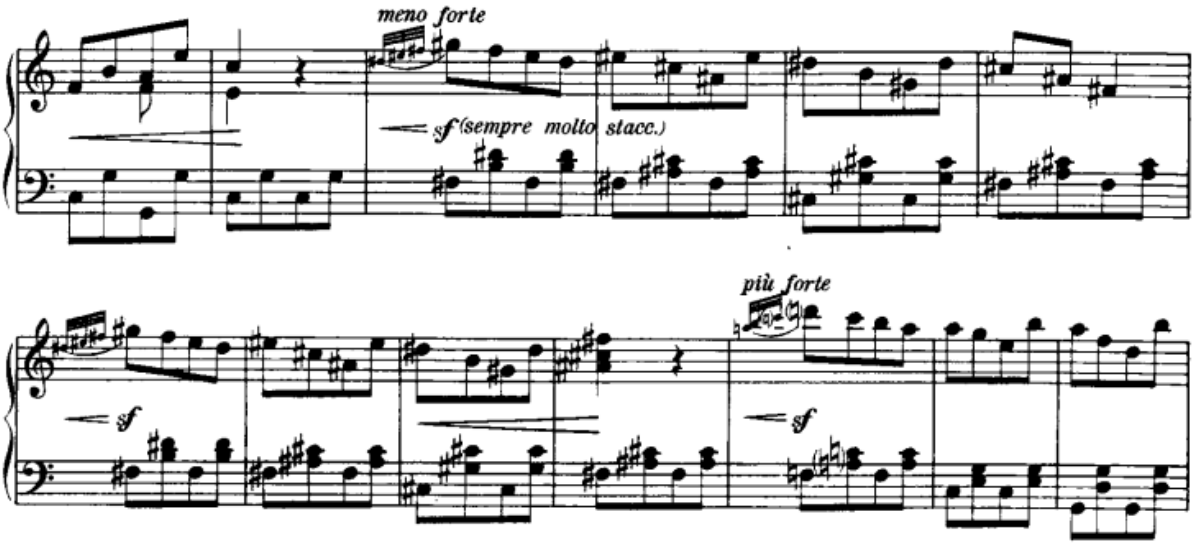


Figure 75: The second A section, and the second theme in F#, then moving up an octave when it returns to C major in the following phrase

Other than this modulation, the movement is simple in tonality and structure. Other than the command to play the work *prestissimo* and *allegramente,* there is little else expressively challenging in the work. It is a fun movement, both to play and hear, and a very cute way of racing to the end of the work as a whole.

Reflections on *Undici pezzi infantili*

As can be seen, *Undici pezzi infantili* does not signify a turning point or stylistic change in Casella's compositional language, as many scholars would purport. Instead, it shows a refinement and maturity being reached. Many of the techniques and traits that were evident in earlier works became polished. Borrowing became less obvious, although is still evident. There is none of the direct quoting that was seen in the *Toccata* or the *Sonatina*. Although various movements suggest influence from Debussy, Stravinsky and Bartók, these pieces present a different view of Casella's borrowing. Instead, Casella borrows from the traditions of forms and styles, using his own harmonic and tonal language. These were Casella's most simple and refined works for piano composed up to this point.

As a performer, it is easy to comprehend and make sense of the characters within this work. Each movement has a distinctly different character, complementing the others through similar tonal landscapes, use of traditional forms, and contrasting between movements. They are a quirky and entertaining set of children's pieces with a childish, ironic character. Unlike the *Sonatina*, which was also ironic, there is much less aggression in these works. As Gatti noted in his review of Casella, 'he was conscious of how much the traditional forms [he used in *Undici pezzi infantili*] might yield to [… show] complete self-expression.'[288] They are expressive movements, demonstrating different facets of Casella, and different facets of his understanding of music's tradition.

[288] Gatti and Martens, "Alfredo Casella," 181.

Case Study 4: *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata*, Op 59 (1936)

Now comes the most challenging piano work of Casella's, his monumental triptych, the *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* Op. 59 (1936). It is Casella's longest, and most technically, gesturally, and expressively difficult work for piano. More than that, it one of one a handful of fascist works that he composed. It was composed for the 1936 *Festival Internazionale di musica contemporanea* and premiered by Ornella Puliti-Santoliquido. Yet, it was also written as a response to growing claims that Casella was anti-Fascist, and overly modernist as an attempt to revitalise his public image. This work stands out from all of Casella's others across his entire oeuvre because of its aggressive character and monumental structure and length. It is important to remember that this work – like this thesis – is not an exploration into Casella's fascist affiliation. While the work is definitely Fascist in intent, and was an attempt to regain popularity with Italian audiences, there is no explicit archival information to support this, only views from scholars and an analysis of the themes within the work and the context surrounding it. Performers do not need to interpret the work as Fascist to perform it well.

There are many ways to investigate the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata*. One could write extensively on form and harmony before even beginning to tackle issues of borrowing, expression, and performance and interpretation of the work.[289] The work borrows from the tradition of both sonatas and large-scale triptych piano works. There is influence from Debussy, Franck, and Beethoven evident throughout each movement, and the overall structure of the work. Yet, similarly to Casella's *Sonatina*, the work is a triptych collage: each movement has various different themes or sections that do not create a cohesive whole, within the movement or across the entire work. The work is difficult to interpret convincingly because of its many themes and the technical challenges it poses.

[289] Two theses have been written on the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata*. Warren Lengel wrote a doctoral thesis analysing the work in 1956. The premise of his thesis is very much a descriptive analysis, discussing the tonal centres, structures, and 'characters' of each movement. Lengel details the traditional use of the form of each movement, and discusses various functions and themes within each movement. However, he fails to do a deep analysis of each movement: he does not investigate the types of tonalities, but merely states the tonal focus of different themes. Similarly, he does not attempt to link various borrowed themes and elements of movements, and just describes various features and structlures of movements. His thesis can be viewed as excellent in that it identifies various musical elements throughout the work (his thesis is structured very similarly to LaRue's analytical structure discussed in Chapter 1.3 of my own thesis). It presents the various elements and features of each movement well, but concludes somewhat lamely with a simple statement that the work is not cohesive, but gives the impression of being so through the use of chords.
Lengel, *An analysis of* Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata *by Alfredo Casella*.
Similarly, Nancy Copeland wrote a thesis on the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* in 1981. Her thesis is limited like Lengel's, offering that the work is great through its continual thematic transformations. She compares the work with his *Toccata* Op.6 and *Sonatina* Op. 28, as this thesis does, labelling the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* a great neoclassical work. While Copeland does note the link between Casella's work and various other triptych compositions (such as Franck's *Prelude, Chorale et Fugue,* and *Prelude, Aria et Finalé,* and Debussy's *pour le piano*), and notes the borrowed opening theme of the *Sinfonia* as coming from Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 111, she does not discuss how one might interpret the work (given that her thesis was for a performance-based DMA, one would assume performance would come into her thesis). There is a superficial nature to her discussion, such as that covering links between the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata,* and the *Sonatina*: she entirely misses that both works are collages of themes, and that both are extremely avant-garde in their nature, rather than 'new neo-classical'. While, like Lengel, she offers a good outline of the themes and structures of each movement, there is no deep analysis into the work's character, style, or possible interpretations thereof.
Copeland, *The New Classicism: Alfredo Casella's* Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata *Op. 59.*

Context of the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata*

The 1930s were a period of great change and challenge for Casella. With the difficulties he faced throughout this decade outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis. At the end of 1932, he and Malipiero were publicly accused of being 'too modern,' their compositional aesthetics being too cosmopolitan, and thus anti-fascist. The *1932 Manifesto of Italian Musicians for the tradition of Nineteenth Century Romantic Art* was a xenophobic and extreme anti-modernist attack aimed at both composers.[290] Respighi, along with others, co-wrote and signed the article that was published in December 1932. It arose after a series of articles were written in *La Stampa* throughout the year, where various composers of *la generazione dell'ottanta* argued against Modernism, and the morality and expressiveness within those styles. Respighi and his followers believed that Modernism could not be a true style, given it lacked a human or moral content. They believed that both Modernism and Futurists were against the common good of Fascist Italy. They argued in somewhat ambiguous terms that Modernism was, at its very core, anti-fascist and anti-Italian, given its cosmopolitan nature. They believed that Romanticism – Italian Romanticism borrowing from classicism, not German Romanticism – was the true spirit of modern Italy, claiming that 'Yesterday's romanticism […] will also be tomorrow's romanticism.'[291] Against Casella and Malipiero they made the following attack:

> For which musicians do we want to distinguish ourselves from? From Malipiero and his followers, who negate the Italian Nineteenth Century […]; from Casella and his followers, who do not deny the Italian Nineteenth Century, on the contrary sometimes appeal to Verdi, and declares to aim for a hedonistic, "fun" aesthetic, and in all he proclaims himself very Italian; […] who in the last thirty years abandoned even the most transformed and renewed nineteenth-century expressions, namely sentiment, tonality, to try and pursue new combinations of sonar material and new artistic orientations.[292]

Romanticism, as Sachs notes, was used by Respighi and his followers 'a catch-all term for a moral and expressive aesthetics that could be applied to a wide range of musical languages,' but could also exclude other musical languages that did not adhere to a specific aesthetic.[293] Casella and Malipiero – due to

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[290] Respighi et al. "Travagli spirituali del nostro tempo: Un manifesto di musicisti italiani per la tradizione dell'arte romantic dell'800." Co-authored and signed by: Ottorino Respighi, Giuseppe Mule, Ildebrando Pizzetti, Riccardo Zandonai, Alberto Gasco, Alceo Toni, Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli, Guido Guerrini, Gennaro Napol, and Guido Zuffellato.

[291] Ibid.

[292] Ibid, 'Da quali musicisti essi si distinguono e vogliono distinguersi? Dal Malipiero e dai suoi seguaci, il quale nega l'Ottocento italiano, e del quale si dice che si ricongiunga, saltando appunto il secolo decimonono, al Seicento o a più arcaica epoca; dal Casella e dai suoi seguaci, il quale, non rinnega l'Ottocento italiano, anzi si appella talvolta a Verdi, e dichiara di mirare a un'estetica edonistica, di "divertimento", e in tutto si proclama italianissimo; […] che negli ultimi trent'anni abbandonarono anche le più trasformate e rinnovate espressioni ottocentesche, e cioè sentimento, tonalità, per tentare e perseguire nuove combinazioni della materia sonara e nuovi orientamenti artistici.'

[293] Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 25.

their use of modern (i.e., atonal, dissonant, polytonal, and bitonal) harmonies and their cosmopolitan musical experiences and educations – were viewed as not Italian enough, and so ostracised.

Simultaneous to this very public discussion on the anti-fascist nature of Casella's music was the rise of fascist control in the Arts within Italy. Arts and music festivals were changing to be fascist-run, rather than controlled by local councils. One example of this is the Venice *Esposizione biennale artistica nazionale*. In 1930, the running of the *biennale* was handed over to the federal Fascist government from the local Venetian government. Along with this change in governing body of this major art festival was the creation of three entirely new arms of the festival: music, cinema, and theatre.[294] As stated above, the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* was written for one of these festivals: the 1936 Festival Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea. Casella had been involved as a founding organiser in the music festival since its conception in 1930, and was an integral part in the organising committee for the festival.

It is important to reflect on this shift from art and international arts festivals changing hands from regional cities and councils to the *Ente Autonomi*. Casella was part of a rapidly changing cultural landscape. Art initiatives were no longer privately funded, but were becoming state-owned and operated ventures. Similarly, there was an ever-growing divide in popular and high art. Popular music and arts was controlled by the *MinCulPop*, and the National Fascist Federation of Entertainment Industries, and looked to creating propaganda for the masses. But high artists and composers, such as Casella, Malipiero and Respighi, who created separately from government intiatives, were not controlled in their output. They were viewed not only as practitioners of high art, but as moral voices of the regime. High art was free from the control of the state. Composers' compositional output, touring schedules, or programme choices were not controlled by the party. Fascism was very much a part of everyday life for Casella, but it had not, until the middle of the 1930s, controlled or impinged upon his life.

With these changes in Fascism infiltrating the everyday for artists and composers, and the public outcry about the supposed anti-fascist nature of his music, Casella underwent a period of compositional nationalism. It was an attempt to make himself more publicly palatable, and to appeal to Italian critics and audiences once more. The first of these nationalistic compositions were his *Notturno e tarantella* Op. 54 (1933). This was quickly followed by *Ninna-nanna* (1934), an elaboration on a Genoese folk song, *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* Op 59 (1936), *il deserto tenato* Op. 60 (1937), and *canto e bello sardo* (1937). All these works were an attempt to prove himself as an Italian, not European or cosmopolitan, composer.

[294] "From the beginnings until the Second World War," *La biennale di Venezia,* accessed 20th December 2020, labiennale.org/en/history/beginnings-until-second-world-war.

Il deserto tentato – Casella's only other majorly fascist composition – is a one-act opera celebrating Italy's Ethiopian conquest, and was dedicated to Mussolini (perhaps the only work of Casella's not dedicated to a musician). This opera is also Casella's only work that openly celebrates Fascism, and the apparent triumphs of the regime. While the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* is fascist in nature, it does not celebrate specific feats of Fascism or Mussolini, like *Il deserto tentato* does. Casella moved away from composing for solo piano during the 1920s and 30s. While he wrote some small compositions, such as *Nanna-ninna* (1934) and *Due ricercari sul nome B-A-C-H* Op. 52 (1933), the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* was his last monumental piano work. Importantly, these three works were Casella's only compositions for piano during the 1930s, and his last work for piano would be *Sei Studi,* Op.70, composed eight years later in 1944. The 1930s was a decade full or orchestral, operatic and chamber music.

The compositional evolution of the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata*

> It [*Sinfonia, arioso e toccata*] is apparently my most important work for the piano, not only because of its size, but above all for its musical content. . . . The triptych seems to me to mark a decisive point in my production.[295]

This quote suggests that, while many critics and audiences believed that the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* was one of Casella's greatest works, the composer did not entirely share this view. While he notes that it was an important work in his oeuvre, being his greatest, longest, and most challenging piano composition, he did not think it his *most* important work, nor that it contained the greatest musical content. It also suggests that this composition was not a labour of love, or that it came from any great place of inspiration, but was a 'product.'

Other than this singular reference to the work in his memoir, there is little else pertaining to Casella's views on the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata*, or as to how it came into existence. Compared with other works by Casella, it was composed very quickly. It was first sketched on 13th May 1936, in Rome. The sketch was partially completed, and only contained a draft for the first *largo* theme of the *Sinfonia* movement (Figure 76). There is no other sketch material evident for the work.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Figure 76: The partially completed sketch for the first theme of the Sinfonia movement

[295] Casella, *Muic in My Time,* 214.

All further work was done on a completed manuscript. Casella indicates as much himself, noting on the second page of the sketchbook above that the work was 'terminato sul altro manuscritto, A.C.' The completed manuscript demonstrates that many edits and additions have been made to the score, and shows the rest of the work's timeline. The *Sinfonia* movement is dated at the end as being completed 10th June 1936. *Arioso* is marked as being finished 10th July, in Siena. The *Toccata* is noted as being completed 14th July – just four days after the *Arioso* was completed. There is a note on the front page of the completed manuscript stating the work was premiered 12th September that same year by Ornella Puliti-Santoliquido, performed at the Ca'Rezzonico Museum, Venice.

There are several oddities about the notation and drafting style in both the sketchbook (Figure 76 above) and the completed manuscript.[296] The first is the inclusion of an opus number in the title. Next to the title written in red on the first page is the inclusion of 'Sinfonia per pianoforte op. 59' in the top left-hand corner of the folio. No other sketches by Casella include an opus number. This is the only sketch for piano works that includes this kind of marking. This implies that the work was not necessarily an organically composed work that came to him naturally, but was a planned or commissioned work. The fact that the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* was premiered extremely quickly after it was composed support this idea. The short timeline in which the work was completed suggests that Casella was writing to a deadline. Furthermore, the marking 'terminato sul altro manuscritto' suggests that Casella knew he was up against the clock regarding when he needed to finish composing this work. Instead of drafting it in a sketchbook, then copying it onto a completed manuscript, he simply chose to write directly onto the completed manuscript, saving time. This – opting for and noting that he chose to complete the work on the manuscript – never appears anywhere else in the sketchbooks.

On the completed manuscripts, there are similar oddities. There are many edits, scribbles, blacked-out notes, and rewritten passages. Entire sections are rewritten in a way that was only ever previously seen in the sketchbooks. These revisions are most evident in the *Toccata* movement, which – if we remember – was composed in only four days. Entire passages are rewritten in both hands, and he leaves two blank staves between each line of music, instead of his usual one, as if pre-empting that he will need extra space to rewrite parts for both hands. It all suggests that all compositional phases were done on the completed manuscript, and in a hurry.

It can be assumed, then, that Casella wrote the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* in somewhat of a hurry. The work was composed in just over two months, being commenced in May 1936, and completed in July the same year. For such a long work, this is odd that there was such a short time taken to compose the

[296] Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I have been unable to obtain copies of the completed manuscript for the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata*, thus am unable to present it here in this thesis.

work. When we look at other monumental works by Casella – such as the *Sonatina* – they were composed and revised over a period of many months, and seem to have been laboured over carefully and thoughtfully, rather than hastily penned and edited on the completed manuscript. As hypothesised above, it is most likely that Casella was working to a deadline, and needed to complete the work for the September *Festival internazionale di musica contemporanea*.

Style and Structure

Given that Lengel and Copeland both identify and offer detailed descriptions of the work in their theses, there is little point reiterating their adequate descriptive surveys. This discussion on the work's style will outline the structure of the work overall, then discuss the borrowed elements therein. Following this, the individual movements will be discussed regarding what stylistic gestural and tactile motifs arise. This case study will conclude with a discussion of the technical and interpretative challenges of the work.

The overall structure of the work is effectively a sonata, although not a cohesive one. Similarly to the *Sonatina* Op. 28, it is a collage of themes. However, unlike the *Sonatina,* the thematic cohesion throughout the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* is less apparent, and the themes seem more cut-and-paste. As Copeland argues thematic development is continual and extreme.[297] By this, Copeland means that each theme is modified and modulated into something startlingly new, prohibiting cohesion between themes and movements. While there are some hints throughout each movement of the initial opening theme, these opening themes seldom return in a recognisable way, and each movement is a collection of different themes that are linked with mostly chromatic modulations. The first movement alone is a collage of seven starkly different themes. While they were composed as a triptych, there is nothing from Casella or any scholarship demanding that the movements be performed as a whole work, or without other works interspersed between them.[298] The lack of cohesion of the work as a whole arguably encourages this. Thus, it is extremely challenging for performers to learn or create expressive and interpretive cohesion throughout the work.

Casella models the work on Beethoven's sonata Op. 111. While there are obvious elements that Casella borrows from this specific work (especially in the first *Sinfonia* movement, discussed below), there are a number of overall structural elements taken from Beethoven. Casella was intimate with Beethoven's piano music: he performed it regularly as part of his work as a pianist and with his trio. He also edited

[297] Copeland, *The New Classicism: Alfredo Casella's* Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata *Op. 59,* 16.

[298] Originally, I had planned on performing these works as part of a series of concerts, rather than submitting recordings as I have. One of the ideas I had for this was to programme the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* alongside Franck's *Prélude, chorale et fugue*, and intersperse the movements of both works.

the entire Beethoven sonatas for Ricordi & Co between 1919-1920, completing a three-volume critical teaching edition of the works.[299] Importantly, Casella defined Beethoven as the 'first of the great romanticists.'[300] Having been accused of being the opposite of romantic – being too modern – it makes sense that Casella would borrow from a giant of the early Romantic period when composing a work to reingratiate and re-establish himself in Italian society. Both works begin with a *maestoso; allegro*, followed with an *arioso* second movement (although Beethoven's is titled *arietta*). Casella borrows broadly from sonata style by adding a monumental fast, final movement to the work: the *Toccata*.

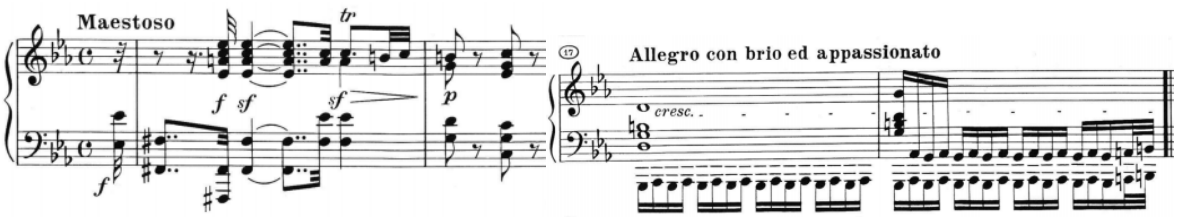
There are also possible influences from the grand triptychs of Franck. Franck wrote two major triptychs for piano, both of which Casella likely played and was intimate with: *Prélude, choral et fugue* (1884), and *Prélude, aria et final* Op. 32 (1886). However, other than the triptych structure, and using form-denoting movement names, nothing else links Casella's work to Franck's. One may construe similarities between other, more contemporary grand three-movement works for piano, such as Ravel's *Sonatine* (1905) and Debussy's *Pour le piano* (1901). But it is merely the three-movement form that is similar, rather than any deeper structural or stylistic features. When we consider that the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* was written during a period where Casella was trying to gain favour with the Italian 'romantics,' it makes sense that he would not borrow from Modern composers.

This choice to not borrow from Modernists, but only from the Classical and Romantic periods suggests that Casella was aware of his borrowing. As will be shown in the discussion on the *Sinfonia,* there are moments that borrow from Beethoven more specifically than just structure or movement titles. This all suggests that Casella was aware of his borrowing, although whether he acknowledged it or not is another matter for debate outside of this thesis.

Sinfonia

The *Sinfonia* somewhat borrows some its structure from the first movement of Beethoven's piano sonata Op. 111. Similarly to the first movement of Beethoven's work, Casella uses a *maestoso* passage to open the work, as a long introduction. This is then followed by an *allegro* section in both works (Figure 77 below). One cannot escape the influence of Beethoven in the *Sinfonia*. Whether he knew it or not, it would appear that Casella drew upon the entirety of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op 111, from key signature, tempo indication, and structure, to rhythmic, textural and gestural similarities.

[299] Beethoven, *Piano Sonatas,* Ed. Alfredo Casella, Volume 1 (Milan: Ricordi & Co, 1920), accessed 20th May 2021, https://ks4.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/d/d2/IMSLP268596-PMLP435136-LvBeethoven_Sonate_per_pianoforte_vol1_ACasella.pdf
[300] Ibid, 1.



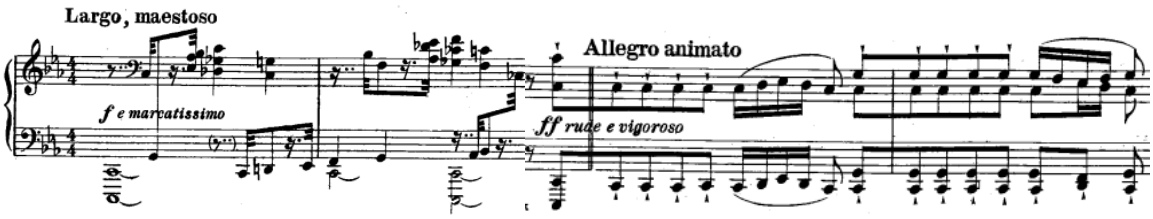


Figure 77: The opening maestoso and allegro passages of Beethoven's Op. 111 (above) and Casella's Sinfonia (below)

Both opening movements by Beethoven and Casella begin in C minor, with a heavily dotted rhythm of demisemiquavers and dotted quavers; a thumping, syncopated weighted fall gesture, like the first hints of an avalanche. Both use multi-voice chords, with touches of atonality (an A diminished chord in the Beethoven, and a stacked fourth in Casella's above a C suspension). Even the dynamics of *forte* in both works is similar. While Beethoven chooses to employ uses of *sforzandi*, Casella instead uses *marcatissimo*. When we come to the *allegro* section, Casella continues to borrow the aggression and gestural heaviness and spikiness of Beethoven's first movement. Where Beethoven marks *allegro con brio appassionato*, Casella uses *allegro animato, rude e vigoroso.*

Yet, after the beginning of the *allegro animato*, Casella moves away from the influence of Beethoven, presenting a work that is a series of moving themes. As stated before, Lengel has done much legwork as to the various musical elements within Casella's *sinfonia, arioso e toccata*. The summary of the *sinfonia's* structure can be viewed as: A B C D E B A. In this thematic structure, the A section signifies the *largo, maestoso* opening theme, and B signifies the *allegro animato* theme (both seen in Figure 77 above). The following C, D, and E themes are presented below in the discussion, investigating the expressive qualities of these themes and how they may be interpreted.

If we momentarily jump back to the opening of the *Sinfonia,* and the *largo, maestoso* A theme (above in Figure 78), let us discuss the expression and interpretive challenges therein. This grand, loud, and thunderous entry at the very lowest register of the piano is extreme in every way: dynamics, attack, and register. It is dramatic and intense, with a thumping weighted fall juxtaposed with a syncopated rhythm. This whole first theme until the *allegro* B theme is grand and bold, and heavy in tactility. Given the minor-dissonant harmonies, and the continually moving dotted rhythms above the sustained bass C octaves, there is a menacing and threatening character (mirrored in gesture) that grows until we arrive

at the aggressive, punchy, spiky, and rough *allegro* (Figure 77 above). While the violence and hostility of this section remains throughout the rest of the movement, there is nuance within this. The first theme at the *allegro* (above) is very militaristic in nature, with its stomping, oscillating hands gesture. Given the continually thumping *staccatissimo* quavers in both hands, and the loud dynamic marking and various accents, it is reminiscent of two things: Casella's own stomping and marching in his *Pagine di Guerra* Op. 25 (1915), and the historical image of the March on Rome, 1922. This stomping continues throughout the first *allegro* theme, and becomes more intense as we enter the third C theme of the movement (Figure 78).

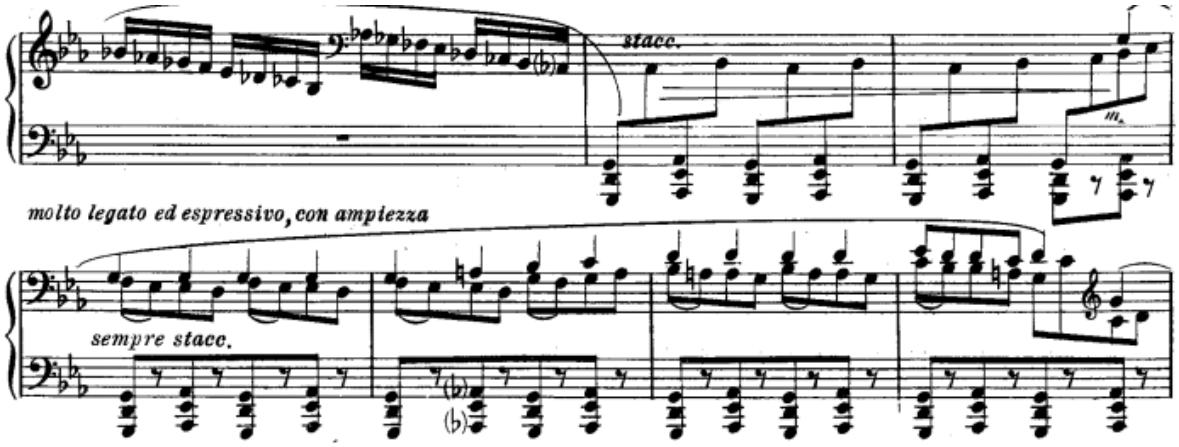


Figure 78: The third C theme of the Sinfonia, and the continuation of the militaristic marching character

This C theme, marked *molto legato ed espressivo, con ampiezza* for the melodic line and *sempre staccato* in the accompaniment, is a further continuation on the march-like military feeling of the movement, both musically and gesturally. The continually stomping left-hand motif is indicative of marching soldiers on the road to war. The chromatically moving right hand crunch-stomp is indicative of artillery tanks rolling over gravel. This monotonous, repetitive movement coupled with dissonance furthers this forceful and abrasive character. Not only is the character evident in the tonality and texture, but also the gestures required to play this section: the tactility conveys the character. There is no respite from militaristic mood this until we come to the fourth D theme in C major (Figure 79).

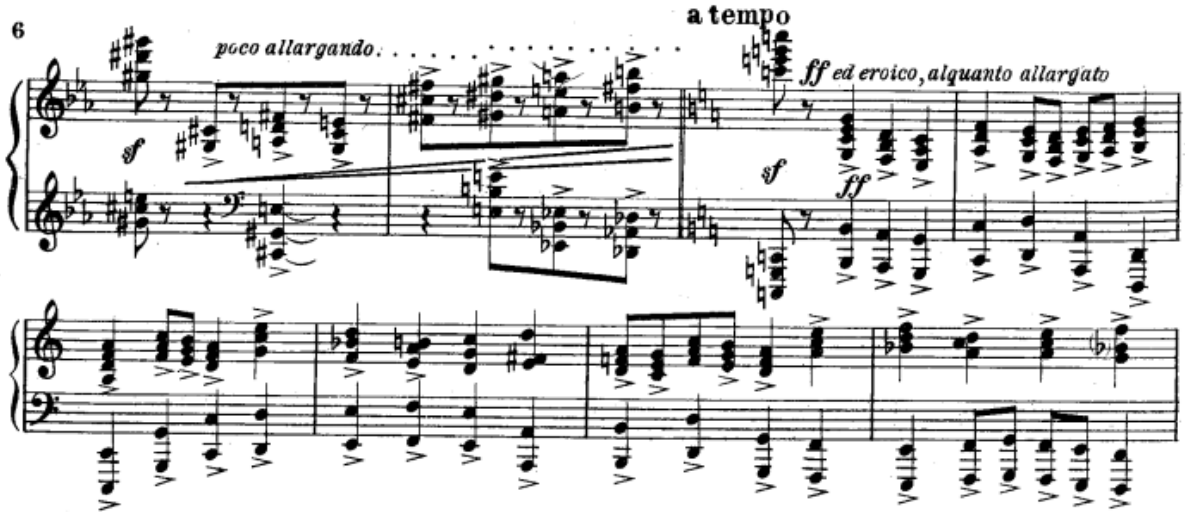


Figure 79: The fourth D theme of the Sinfonia, and the tonal respite being in a major key and having a modal tonality

This new major theme – the D theme – offers a grand, heroic character into our militaristic scene. The *eroico, allargato* offers a moment's hope and glory before returning to the aggressive pounding of a new minor theme. The major theme is has modal moments, rather than being strictly in C major. The heavy, solid block chords feel strong, and reflect the *allargato, eroico* character. The strength and solidity required of this theme not just evident in the score, but in the tactile style required to play this theme. Similarly, the stationary nature of the rhythm through using mostly crotchets creates a sense of breadth and space not allowed since the opening *maestoso* theme. Yet this space and resolution are quickly shattered with the arrival of a new minor theme – the E theme (Figure 80) with active, jumping gestures that again require a spikiness of touch.

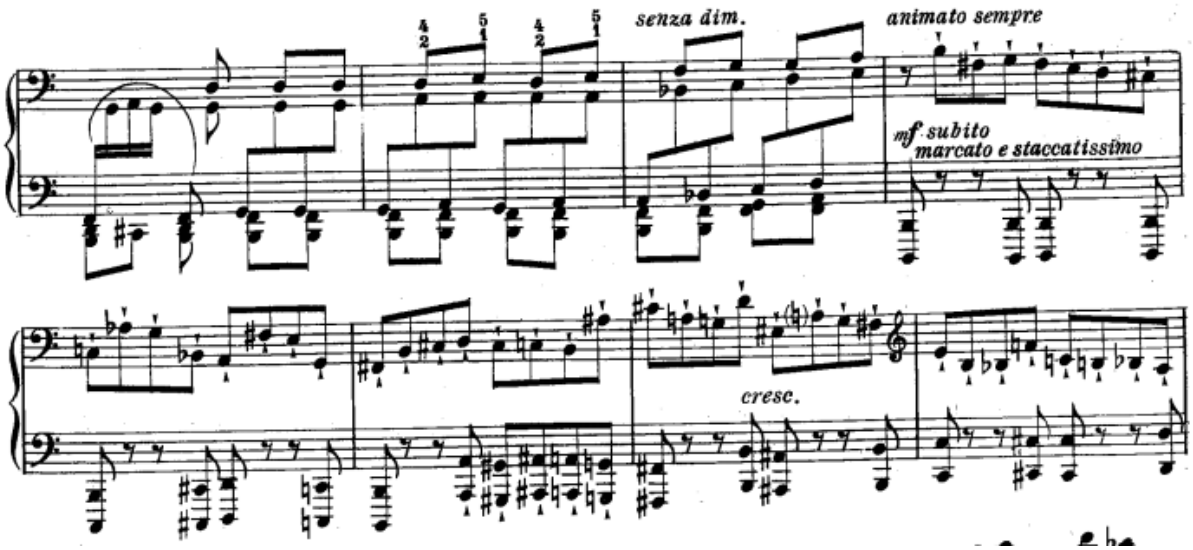


Figure 80: The fifth E theme of the Sinfonia, and the return of the minor tonality and aggressive staccatissimo quavers

The *marcato, staccatissimo* thundering quavers return with the E theme. The rest of the movement continues in this vein: aggressive, thunderous, and impressive. Within this is a reiteration of the *allegro* B theme, and finally a return to the original *maestoso* A theme to conclude the piece. There is so much anger and bellicosity throughout the movement. Other than the D theme – written in C major – there is no respite or break from this relentless aggression. Throughout the movement Casella indicates this violent and angry character through markings such as *furioso*, *pesante*, and *appesantito*. We can understand this angry, aggressive, and violent character easily not just through the use of expressive language, but also the gestures and tactility demanded of the performer. There is nothing *leggero* or *delicato* in the *Sinfonia* movement, with the work demanding force and strength.

This angry character, reflected in the tactility of the movement, reflects Casella's potentially angry persona: anger at the world and critics that have turned against him. It is also possible this aggression reflects the aggression and violence of the fascist regime, and evokes the March on Rome that signalled the beginning of the regime in 1922. The best way the performer can understand this character is by channelling their own anger into the work, and the shapes of rage and aggression therein.

Arioso

This movement is a complete shift away from the *Sinfonia* in both character and tactile style. After the aggressiveness of the first movement, the *Arioso* is a plaintive and gentle turnaround in character, gesture and expressiveness. Where the *Sinfonia* lacked cohesive structure both formally and tonally, the *Arioso* offers a semblance of both. Harmonically, the movement follows a traditional classical-period modulation structure. While chromaticism features heavily throughout, the exposition is written in based around E minor. The development begins in B major, followed by a B minor secondary theme before returning to the tonic (E minor) for the recapitulation and coda. While we are still very much in a minor-chromatic tonality (E minor, even though we begin on the diminished 4th of the scale), there is none of the aggressiveness and violence of the previous movement, through use of a much slower, calmer tempo, and the *dolce e tranquillo* tactility demanded throughout the movement (Figure 81).

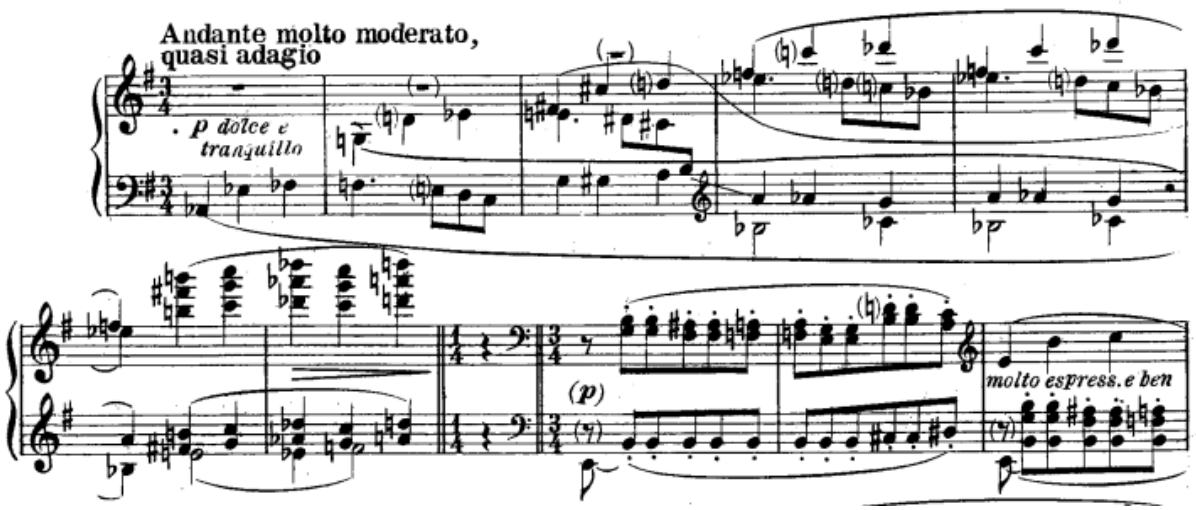


Figure 81: The opening (introduction and exposition) of the arioso movement; a much calmer, slower, and softer movement compared with the Sinfonia

The dynamics and texture indicate a complete transformation of mood and character away from the first movement. The *piano* opening of three voices entering in a fugue-like manner are phrased, suggesting a legato touch, and with some (if not a lot of) pedal. The gesture and tactility necessitated by this is a delicate touch, a floating etherealness to ensure softness and gentleness, and no sudden movements to disrupt the tranquil character.

As can be seen above in Figure 81, the *Arioso* begins with an introductory seven bars, where each voice enters in a contrapuntal manner. However, this fugue-like introduction ends quickly, followed by the first main theme of the movement. As can be seen, there is a bass E in the left hand, which is phrased into the following inner-voice quavers. It is unclear whether this E should be sustained with the piano's middle pedal (like in the *Toccata* op. 6, where bass notes written with similar phrase-markings were sustained), or whether it should only be held until the following note comes along. There is then the inner-voice chord progression, which moves in the upper voices by chromatic step, and comprises slurred staccati. Above this, after two bars comes the melodic line, marked *molto espressivo e ben cantato*. We have sustained notes in the bass, *espressivo* and *cantanto* in the melody, and a somewhat bouncy yet slurred middle voice. All of this results in a very rich and resonant texture. It is a compromise of an almost spiky staccato gesture in both hands unevenly balanced with a delicate, floating touch.

The subsequent character that erupts from this textural and tonal soundscape is seductive and melodramatic. The melodic line sings lyrically and expressively above an active and complex accompaniment, resulting in an emotive character. The tactility demanded of this is a swelling of expressivity in the hand, swaying and breathing like an opera singer would when delivering an aria. Yet this melodrama and sensationalism resolves mid-way through the movement. Just as in the middle of the *Sinfonia* there was a modulation to major, so too is there in the middle of *Arioso* (Figure 82).

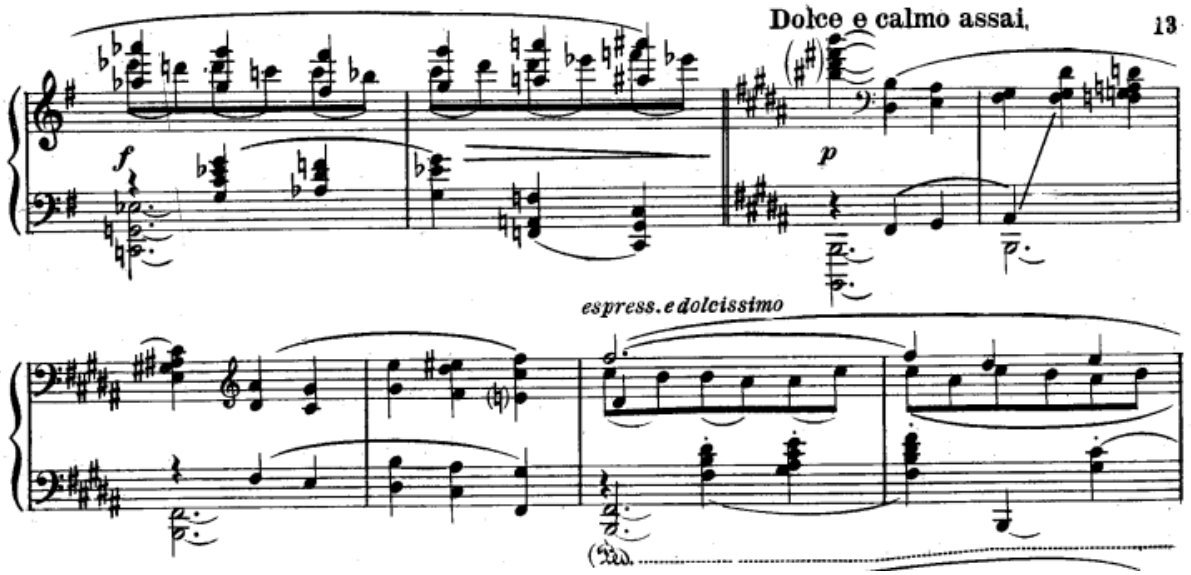


Figure 82: The modulation to B major in the middle of the arioso (the first theme of the development), and moving away from the minor-chromatic dissonance of the first theme

After building and building through chromatically moving chords in the first theme, Casella bring us to a new theme in B major (the major dominant of E minor). After the tumultuous building of intensity and dissonance throughout the first theme, Casella brings us back to a state of calm and tranquillity. He marks exactly this in the score. As can be seen above (Figure 82), the new theme is not just indicated by the new key signature and resulting tonality, but also with the command *dolce e calmo assai*, followed shortly after by *espressivo e dolcissimo* above the melodic line. This new theme is resonant, rich, and sweet, requiring a considered yet strongly weighted gesture. It is the most tonal section of the entire work. Casella gives it a sweet, loving character, emulated through the strong, calm evenness of touch required to deliver this. It sparkles, through sustained repeated bass chords, with a light and moving melodic line high above. However, this calmness and beauty does not last long. After an indication stating that the mood should change to one more *misterioso e solenne*, there is another key change. We go to B minor (the dominant minor) for the third theme of the movement (Figure 83); a step on our journey back to E minor.

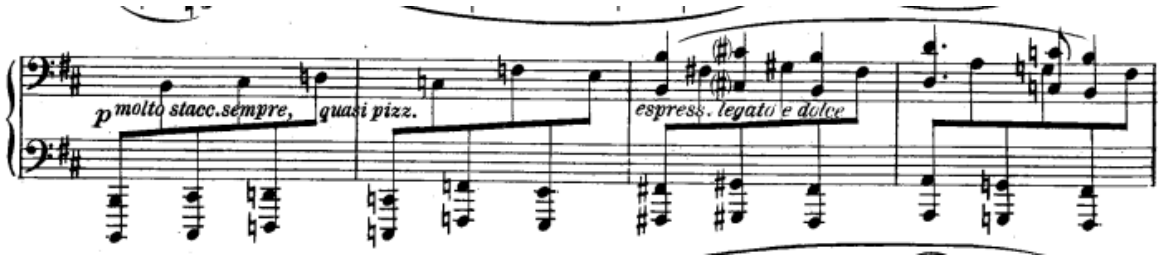


Figure 83: The third theme of the arioso in B minor (the second theme of the development), a much sneakier and cunning theme

With the return to a minor key, the negative character of the work returns. Yet here, thanks to the use of *molto staccato, quasi pizzicato,* there is a much more stealthy, sneaky, and cunning character and touch – a hunching of the hands, almost. While the melodic line continues to move expressively, *legato e dolce* as before, the change in accompaniment signals more tensions are to come. The intrigue grows throughout this theme until we return, through chromatic movement, to the first theme of the movement.

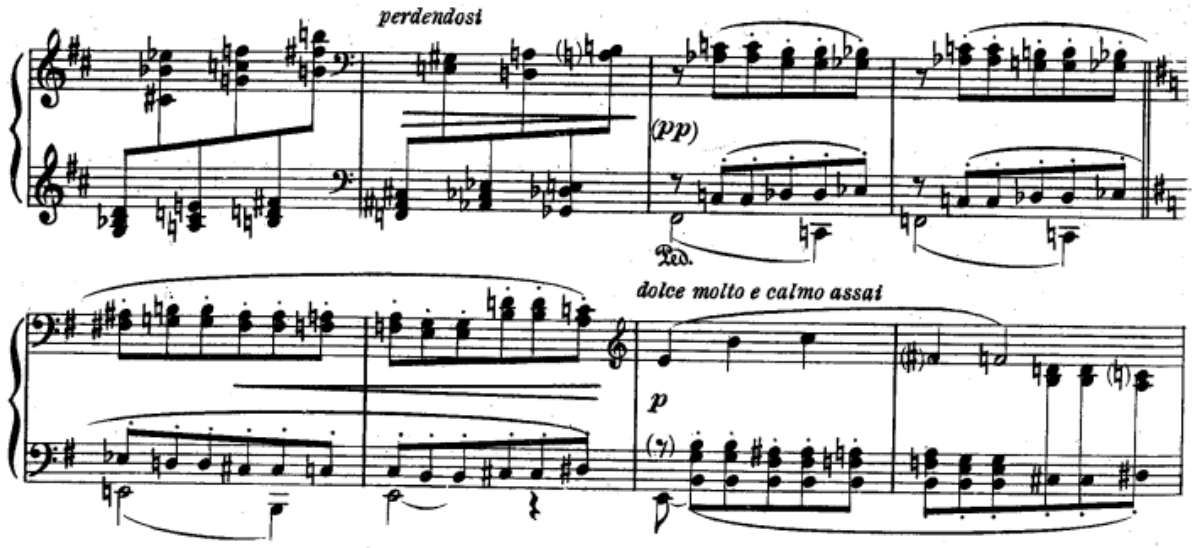


Figure 84: The return to the A theme (the recapitulation) in the arioso

Instead of building tempestuously and aggressively to bring about a new theme, as he does in the *Sinfonia*, here Casella brings thematic change and development through diminishing dynamics and small hand movements. Instead of wide-stretching busy chords functioning as a bridge to modulate between themes, here he uses small moving parallel thirds, and small chromatic steps in each voice, mirrored by a smallness and stillness of gesture. When the recapitulation comes and the A theme returns (bar 7 in Figure 84 above), it arrives calmly and quietly, with a sweetness that is familiar to the movement. Even though there are moments of intensity, dissonance, and drama throughout the movement, the majority of the work is lyrical rather than plaintive. Even the melodrama that begins the first theme of the work is sweet and resonant, rather than aggressive or affronting. While still chromatic, it is a much different kind of inharmony than the *Sinfonia.*

Toccata

Now we come to the final movement of the work: the animated and lively *Toccata*. This movement is the most technically demanding of the three. Like the *Sinfonia*, it contains constantly evolving thematic changes, a huge numbers of notes, dissonance (although of a much more chromatic nature), and intense aggression in both gesture and character. It is so fast moving in tempo and thematic material that there

is not quite enough time for the listener (or performer) to ever settle into the movement until the coda. It is difficult to know how to interpret this: do we performers simply play all the notes, and follow the instructions on the page, given the speed at which we get through notes and the various different themes? Or do we need to take a considered and careful approach to the work, and elucidate individual characters for each new section as it comes?

Like the *Sinfonia*, the *Toccata* is a collage of themes. The structure of the movement can be seen simply as: A B C D E B F G H. It begins within an introductory A theme in B♭ minor, marked *allegro ma non troppo.* This then develops to the second B theme, *allegro molto vivace*. The third C theme arrives with the change to C major/A minor, and a change in key signature. The fourth D theme is also heralded with a key change, going to F minor, marked *più mosso*. There is then a heroic and major E theme, which is in the tonic major – B major, marked *un poco largamente ed appesantito.* The B theme returns with the return to B♭ minor – the original tonic – before an F theme, *animato,* in C# major arrives. After modulating to C major there is an extended theme – the G theme, marked *un poco più largamente* – which leads to the final H theme of the movement, *largo molto, festoso, alquanto pesante.*

The opening A theme introduces the overarching character of the work: tempestuous, continuous movement that never seems to resolve. Casella himself notes this continuous movement, and that this introductory theme is to incessantly grow and move as it progresses (Figure 85). There is the weighted fall gesture divided across the hands, although done with a hushed dynamic and resultingly smaller hand movement.

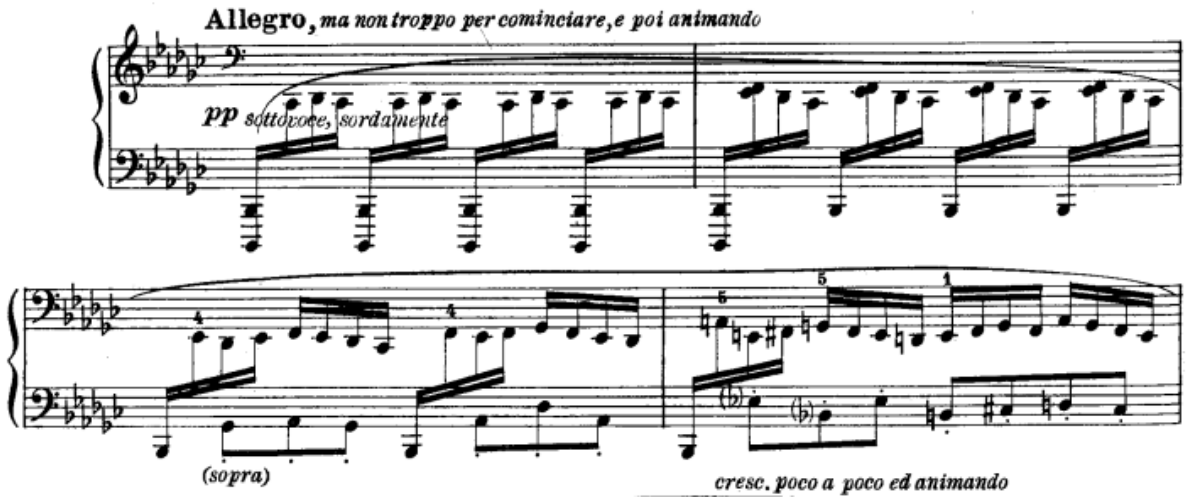


Figure 85: The opening of the Toccata, and the introductory A theme

Casella marks *allegro ma non troppo per cominciare, e pio animando*. We should not start too quickly, or too animatedly, implying that there is a long way to develop and grow in both speed and animation throughout the work. The opening motif is to be supressed until the melodic line develops further in the fourth bar, where we are then instructed that it should gradually grow in volume and animation. There are many similarities to this opening theme of the *Toccata*, and Casella's *Toccata* Op. 6 (1904), including the placement of the melody on the beat with the left hand, while the right hand plays semiquavers as harmonic filler underneath the melody. While not using the same cascading gestures as the *Toccata* Op. 6, there is a similar unevenness of hand distribution of the melody: one voice is prominent, just as one part of one hand is prominent in the tactility required. This theme continues to build and wind, growing in intensity and volume. Casella marks throughout this theme *continuando cresc. ed animare*, explicitly shepherding the performer to grow in energy. When we come to the B theme, we seem to settle into a regular dynamic and tempo marking (Figure 85).

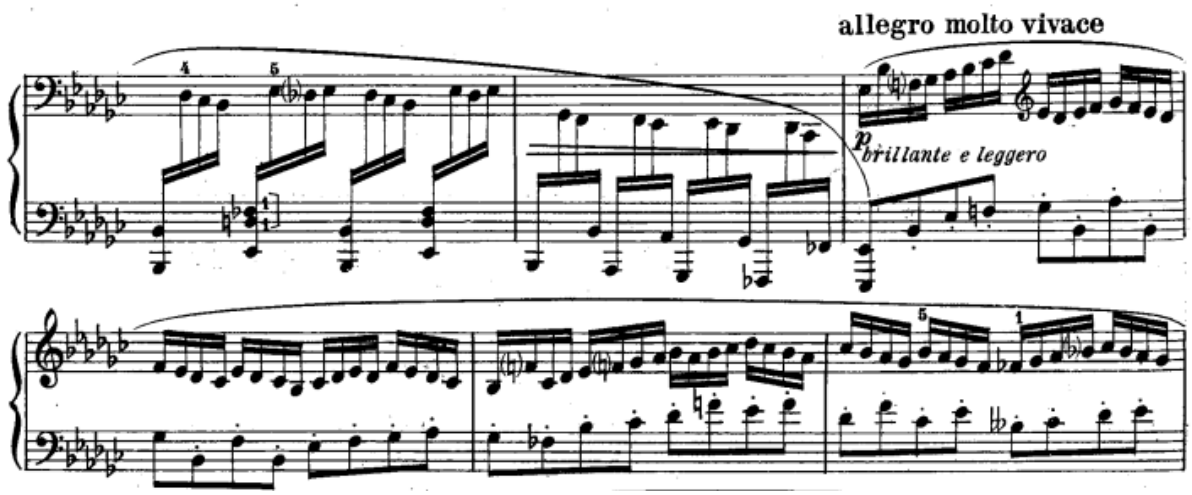


Figure 86: The B theme of the Toccata

At the B theme, we seem to reach a steadiness of tempo, dynamics, key and gesture. While the running tonality is still chromatic, there is a more constant sense of the B♭ minor tonality through the alberti bass figuration, and the very conventional melody-accompaniment tactile division of the hands. Similarly, the tempo is marked as *allegro molto vivace*, as if we have arrived at the speed we were previously working towards. After continuing to grow in animation, we finally arrive at *brilliante e leggero*.

After progressing through the second theme, and gradually growing in dynamics, we come to the C theme (Figure 87). This theme is introduced by a change to the key signature: there are no sharps or flats in the key signature, even though the section appears to be written in E major to begin with. Just

as at the beginning of the movement, there is a division of the hands, implying a weighted fall of the left hand at the beginning of each beat.

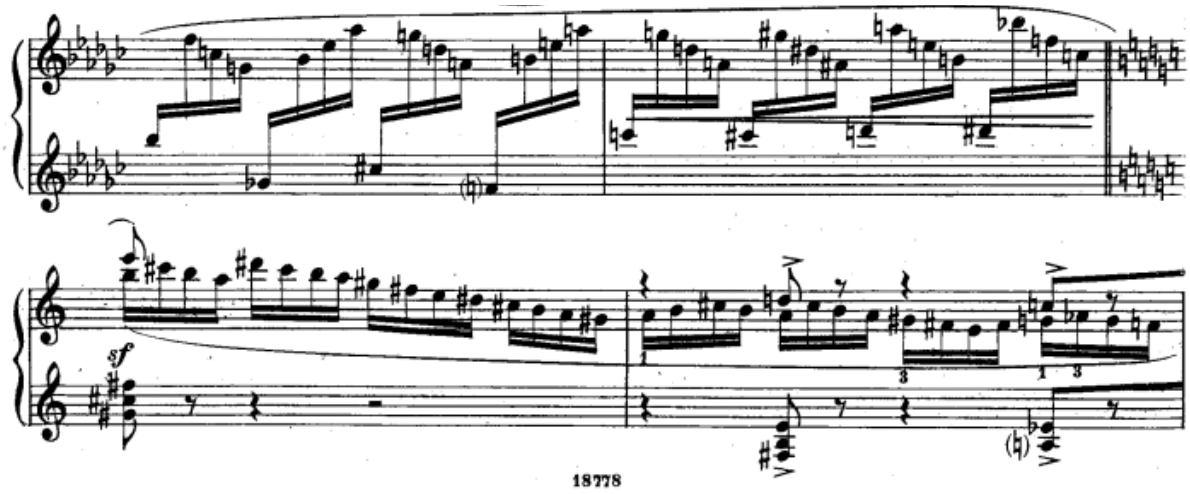


Figure 87: The key change and the beginning of the C section

Yet this E major tonality is fleeting. This section modulates rapidly, moving swiftly from E major to A major, then to C minor in quick succession. It would seem that the function of the C section is to modulate towards F minor – the key of the D theme (Figure 88). Yet there is also a modulation of rhythmic and textural material. There is a shift away from melodic notes being at the start of every four semiquavers, to the melody being placed as quavers above the running semiquaver line. This develops throughout the section into a *sonoro e brilliante* expressive melodic line. With the continuing modulations of the melody and the tonality, Casella marks *crescendo ed animando poco a poco*, implying that the settled nature of the B theme has ended, and that once more the character is racing towards the unknown. Thus we arrive at the D theme with a new tonality, a new key signature, and a new tempo marking (Figure 88).

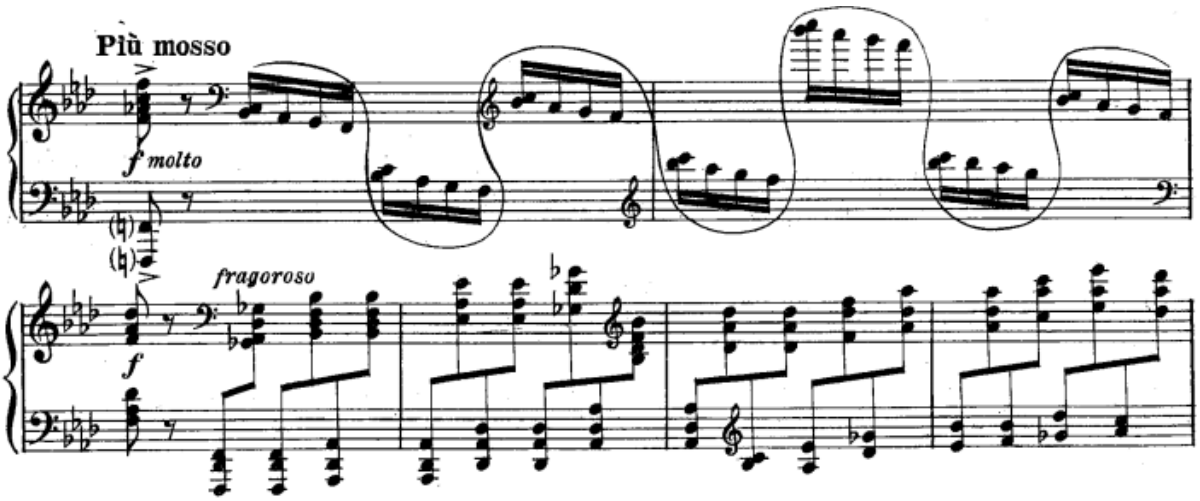


Figure 88: The opening of the D theme, the new key signature and tonality of F minor, and the new tempo più mosso

As can be seen above, we arrive firmly in F minor, but only for two bars before Casella begins sneaking in hints of a modulation. The tempo is slightly faster, *più mosso*, and the dynamic marking is loud and thunderous. There are two parts to this new D theme, as can be seen above: the semiquaver passage of alternating hands, which rises and falls like a crashing wave gesture, and the alternating *fragoroso*, roaring and stomping, alternating, ascending chords that follow. This happens three times before we reach the E theme with yet another key and tempo change (Figure 89).

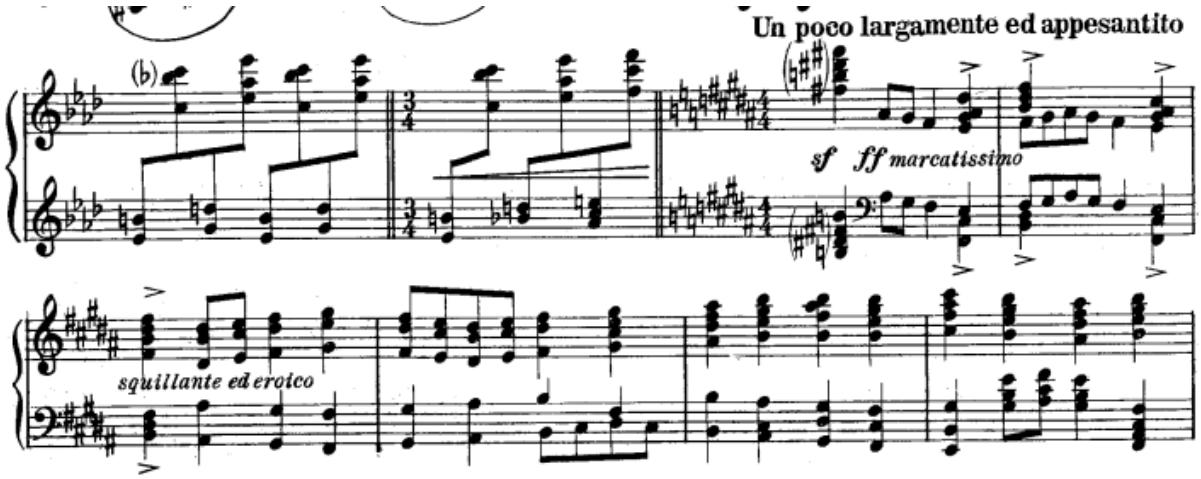


Figure 89: The E theme of the Toccata, in B major and with a slower tempo

This new E theme is majestic, grand, and more passionately grand than any of the previous themes. Similarly to the middle of the *sinfonia* and *arioso* movements is the shift to a major key in the middle of the movement. Just as in the other two movements, this also gives a heroic and positive lift to the character of the movement. Instead of the busy, mischievousness of the previous themes, the E theme is uplifting, glorious and triumphant. Not only does the tonality reflect this change in character, but so too does the change in tempo, articulation and largely homo-rhythmic movement of voices. The previously stomping choral gesture changes to a strong, resonant and swelling one. The tempo slows to a stately *largamente ed appesantito*, heavy and wide in both the attack which the notes are played with, but also the resonance and volume of sound given to sound out. The thick chords in both hands (and the implied liberal use of pedal that comes with this), accented and *marcatissimo* add to this lusciousness of sound and resonance, furthering the heroic and grand character of this theme. Yet again this new theme is only short lived. The B theme in B♭ minor returns, and with it the agitation and sneakiness of the beginning of the *Toccata*.

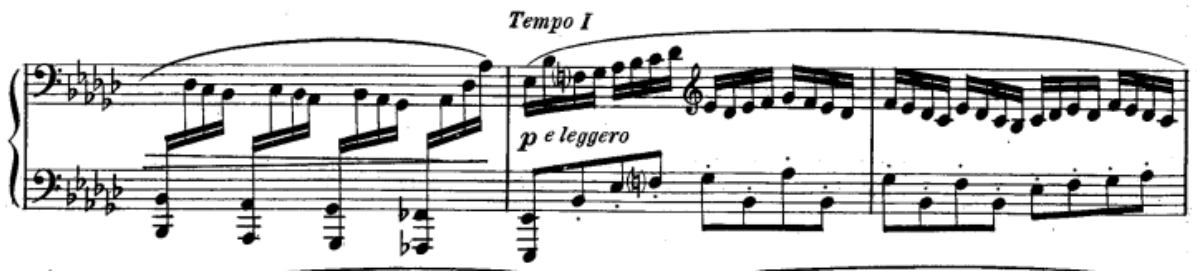


Figure 90: The return of the B theme in B flat minor, and the agitated and cunning character that began the work

With the return of the B theme, Casella indicates a complete shift away from the luxurious and rich E theme. Gone are the heavy wide chords, major tonality, and stately tempo. They are replaced with the original *allegro molto vivace* tempo, and the new minor-chromatically moving tonality of the B theme. The texture thins out with staccati quavers underneath a running *leggero* semiquaver passage. This leads to the *animato* F theme in C# minor (Figure 91). We can see from the figure below that there is a similar scrunch-like gesture between the hands, contracting inwards.

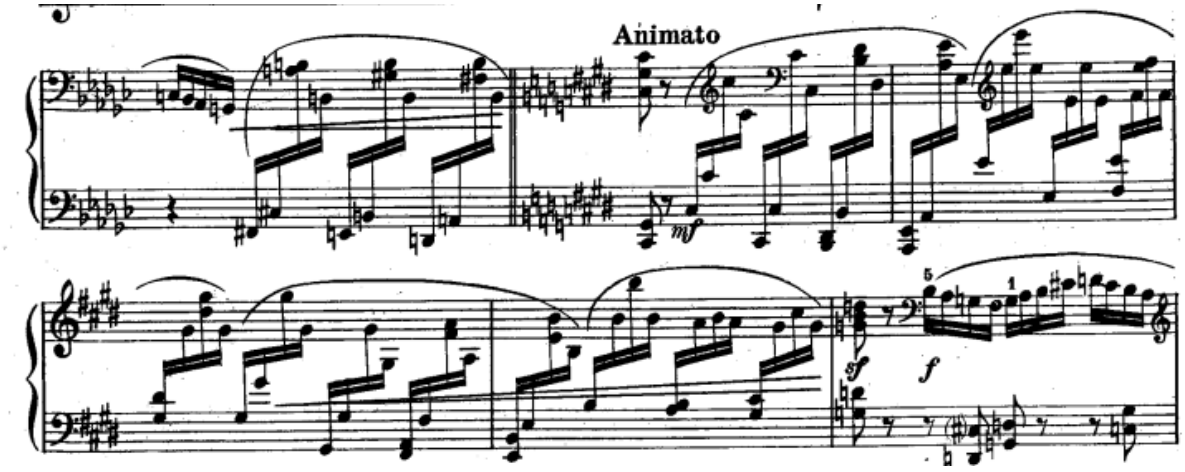


Figure 91: The animato F theme

This theme and the scrunching gesture therein comes from Casella's very first *Toccata* Op. 6. The octave motif and scrunching inwards of both hands seen here above in bar 2 of repeated C#s is similar to the opening cascading and scrunching motifs of his earlier work. So too is the key signature, being in C# minor, just like Casella's first *Toccata*. Comparable also is Casella's use of this octave motif to modulate to another key. Just as in Op. 6, here too this octave motif gradually modulates towards a new key. Through chromatic steps, we gradually come to the penultimate theme, the G section (Figure 92).

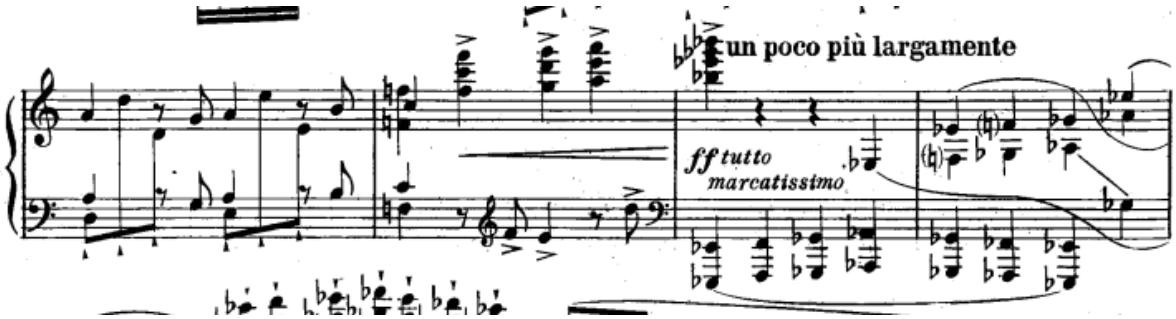


Figure 92: The penultimate theme: the G section, with a new tempo marking and key signature

This section, as is similar to previous new themes, is introduced by a new key signature and tempo marking. However, Casella does not begin the new theme with a new key signature – that comes earlier, in the modulatory chromatic section building up to the new tempo. There is, however, a new tempo and dynamic established for the new section. Casella marks *un poco più largamente*, *fortissimo tutto, marcatissimo*. This new section is dissonant in the extreme through the use of minor 7ths in both hands. Throughout the G theme, Casella continually pulls back the tempo, marking in various places *poco allargato*, and *espressivo*. While there are still markings such as *sempre molto animato poco a poco*, there is some restraint to this theme. Instead of racing ahead, Casella pulls the performer back through tempo and *espressivo* markings. It suggests that we should give more time to the melodic line, and to the resonances arising throughout the passage – a gestural swelling and breathing to give space between chords. While it is to be animated and *stridente*, it is also leading to the final H theme: *largo molto, festoso, alquanto pesante* (Figure 93).

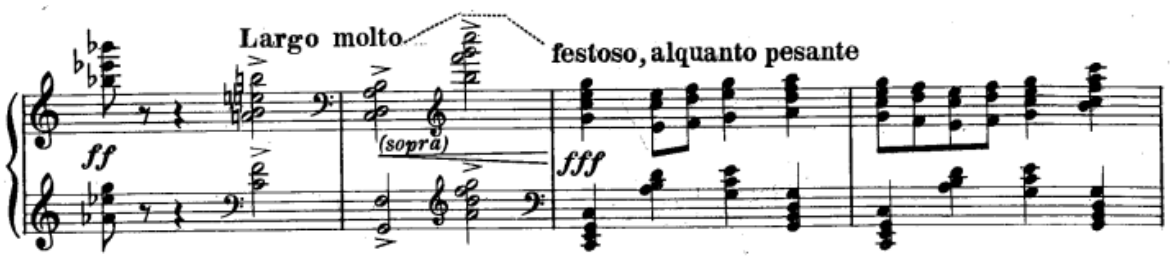


Figure 93: The final H theme, largo molto

After the tumultuous and ever-changing themes of the *Toccata*, we are finally able to gesturally and metaphorically sit and enjoy the final C major theme, which is joyous and festive. While extremely heavy and loud (as can be seen marked in Figure 93 above), this is theme is triumphant and celebratory, rather than rushed and fleeting. This theme again borrows from Casella's first *Toccata* Op. 6. Similarly to that early work, this one ends with the command *precipitando* above an ascending chordal passage,

before a falling chord sequence which is marked *largissimamente*, and a final chord that is notated to ring out until the instrument stops resonating.

The similarities between this *Toccata* and the *Toccata* Op. 6 are striking to one who knows Casella's piano repertoire. They are more than visually similar on the page, but also sound and feel familiar to play. Many of the gestures and tactile elements of the *Toccata* Op. 6 are similarly felt in the *Toccata* from Op. 59. It again suggests that Casella knowingly borrowed from himself, and had a unique and uniform style that did not change across his oeuvre.

Performing and Interpreting the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata*

The most important thing to note about the *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* is the sheer size and scope of the work. As is detailed above, the thematic changes across each movement, let alone the entire work, are enormous. Coupled with this are the extremely demanding technical challenges of the work. There are seldom moments of true diatonicism, quickly overturned with chromaticism and continual modulations through various tonalities. The performer must also build stamina to cope with the sheer size of the work. Performing a non-diatonic work of such a length is a great challenge for any pianist.

There is then the structural challenge of making sense of the work: what is the form, and how does one interpret and elicit the character of the work? Simply, the work – when looking at all three movements - is a sonata. But there are none of the usual structures within movements, except for the *Arioso*, which is written in sonata form. Both the *Sinfonia* and *Toccata* movements are cut-and-paste movement, with everchanging thematic content. The only real connecting and similar features between movements is – other than the use of chromaticism – the use of a major middle section in each movement; a moment of tonal respite from the dissonance.

One can interpret the *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata* as a collage of dissonance, with each movement having its own overarching character or mood. The *Sinfonia* is aggressive, dissonant, and taciturn. The *Arioso* is a lyrical and dramatic movement, like a tragic aria in an opera. The *Toccata* is cunning, sneaky, and at moments verbose, yet dramatically changes to a festive and celebratory character towards the conclusion of the work.

Finally, we should consider whether this piece is truly is a fascist piece of music. Casella nominally wrote this piece to prove himself as a nationalist, Italian composer. While he borrows extensively from Beethoven – who he champions as the first romantic composer – he has not written a Romantic (or even Classical) piece. Through use of dissonance and ever-changing thematic material, the *Sinfonia, arioso*

e toccata presents as an extremely modern, avant garde work. It is a collage, like the *Sonatina* Op. 28. One could argue this work is a fascist monument because it was written for a fascist-supported festival, the *Festival internazionale di musica contemporanea*. But, as has been discussed in the biographical chapter, Casella was not a fascist. Similarly, the timeline suggests that the work was commissioned, for the festival, rather than being an organically conceived piece.

Ultimately, it is a challenging work in every conceivable way. It is Classical in the overall structure of the work, yet extremely anti-romantic in almost every other way. However the performer chooses to tackle and subsequently interpret this work, it must be a negotiation of various elements. The performer may decide to interpret this work as either fascist or not fascist. Similarly, they must decide how to tackle and characterise the various themes in the work, and decide whether to force the work into some sense of a whole, cohesive work, or whether to indulge in the collaged structure of continually developing themes.

Case Study 5: *Sei studi* Op. 70, 1942-1944

These six short studies are Casella's final work for piano. Written between 1942 and 1944, the each study is dedicated to colleagues and students from his final years teaching at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia. They harken back to various of his previous piano works, as well as borrowing from the tradition of studies and études. These studies return to Casella's earlier, avant-garde style of compositions written before *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata*. They are reminiscent of his earlier multi-movement works, such as *À la maniere de…* and *Undici pezzi infantili*. Each movement presents an initial, specific motif (whether rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, or a combination therein), then repeats, reiterates, and develops this idea. Casella laboured over these studies, taking two years to complete them before they were published in 1944. They present an interesting snapshot of Casella's compositional process and language in his last years, showing a return to a slower, more well-thought-out approach to composing.

It is important to consider where in Casella's oeuvre this work sits. Not only is it his last piano composition, but it is his penultimate composition (the final being his *Misa pro pace* (1944)). *Sei Studi* is also his only serious piano work completed after the *Sinfonia, Arioso e Toccata*. Perhaps here it is also worth mentioning that we should look to Casella's biography again to contextualise the studies. He never performed the studies himself, and, from archival records, there was no known public performance of the studies during his life.[301] The man who composed these works was not the same internationally renowned pianist of his youth, but an older Casella: the pedagogue, writer, and composer who used to be a pianist. This work exemplifies that identity shift: each movement presents a challenging tactility and gestural motif to be overcome and mastered, and the technical elements of each study are obvious from the outset of learning the works, rather than being a dazzling and flashy concert piece. Yet the set is also a study on expression, done in homage to both Chopin and Ravel. The set has merits as both exercises and performance pieces, and challenges the performer in both expression and technique.

Sei studi was written during the Second World War. Unlike the First World War, which only had an emotional effect on the Casella, the Second World War was an extremely difficult time. He was ill with cancer, and whilst many of his medical expenses were covered by the Fascist state, and he received funding from Mussolini himself, it was still a time of personal stress. His wife, Yvonne, was Jewish, as were many of Casella's friends. Similarly, his career as both a pianist and a conductor were ending. International tours were not being offered to him (or anyone) in Italy, and his international fame and influence was wavering. The many once commonplace luxuries were drying up, whether because he

[301] Conti et al, *Catologo critico del fondo Casella, scritti, musiche, concerti.*

was Italian and linked to the Fascist State, or because of issues and practicalities of war.[302] It was not a happy time in Casella's life. Yet, the works are not unhappy or melancholic in nature. Rather, they are spritely and humorous at times, perhaps pointing to Casella's resoundingly positive character, even during times of hardship.

Before diving into a discussion of the studies' compositional process, first a note should be made about the movements, and the work's overall structure. The six studies are:

1. *Sulle terze maggiori, presto*
2. *Sulle settime maggiori e minori, allegro molto vivo*
3. *Di legato sulle quarte, moderato*
4. *Sulle note ribattute, allegro molto vivace ed agitato*
5. *Sulle quinte (omaggio a Chopin no. 2), tempo del "preludio in La maggioro" di Chopin*
6. *Perpetuum mobile (Toccata), presto veloce*

After discussing the works' overall compositional process and their evolution from a single sketch in 1942 through to the completed published works in 1944, each work will be discussed individually. Because of the brevity and relative structural simplicity of each movement, more weight can be given to a discussion of the technical and expressive challenges of each study. Each study borrows a motif or concept from another work, but the set can be seen to borrow from the tradition of studies more than anything one piece or composer.

Unlike Casella's other works, these studies do not present an easily identifiable character or narrative. They are a series of moods and atmospheres rather than specific characters. This fits well with the structure and form of the work overall: with each technical challenge is also a mood to match and complement. They each contain a singular atmosphere. While they culminate in the *Toccata* with the technical challenges of all previous movements presented in this final study, there is no character arc across the set of studies that seems to resolve in this movement. While the studies can be performed as a set, there is nothing demanding they necessarily be played together.

It is hoped that these studies offer an overview of Casella's compositional style, and how we can interpret his works. The studies are demonstrative not only of his compositional process and style in a general way, but also exemplary of the challenges – both technical and interpretive – that performers

[302] There is one particularly funny letter in Casella's archives at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini from Steinway, America. It would seem from the letter than in 1943, Casella had asked for a new grand piano to be shipped to him in Italy, as he needed (or wanted) a new instrument. Steinway's reply, unsurprisingly, was an abrupt no, citing the issues of War, and lack of diplomatic ties between the USA and Italy as reason for not being able to fulfil this unreasonable request.

face in the majority of his works. These movements, while pedagogical, have musical beauty in them, and present challenges to the performer as to how best perform and construct an interpretation that aptly shows each study's character, and which makes sense of the entire work. As with all of Casella's works, while the character of each study is not obvious from a first reading or play-through, there is great potential for a rich interpretation once the studies are intimately known and understood.

The Compositional Process

Alongside the published score, we are fortunate enough to have some sketch and draft material existing for the *Sei Studi*. These offer a convoluted journey from sketch to published score. In *Quaderno 16* – Casella's final sketchbook – alongside various sketches for orchestral works, we have sketches for a *studio in terza maggiori (per l'album della Suvini 2)* and *Studio in quarte.*[303] Importantly, this first *studio in terza maggiori* is vastly different from the one published in 1944 as part of *Sei Studi*. There are three other existing sketches on loose sheets (not in sketchbooks): *sulle terze maggiori* (1st study, and the version that was published in 1944), *sulle note ribattuta* (4th study), and *in perpetuum mobile (Toccata)* (6th study). Already we have an interesting story unfolding.

The first and earliest sketch for a study movement is that of *studio sulle terza maggiori* in sketchbook 16, followed by the marking '*per l'album della Suvini*.' The sketch is dated 4th-6th July 1942, Scacciapensieri (a province of Siena). On the immediate following pages in the sketchbook is the sketch for *studio in quarte, moderato*. This is dated and placed as 27th November 1943, Rome. It is curious that the next study was sketched almost sixteen months after the first study *in terze maggiori,* yet appears directly after it in the sketchbook. It raises the question: did Casella not sketch or compose at all during this time, or were sketches completed on separate, loose sheets, and he stopped using his sketchbooks? The answer is potentially both. There three separate pages of autograph sketches for three other movements: *sulle terze maggiori, sulle note ribattuta,* and *perpetuum mobile (toccata)*. They are dated individually throughout January 1944 in Rome: *note ribattuta* completed 11th January, *perpetuum mobile* finished on 16th January 1944, and the second *terza maggiori* being completed on 21st January. Two things are evident from these archival sources: the three 'loose-leaf' sketches were completed quickly, over a two week period. The ending of the *Toccata* movement has been re-written three times in the draft sketch – quite a substantial rewrite for Casella's later compositional career.We have no archival sources of any kind of the study in 7ths (*sulle settime maggiori e minori*) or the study in 5ths (*sulle quinte (omaggio a Chopin)*).

[303] Quaderno 16 (1942-43), M 115, MUS 54, Fondo Casella, Istituto per la musica, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice. Unfortunately due to Covid-19, I was unable to get reproductions of the sketches in this Quaderno.

Thus we can suggest the following narrative for the *Sei studi*. In 1942: Casella was likely approached by the publishing house Edizione Suvini Zerboni, Milan to contribute a work to the collection *Antologia pianistica di autori Italiani contemporanei*, edited by Pietro Montani (subsequently published in 1944).[304] Thus, the 1942 version of *studio sulle terze* was initially sketched as a commissioned work (Figure 94). As can be seen below, the draft for the 1942 version – transcribed below – is vastly different from the 1944 draft of *sulle terze*, or the published edition of *Sei studi*.

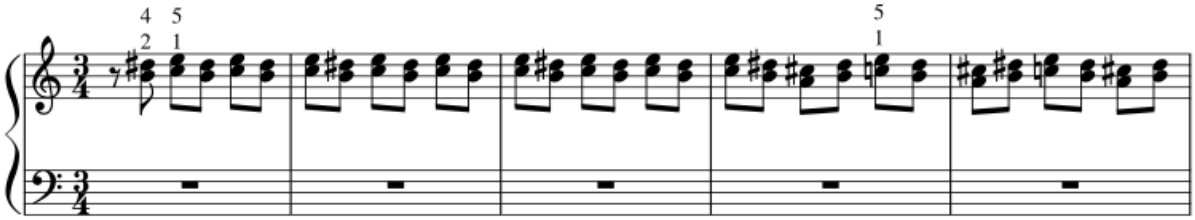
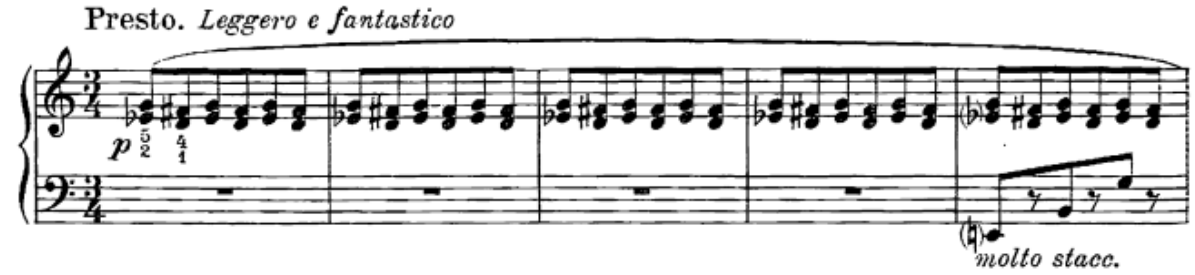
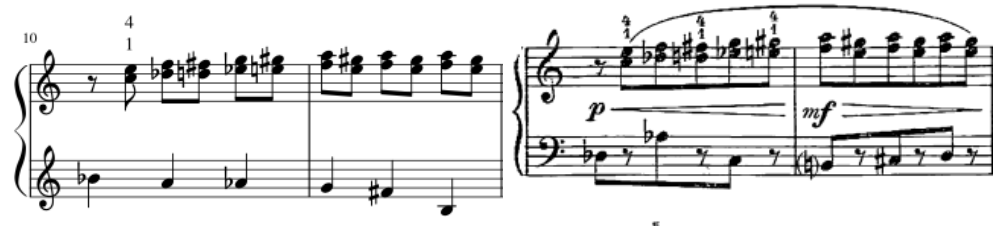


Figure 94: Transcription of the 1942 version of studio sulle terze maggiori (above), and the opening line of sulle terze maggiori as it was published in 1944 as part of Casella's Sei studi (below)



Yet other than the use of major thirds, there is little similarity between this and the 1944 version of *sulle terze maggiori*. While both works centre around repeated oscillating major thirds, there is little else in the sketches to link the two movements together. Register, rhythmic accent, and evening fingering, differ. As can be seen above, they are different works, yet there are similarities from simply looking at the score. Yet if we go further through a comparison of the 1942 and 1944 versions of the works, there are more moments of similarity. The placement of melody beneath a chromatically moving harmony is sometimes the same. As can be seen below (Figure 95), Casella takes the accompaniment from the 1942 version, and uses it in the 1944 version, although with a starkly different melodic line underneath.



[304] This *Antologia* was a collection of works by leading Italian composers of the 1940s. It was published as two volumes of short works in 1944, and seems to largely be a selection of preludes, studies, and short pieces aimed at intermediate and amateur pianists. Unfortunately due to Covid-19, I have been unable to access a copy of this at either the British Library or through interlibrary loans. https://www.worldcat.org/title/antologia-pianistica-di-autori-italiani-contemporanei/oclc/2329271.

Figure 95: The 1942 and 1944 versions of Sulle terze maggiori, and the similar chromatic accompaniment in the right hand

However, there are also many moments of similarity between the 1942 version and another 1944 sketch: *sulle quarte*. While there are no direct quotations between the two movements, there are similarities in register, melodic movement, and texture. One would expect the works to be harmonically different – one is based on thirds, and the other on fourths. But, visually, there are many similarities, as if Casella has reshaped the 1942 study in thirds as a study in fourths. As can be seen below in Figure 96, while the interval is different (a perfect 4th instead of a major 3rd), it appears in the right hand as the accompanying motif in both works. Similarly, there are obvious similarities in the left hand, both starting with a similar descending step patterns after and introductory right hand solo.

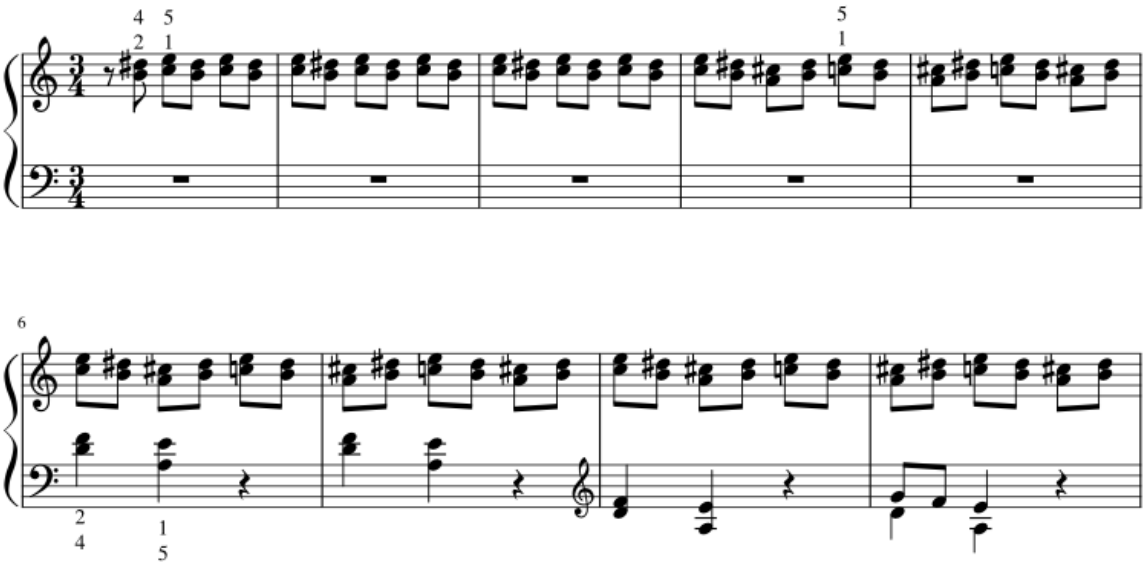
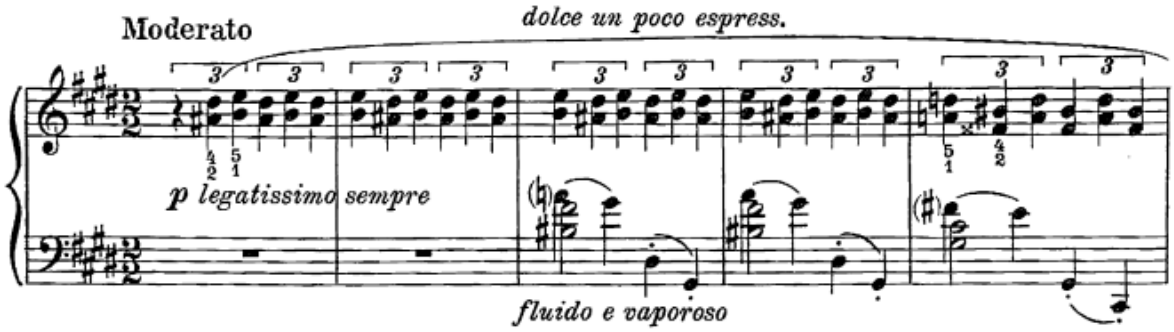


Figure 96: The opening nine bars of the 1942 sulle terze (above) and the opening of the 1944 Sulle quartes (below)



We can assume the following, from the similarities between the 1942 sketch of *sulle terze maggiori* and the 1944 sketches for the other movements in *Sei Studi*. In 1942 Casella was commissioned by Suvini to contribute a study to the collection *Aontologia pianistica di autori Italiani contemporanei.* Casella completed this initial study – *studio in terze maggiori* – between 4th and 6th July. The *Antologia* was not published until 1944 by Editore Suvini. Between 1942 and 1944, Casella – perhaps frustrated that his

study had not yet been published, or perhaps inspired to continue writing pedagogical works and studies – returned to his sketchbook in 1943 to sketch another study, *sulle quarte*. This was perhaps a re-imagining of the original *sulle terze*, or perhaps a work to accompany the original study sketch. After initially sketching *sulle quarte* on 6th November 1943, he then returned to edit and revise the work on 27th November that same year. In the new year, 1944, Casella sketched a further three studies: *sulle terze maggiori* (the second version, 1944, mentioned above), *sulle note ribattute*, and *perpetuum mobile* between 11th and 21st January. Hypothetically, sketches may exist for the other two studies, *sulle quinte* and *sulle settime*, but we cannot know this, as there is no evidence. It is likely that there was an editing phase after January 1944, where the works were polished and copied onto a completed manuscript, and expression and dynamics, and the opening foreword accompanying the works was written. The work was finally published later in 1944 by Edizioni Curci, Milan.

Each movement of the *Sei Studi* will now be discussed individually regarding style, expression, and interpretation. It will be shown that these studies, while not the same aesthetic style as those by Chopin, still fit into the tradition of studies and etudes generally, and borrow generously from Chopin, Ravel, and Debussy. It will be shown that these are expressively rich and quirky studies that challenge a performer's technique and aural sensibilities.

Casella's foreword to the Studies

> The present collection of "studies" attempts to be a humble homage of admiration and gratitude to the memory of F F Chopin and M Ravel. This illustrates – as well as clarifies the reason for those (very transparent) "allusions" in studies 1 and 5 – why and how the author has here tried to give value to the art of some exceptional pianistically technical problems and transferred them to the level of musical expression.[305]

Unlike the foreword to the *Sonatina*, this foreword to *Sei studi* is not a word about interpretation, but done as a defence of the studies. They are 'an humble homage of admiration and gratitude' to Ravel and Chopin. Casella knew Ravel, and they were likely friends, corresponding until Ravel's death in 1937. The thanks here seem to be of a personal nature, thanking someone who had a direct influence on Casella's compositions, and his memory of that man and his music. The gratitude and homage to the memory of Chopin, however, is a more general one. Casella, of course, never met Chopin, so this

[305] La presente collana di "studi" vuol essere un umile omaggio di ammirazione e di gratitudine verso le memorie di FF Chopin e di M Ravel. Question valga - oltrechè a chiarire la ragione di quelle (assai trasparenti) "allusioni" degli studi no. 1 e 5 - ad illustrare perchè e come l'autore abbia qui cercato di dare valore di arte a taluni problemi eccezionali del technicismo pianistico trasferendo li sul piano della espressione musicale.
Alfredo Casella, *Sei studi Op. 70* (Milan: Edizione Curci, 1944), 1.

'memory' of which he speaks refers to the taught tradition of Chopin – and the canon – rather than the man himself and his personal effect on Casella's life. It is interesting to note these two different types homage, and how it reflects Casella's stylistic borrowing.

The foreword also states that Casella has tried to 'give value to the art of some exceptional pianistically technical problems.' This can be interpreted as Casella having tried to make pianistic technical challenges expressive and artistic. Each study presents the technical challenge in the title. But instead of being studies for the practice room to simply develop these techniques, Casella posits his studies as also being worthy of performance. This claim that he has 'transferred' those technical challenges 'to the level of musical expression' implies that he has made the technical aspects expressive.

Style of the Studies

Each of the *Sei studi* present both a technical and expressive challenge. As a blanket statement, we could argue that for each study, the expressive and technical challenges are the same: the interval that forms the basis of the study, and making that interval interesting and expressive. Yet, as will be shown, there are further nuances within the movements, and the challenge is not just technical, but interpreting and performing the studies as an entire collection. While there are the usual borrowed elements from other works and external influences, each movement also borrows from a previous work of Casella's. There are particularly obvious similarities with *Undici pezzi infantili* through use of repetitive motifs. There is also a return to the playful, ironic Casella of earlier years. While the pieces are technically challenging, they are quirky, unusual, and not serious. One final thing to note is the dedication given to each movement. Each dedicatee was a colleague or student of Casella's in Rome during the Second World War. It must thus be asked whether the character and expressive profile of each study is reflective of the dedicatee and their expressive playing style, or whether the study was written for the particular dedicatee and a technical challenge they had, or – like Casella's other dedications – they were added in the final polishing stage, and have no impingement on the work's character and expression.

1. *Sulle terze maggiori, a Carlo Zecchi*

Sulle terze maggiori is written in ternary form, with a brief coda: A Bridge A Coda. The A section comprises two themes, both built around the harmonic line, rather than the melody. It is built on oscillating major thirds and a chromatic scale pattern. The melody moves largely on the beat as single notes, and – like in *Undici pezzi infantili* – is relatively simple (although not diatonic).

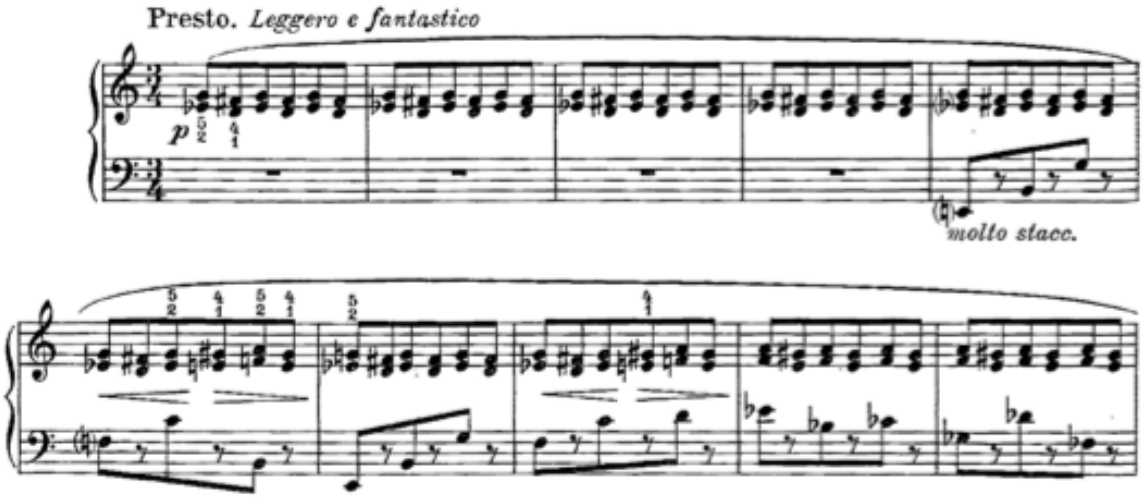


Figure 97: The opening theme of Sulle terze maggiori

For each recurrence of the theme in the A section, the texture is slightly different. The opening theme, with the long right-hand solo, is like a trembling, shaking shimmer. Even though it is marked *leggero e fantastico*, it still is a kind of tremble that does not appear comfortable or established until the melodic line arrives. When the theme develops, and the chromatic scale passage arrives, there is a rising and falling that is wave-like. Throughout the work there is a smoothness, a busyness from the accompaniment that comes from the continually moving thirds and chromatic motifs. While this accompaniment switches between the hands and moves registers, the movement within it is constant, as if building in anticipation and energy for the entire study and the following movements. It is such a contrast to the melodic line, which (as can be seen in Figure 97 above) is mostly static, staccato notes; jagged, edgy, and stagnant in comparison.

The bridge is a complete contrast to the A themes, both in texture, tempo, and expressive character. As can be seen below (Figure 98), it is marked *alquanto rubato, espressivo*. Unlike the A section, where pedal does not seem necessary because of the *leggero* and staccato nature of the themes, here it seems essential, due to the slurring and phrasing, but also the sighing style motif in the lower voice, and the dotted rhythm in the upper voices. It is a complete shift away from the growing sense of anticipation heard in the A section: here we pause, take time to breath and sigh, and there is a waltz-like feel because of the rhythmic motifs in both hands.

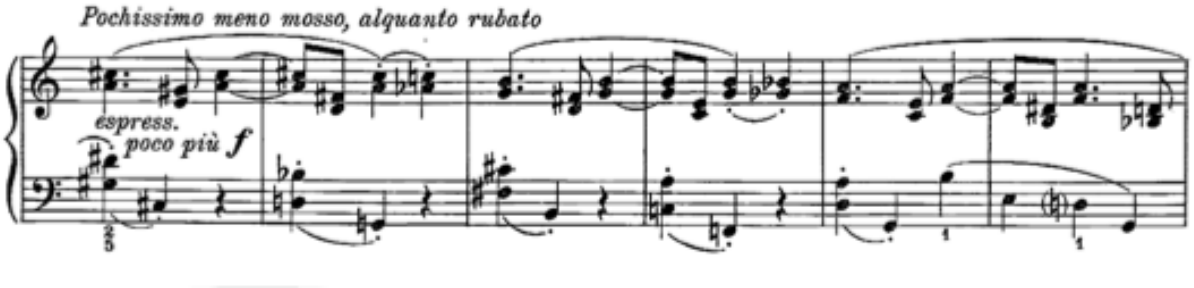


Figure 98: The Bridge, and the complete shift away from the growing anticipation and movement of the A theme

Following this, the A section returns. While the overall tonality, textures, and gestures stay the same, they are building to the coda. When we come to the coda, Casella seems to climb up to the peak, return to the oscillating thirds motif for a moment, and then tumble back down in pitch and gesture, finally ending the work in the very lowest register of the piano, and somewhat abruptly at that.

We know from the title that the work will involve major thirds. We know that this will affect texture and tonality in some way. When we come to read and play the work, we see that these thirds are harmonic thirds, rather than melodic, and that they form the basis of the harmony. The use of thirds is again an oscillating, shimmering pattern, moving up and down by a semitone (as can be seen in Figure 97 above, and bars four and 6 of Figure 99 below). But the thirds can also move in chromatic scale patterns, similar to a legato chromatic scale in thirds (bars 3 and 5 below). The figure below also details two other iterations of thirds. In bars 1 and 2 of Figure 99, the thirds appear briefly as the melodic voice, jumping up and down, like the single-melodic notes seen in the left hand previously. Similarly, when we get to bar 7 of the figure below, we can see the final way Casella employs major thirds: oscillating between two chords separated by a large interval (here a changing between a fourth and fifth).

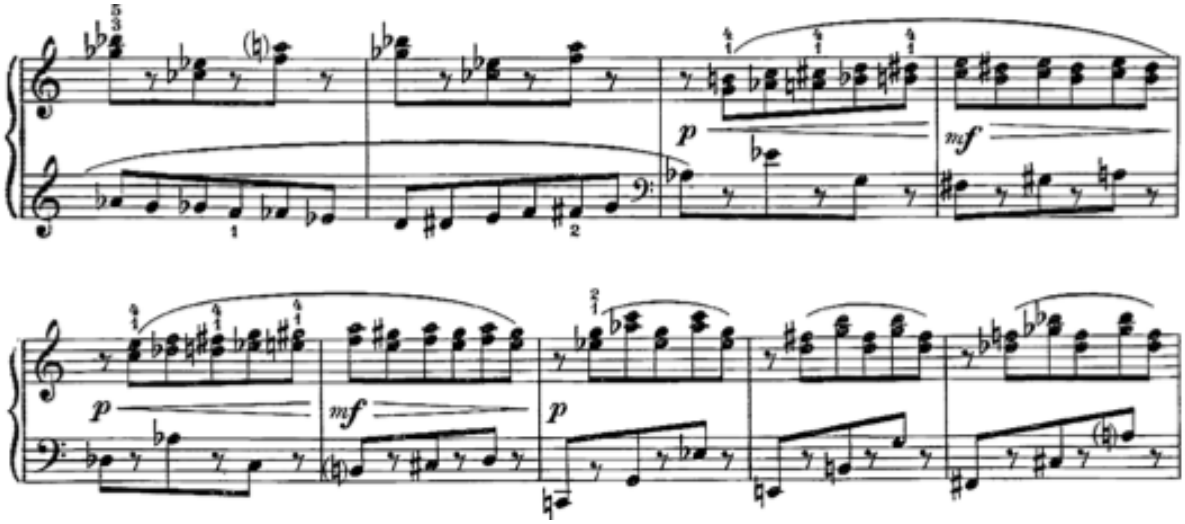


Figure 99: The various types of ways in which major thirds are used in suller terze maggiori

Other than the final type of way that thirds are used (oscillating, but separated by a large interval), all of the types result in a close texture, similar to various textures heard in *Undici pezzi infantili*. The repetitive oscillating thirds are similar to the *Preludio* movement, where the accompaniment in the left hand was built on oscillating repeating harmonic fourths. Yet, even though the harmony is built with major thirds, the resulting tonality is not major. Due to this close texture, and the chromatic movement therein (the non-major relationship between the various different harmonic thirds used), the tonality is more dissonant. It is not quite atonal, because there are major thirds, but more polytonal, as if moving from tonality to tonality, and not fixed in a tonal centre.

When reading and playing through the study, it quickly becomes obvious that, for the majority of the movement, pedal is not needed. Primarily, the aim of the study is to master the art of playing legato thirds. Using the pedal could be seen as a band-aid solution to this technique: instead of getting the fingers to play legato, the pedal does the legato for the performer instead. The technical challenge of this study is maintaining the continuous legato, *leggero* texture of the accompaniment through fingers, and not creating an illusion of this with pedal or rubato. The ability to maintain a smooth, light, and rhythmically even accompaniment is the technical challenge to be mastered. There are also the expressive indications from Casella that imply pedal would add the wrong texture. The opening marking *leggero* dictates a lightness of touch and texture, rather than dense and resonant. The *fantastico* that follows this also suggests a brilliance, rather than heaviness and dullness that would arise from too much pedal. There are then also the rests between melodic quaver notes and the indication *molto staccato* under this melodic line to tell us that pedal is not necessary, and would possibly create the wrong kind of texture that Casella indicates. In the bridge, given the change in articulation, tempo, and phrasing, pedal can be used to add a richness and lyricism.

The character and expressive profile of *sulle terze maggiori* is one of building anticipation, as if setting up the atmosphere for the rest of the studies as one of excitement and eagerness. Yet in this study there is limited use of expressive language. The character of the work overall, and the movements therein, are less easy to identify because of the technical challenges at the forefront of each movement. There are three moments in *sulle terze* where Casella uses expressive language: at the beginning, where he marks *leggero e fantastico*, at the bridge, where he marks *pochissimo meno mosso, alquanto rubato*, and then at the return of the A theme after the bridge, where he marks *a tempo, di nuovo veloce*. These markings are all based around speed.

When we look to dynamics, there is the same careful, precise shaping and notation present in Casella's earlier works, before *Undici pezzi infantili*. Casella notates crescendi and diminuendi through bars, explicitly indicating dynamic swells and shapes to move with the harmony and melody. At many points the dynamics mirror the rise and fall of melodic pitch, particularly when the melody moves in chromatic

scale passages. This occurs throughout the movement. The bridge is the only example where the dynamics do not follow this rising and falling with pitch. Instead, the dynamic marking is *poco più forte*, and continues to crescendo through the section until dramatically dropping to *subito piano* with the return of the A theme. Without these dynamic markings, and various scatterings of expressive and tempo markings throughout the movement, there would be a veritable challenge for the performer to construct a convincing interpretation. What could be seen as merely a chromatic scale in thirds is made into an expressive, twisting, and swelling motif through these expressive markings.

Now we come to the borrowed influence within this study. Casella takes the idea of the bridge from Ravel's *Valse nobles e sentimentales*, borrowing the gestural and rhythmic motif from the fourth *Valse, assez animé*. Casella notes this himself in the foreword to the studies, stating that there is a 'very transparent' allusion to one of Ravel's works. But Casella also borrows from himself. The textures evident in the accompaniment, the jumping moving melody, and the near-polytonality are all reminiscent of many moments in the *Undici pezzi infantili*. One may suggest that this study also borrows from Debussy's étude *pour les tierces*, using a foundation of major thirds as the basis for the study, and as the technical challenge to be overcome. But that is where the likeness ends, and, from Casella's own admittance, he borrows predominantly from Ravel.

Finally, a note about the dedicatee, Carlo Zecchi. Zecchi (1903-1984) was an Italian pianist. After beginning piano lessons with his mother, he studied in Germany under both Ferruccio Busoni and Artur Schnabel. He was a renowned international pianist, performing and recording extensively. In 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War, Zecchi returned to Italy to escape Nazi Germany. Like Casella, he performed for and corresponded with Mussolini, but was not a Fascist.[306] He taught piano at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia from 1939 onwards, and it is likely that this is where he met Casella. His pianism is said to have been 'refined, poised, and very graceful […]. He had great clarity of articulation.'[307] It is interesting that Casella would dedicate a study to him, given that in 1944 when the works were published Zecchi's career as a solo pianist had ended. Thus, we can hypothesise that this dedication was done as a means of homage, and paying respect to Zecchi, rather than for him to necessarily play.

2. *Sulle settime maggiori e minori, ad Armando renzi*

Casella retains the theme of intervals for the second study, *sulle settime maggiori e minori.* Yet in this work, the tonality and character are much more distinct. Both major and minor 7ths are the feature of

[306] Jonathan Summers, "Carlo Zecchi," *Naxos Rights International*, accessed 20th May 2021, https://www.naxos.com/person/Carlo_Zecchi/44203.htm.
[307] Ibid

this study, yet unlike *sulle terze*, there is no polytonality. Thanks to the very natures of 7ths, the work is dissonant, atonal, and aggressive through this unsettled interval. The challenge of this study is vastly different – instead of being a technical challenge related to legato and the even playing of a repetitive motif, the performer must oscillate between continually changing intervals that are aurally challenging and unusual. Where we would usually want to oscillate between octaves, Casella challenges the performer by using 7ths, and different 7ths therein, making a different stretch for the hand and a very unusual tonal centre. It continues in the hasty, excited nature that the first study did, although with a somewhat more aggressive and jumpy character.

The study is through-composed, and semi-improvisatory in nature given its short length and repetitive nature. There are three motifs used in the motif: an alberti-bass style motif of oscillating 7ths used an accompaniment to harmonic 7ths, a discourse style motif where the hands exchange harmonic 7ths like an alternating call and response, and a more melodic, lyrical sighing motif of repeating and sighing harmonic 7ths. The study is only 38 bars long, and progresses quickly through the single mood of agitated liveliness.

Regarding tonality and texture, we already know from the title that both major and minor 7ths will be a characteristic feature of this work. Unlike *sulle terze*, where the thirds were harmonic and featured mostly as the accompaniment, here the 7ths form both the melody and the harmony. Thus the atonal, dissonant texture: the melody moves in leaps of 7ths at points, as well as being constructed on harmonic 7ths. Similarly, through the melodic intervals that make up the accompaniment, the texture is bouncy, jagged, and almost agitato in nature because of the resulting tonality. This contrasting use of 7ths, along with the resulting textures, can be seen below (Figure 100).

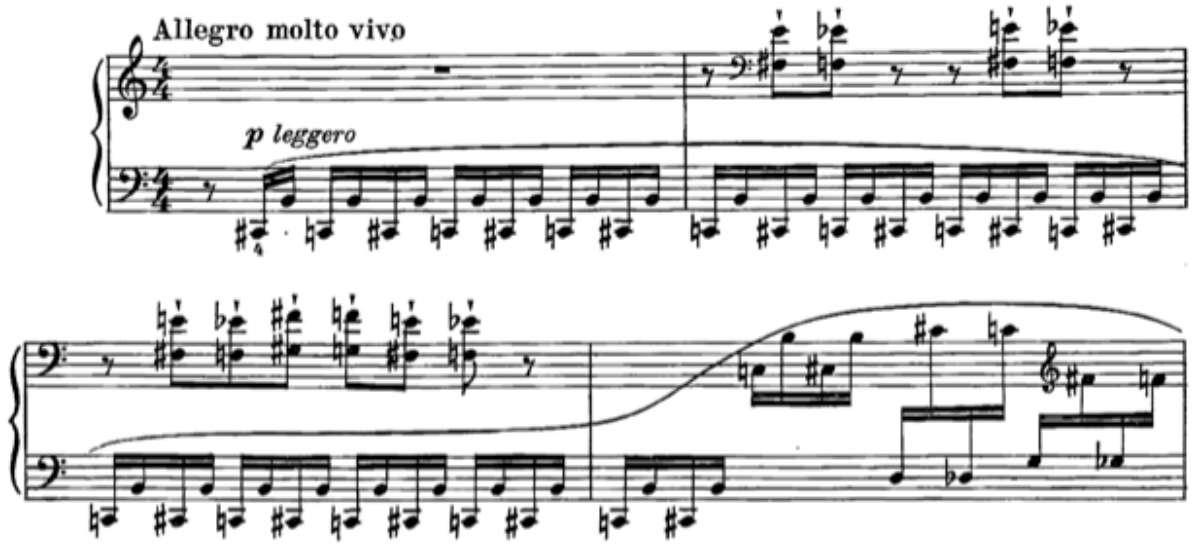


Figure 100: The contrasting use of both harmonic and melodic 7ths throughout sulle settime

There are two challenges with this study. The longer we sit in this dissonance, the more bearable and appealing it becomes. Usually, we are conditioned to want 7ths (both major and minor) to resolve to the perfect octave. Yet here, Casella forces us to sit in this interval, and come to enjoy it. The challenge of the study is as much an aural acceptance of 7ths as it is a technical challenge. In terms of the technical challenge, this is very much about handspan and the tactile experience of intervals. Reaching for an octave is easy – most pianists would be able to do this without looking. Reaching for a 7th is a less automatic gesture, and this is further complicated by alternatively reaching for major and minor 7ths. Repeating parallel octaves is a much more organic hand shape than repeating parallel 7ths. Thus, there is also the tactile challenge to overcome in this study as well.

The character of this work is agitated, aggressive, and lively. This largely comes from the intervals used and the resulting tonality, rather than the expressive commands or articulations and dynamics notated throughout the movement. Similarly to *sulle terze*, the accompaniment is marked *leggero*, and the overall mood of the work is one of lively anticipation, continuing to build from where the first study ended. Yet there are moments of calm beauty and melancholia within the movement, too. Where the motif changes to be built on call and response harmonic intervals, there is the indication for a shift to something *indolente* and with rubato (Figure 101).

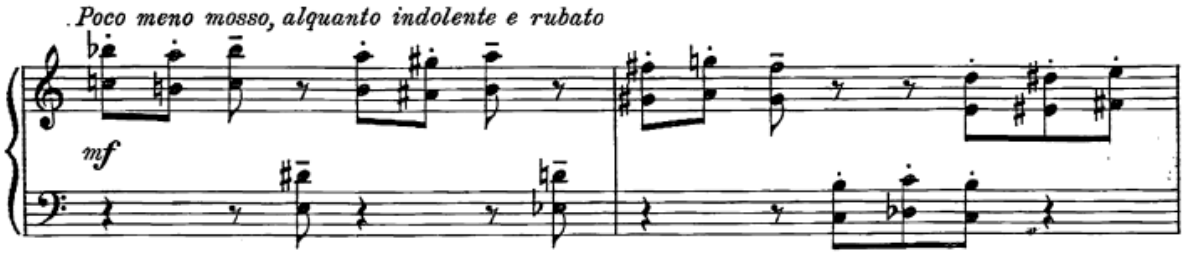


Figure 101: The second motif of sulle settime built on harmonic intervals in a call and response

Although still maintaining the lightness and movement through use of staccati markings, there is a slight shift to something more plaintive. It is a playful movement that has moments of a dejected or despondent mood within this playfulness. Casella marks this too, notating both *poco scherzando* and *espressivo, dolce e melancolico* in various places. It draws on Scriabin's *Étude No. 2* from Opus 65 (1911), the study in major 7ths. There is a melancholy turmoil in Scriabin's study that is similar to the melancholy and despondency in Casella's own work. Yet Casella's is much more agitated and rapid in its development. It seems more to be a borrowed basis for a study, rather than a borrowed mood or tonality, with those two features arising because of the very nature of 7ths as intervals.

Armando Renzi (1915-1985) was an Italian composer and keyboardist. He studied piano with Casella at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia, but was primarily an organist. He was a great fan of Casella's, founding the L'Aquila Conservatorio Alfredo Casella in 1967.[308] Again, it would seem that this dedication was one of respect with Casella acknowledging the regard Renzi had for him.

3. *Di legato sulle quarte, a Maria Luisa Faini*

Sulle quarte is written in ternary form. The right-hand accompaniment of the entire movement is chromatically moving harmonic perfect 4ths. This is perhaps the most texturally complex of the studies, containing a rich, dense, and continually moving harmony in the right hand of perfect fourths, but also through the use of suspensions in the left hand next to the melody, which moves either by step or by perfect 5ths (Figure 102).

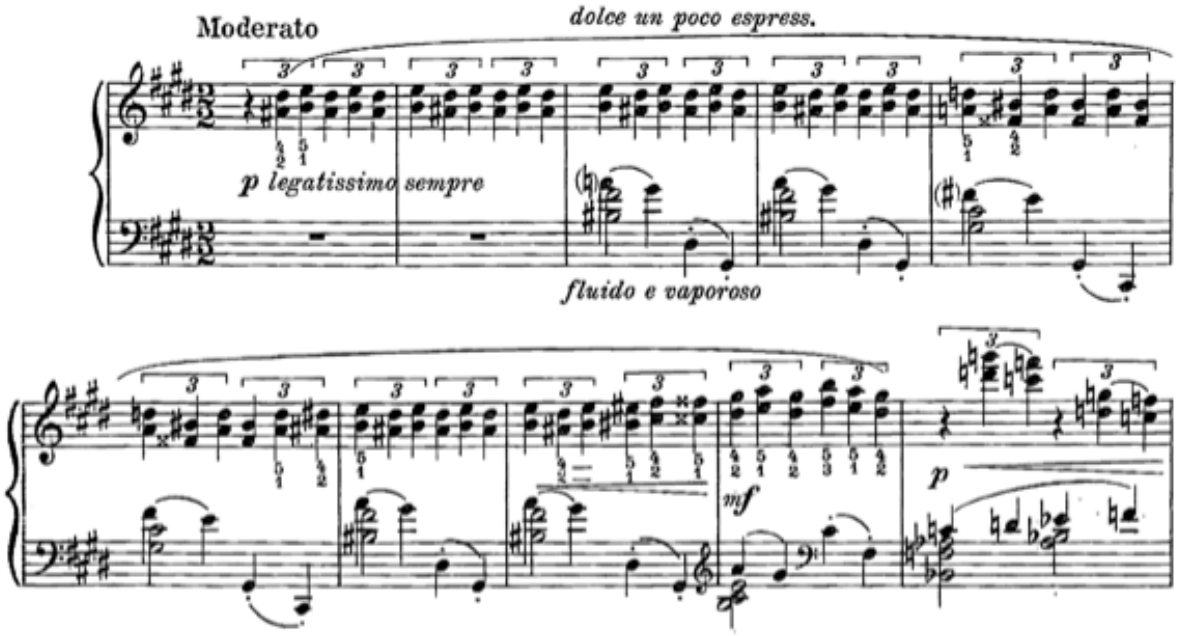


Figure 102: The opening of sulle quartes, with the continually moving perfect 4ths in the right hand, and the stepping and perfect 5ths in the left hand

Other than the various expressive commands in the score, there are two very important things to note from this opening figure: the use of key signature, and the negotiation of tempo and time signature. In the majority of Casella's piano works, there are no time signatures. He favours using accidentals, even when there is a distinct tonality in a movement or a work. After 1908, Casella rarely used key signatures in his piano music. When we think back to works such as the *Sonatina* and *Undici pezzi infantili*, no key signature is used, only accidentals. Even in the first two movements of the *Sei Studi*, key signature

[308] "Armando Renzi: Biographica" accessed 29th May 2021, http://www.armandorenzi.com/biografia.html.

was not used. This is likely due to those works and movements not having a set, singular tonality, or a regular enough tonality to warrant using a key signature instead of accidentals. Yet here, Casella has a key signature and accidentals. If we look to the opening right-hand solo, one questions why the work is written in E major instead of B major, given the immediate use of the A#. With the use of double sharps throughout the movement (such as in bar 5 of the figure above), why any key signature is employed at all. Perhaps this is the challenge for performers: to navigate the complex and ever-changing use of accidentals throughout the movement, and not assign key signature to a specific tonality.

Within *sulle quarte*, there is no specific tonality: it is not diatonic, as the key signature suggests. Nor is it atonal or polytonal, like the first two studies. It sits somewhere between a modal and jazz-like tonality. The parallel perfect 4^{th}s, and the chromatic movement between the harmonic intervals, are modal in tonality, and a common melodic feature of jazz compositions. As is know from looking at the *Sonatina*, Casella regularly used stacked chords, such as stacked 4^{th}s, as a means of harmonic counterpoint. This study presents as a simplified version of that same harmonic writing.

The negotiation of time signature and tempo marking with the lilting contour of the melody is also a challenge of this study. This is not because of the technical challenges in playing the notes. The fingering given by Casella throughout the movement, and the various gestures required from playing the notes are easily manageable once practiced. It is negotiating the speed and beat grouping that is difficult. As can be seen from Figure 102 above, there is a cross rhythm throughout this study: the accompaniment in the right hand is written as triplets throughout the movement, while the melodic left hand is written in duplets. This in itself is straight forward: the rhythmic groupings line up so that emphasis can easily be placed at the beginning of each minim beat. Yet because of the lilting, sighing nature of the melodic contour in the left hand, to rush this melodic line seems to contradict the expressive mood of the study. *Moderato* in this work means a moderate minim beat. But there is something in the expressive language, the sighing and lilting of the melody, and even the oscillating accompaniment that suggests a slower, andante speed would be better, so as to allow the sweetness of mood to sing through and fully resonate.

This idea of musical language and the sweet singing quality of melody carry the mood of the study. It is a melodic, calm break from the intensity of the first two studies. There is a sense of regularity through the repeating rhythmic motif of the work. The very nature of the work is smoothness, indicated through titling the work *legato sulle quarte*, and *legatissimo*. These three features: cross-rhythm, modal tonality, and the smoothness of touch demanded by the work, give *sulle quarte* a sultry, sweet mood. There is a tenderness and sense of longing that builds throughout the work until the end of the B theme that give it a sensitive nature. This is also reflected in written in the expressive language. In the opening bars of

the study we see the notation of *dolce, un poco espressivo* marked above the accompaniment, and the marking of *fluido e vaparoso* for the melodic line.

Just as with *sulle terze*, one may suggest that the foundation of this study is again borrowed from Debussy's etude, *pour les quartes*. Casella borrows the idea of perfect fourths as the foundation for his study from Debussy. But unlike *sulle terze*, there is more than just the interval as a foundation to link the two. Debussy's étude – because of the nature of perfect 4ths, and parallel 4ths, is also modal in tonality, although with less jazzy influence than Casella's. But Casella also borrows from himself in *sulle quarte*. This is not the first work where oscillating, parallel perfect fourths have been the foundation of the accompaniment in one of his works. The *Preludio* from *Undici pezzi infantili* similarly utilises parallel 4ths in the accompaniment. Perhaps then Casella is also borrowing from himself, and developing the foundation idea of a previous work into something more complex and challenging.

This study is dedicated to Maria Luisa Faini, the first female dedicatee within the collection of studies. Faini (ca 1930-2003) was a student of Casella's at Santa Cecilia during the 1940s. She worked with him when he visited the Academia Chigiana, Siena for summer programmes, and was his teaching assistant towards the end of his life. It is believed that she helped him with much of his later transcription and editing work, and that she, like Casella, was hugely interested in editing and revising the music of early Italian composers.[309] It would seem that Faini was closer with Casella than various other dedicatees, being his assistant and working directly with him. Faini was an expressive and sensitive pianist, and so it is possible that Casella wrote this more expressive study for her on purpose.

4. *Sulle note ribattute, a Marcella Barzetti*

Sulle note ribattute is another study in ternary form. The A and B sections have very similar rhythmic motifs, and are based – as the title suggests – on repeated notes. Yet, they are distinguished by their differing heraldic motifs that introduce the sections. The entire challenge of this movement is managing the fast, accented repeated notes in the right hand, and maintaining a clear, crystalline articulation throughout the right hand, whilst maintaining speed and lightness throughout the movement. While the harmony changes throughout the movement, the main focus for the performer is maintaining the speed and intensity of the study. There are several things worth noting from the outset of the study (Figure 103 below).

[309] "Maria Luisa Faini," *Eastman Notes,* December 2003, accessed 20th May 2021, https://www.esm.rochester.edu/pdf/notes/NotesDec2003.pdf.

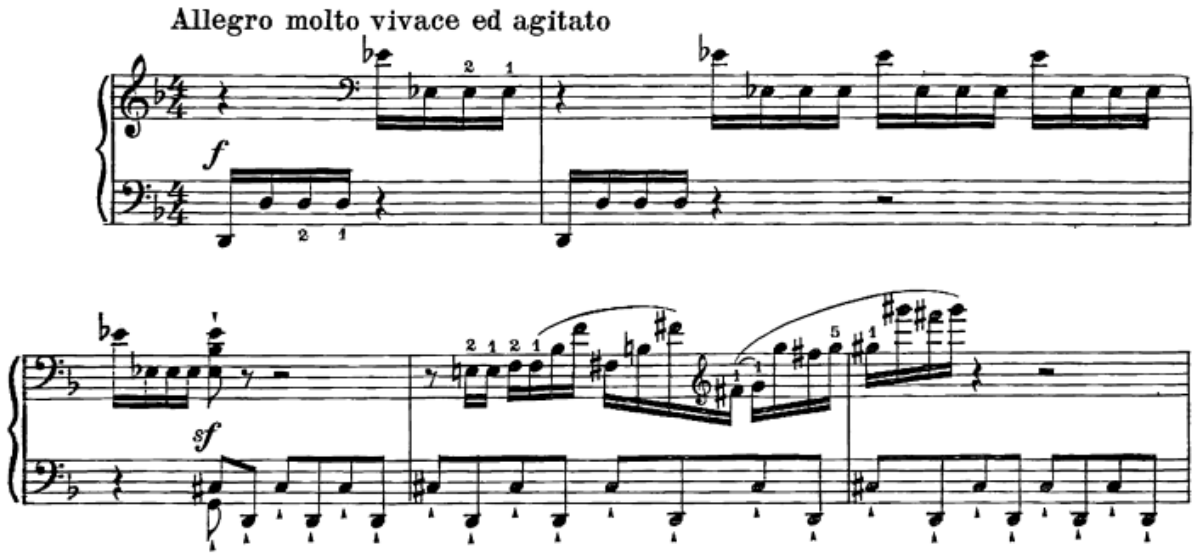


Figure 103: The opening bars of sulle note ribatutte

From this figure, we can see the various elements that Casella adds to make the work a rhythmically complex and interesting study. From the very beginning, there is some ambiguity for the listener as to the placement of beat, given that the work starts with a two-beat anacrusis. This ambiguity is continued throughout the work, with new themes or motifs not beginning at the start of bars, but beginning in the middle of bars (as can be seen in the second full bar above, with the left hand), or half way through beats (as can be seen with the right hand in bar 3). There is also extensive use of accents, and the fingering suggested by Casella offers further chances for accents. In the above figure, we can see the use of thumb in the right hand in various places. The thumb – being the heaviest digit – gives notes such as these a natural accent. Using the thumb at the beginning of beat four, bar four above presents an interesting choice to the performer: to lean into this natural accent caused by the suggested finger, or to maintain an evenness, and try to suppress and mitigate the weight of the thumb.

This idea of an irregular beat and accent structure appears throughout the study. As we progress through the *sulle note ribattute*, Casella continues placing the entry of phrases midway through the bars, and using accents and staccatissimo markings to give rhythmic emphasis. Yet when we come to the bridge returning to the A theme (Figure 104 below), we see a return to the Casella of old, such as in *Undici pezzi infantili* and the *Sonatina*, where he uses changing time signatures without necessarily needing to.

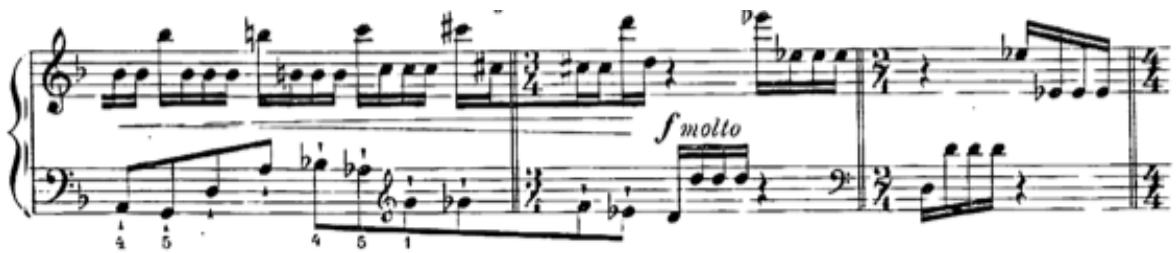


Figure 104: The changing time signatures before the re-entry of the A theme in bar

It is possible that Casella uses the 3/4 and then 2/4 bars to keep the rhythmic groupings of each bar simple. Yet there is nothing simple in having three different time signatures in three consecutive bars. One questions why he does not use a bar of 5/4 before returning to 4/4, as he has done in other, earlier works.

The texture of *sulle note ribatutte* is much lighter than the other studies. There are fewer vertical textures throughout the work, and the articulation is much more jagged and sharp compared to other movements. Casella suggests as much regarding texture through his use of expressive language and articulation. As well as the accents and stacatissimi marked throughout the work, there is the command *agitato* at the very beginning of the work. The mood is agitated, jumpy, and excited. The title as well – 'repeated notes' – also suggests a lightness in touch to the performer. One cannot play repeated notes at an *allegro molto vivace* speed if the fingers and hands are heavy and locked down into the key-bed of the piano. While there are moments of density and richness in the movement, these can be accentuated through resonance and use of pedal, rather than heaviness and loudness in the hands.

The mood of the study is tense, but playful. Casella begins the movement as *allegro molto vivace ed agitato.* From this agitation, and the subsequent uneasy and unsettled beat and rhythmic groupings, and the aggression of the repeated notes and accents, there is a frantic, chaotic mood present. Casella furthers this mood with his marking *forte ed impetuoso* further throughout the work. The performer should make strong, clear sounds, but also there is a sense of impulsiveness and recklessness apparent. When we come to the end of the work, there is the command *luminoso e brilliante*: the mood lifts somewhat away from the aggressive agitation to one of hope and triumph. There is an aggression and a frantic, uncontrolled character bubbling beneath the surface of this study that is somewhat reminiscent of Casella's *Toccata* Op. 6. While there are elements of *sulle note ribatutte* that are extremely dextrous and virtuosic like the *Toccata*, there is also continuous movement and growth throughout both works without much time for pause. Yet this command *luminoso* has also been seen before: in the final bars of the *Sonatina*, Casella marks a similar passage of oscillating, alternating semiquavers *luminoso* for the glorious and triumphant end of that work. It again suggests that Casella is returning to his compositional style of old.

Little is available to us about Marcella Barzetti. She was an Italian pianist, who won the Queen Elizabeth Competition in Belgium in 1938, and performed in London in the 1950s. She performed various of Casella's works in public recitals, including his *Toccata* Op. 6. Presumably, she was a student of Casella's who he taught at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia. Nothing else is known about her.

5. *Sulle quinte (omaggio a Chopin no. 2), a Lya de Barberiis*

This study is Casella's second homage to Chopin. *Sulle quinte* borrows directly from Chopin's Prelude in A major, No. 7 Op 28, using the anacrusis and waltz-like gestures in a modal and atonal tonal setting. The work is written in strophic form. The use of intervals is the predominant melodic voice: the right hand, which moves in parallel perfect 5ths for the entire movement, is the melodic line (Figure 105).

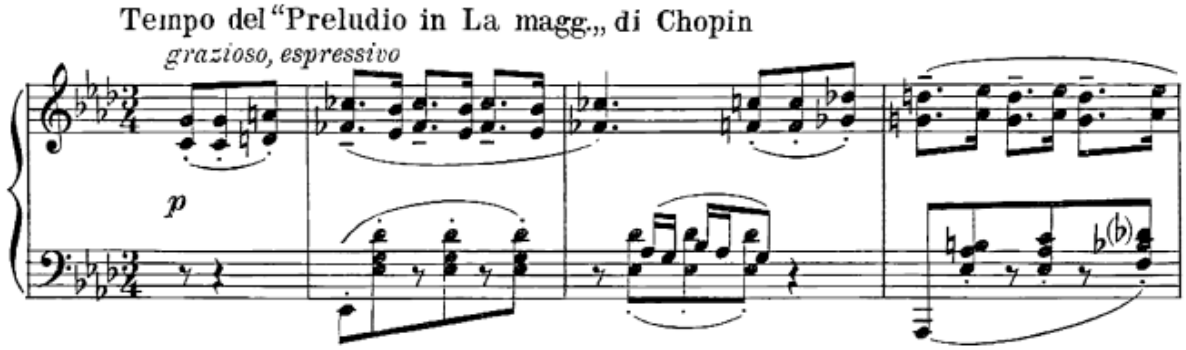


Figure 105: The opening of sulle quinte and the use of key signature, and parallel 5ths as the melodic line

As can be seen, the melodic movement is built exclusively on parallel 5ths in the right hand for the entire study. It is the performer's choice as to which of these voices they decide to bring out as the primary melodic line. While this parallel movement has been seen in some of the other studies, it has not been used as the melody line. This type of melody writing, using chords rather than a single line, is similar (although much simpler) to the block chord passages seen in many other of Casella's works

Casella's choice of key signature – nominally F minor – is an odd one. The opening anacrusis on the dominant leads to a chord on the flat tonic in bar 1. In the opening bars above (Figure 105), we can see the extensive use of accidentals. Given the use of F♭ in the first bar, we can safely assume that this work is not in F minor, and that the key signature is a formality to allow fewer accidentals to be written throughout the score. Yet, when we come to the end of the work, the final passage and ending chord suggest that there is some conventional tonality within the work. While it appears to begin in some form of F minor, the work seems to end in A♭ major. As we can see below (Figure 106), the work suggests influence from a traditional harmonic structure to conclude. The final four bars move from an E♭ pedal point (the dominant) down chromatically to A♭ (the tonic suggested by the key signature).

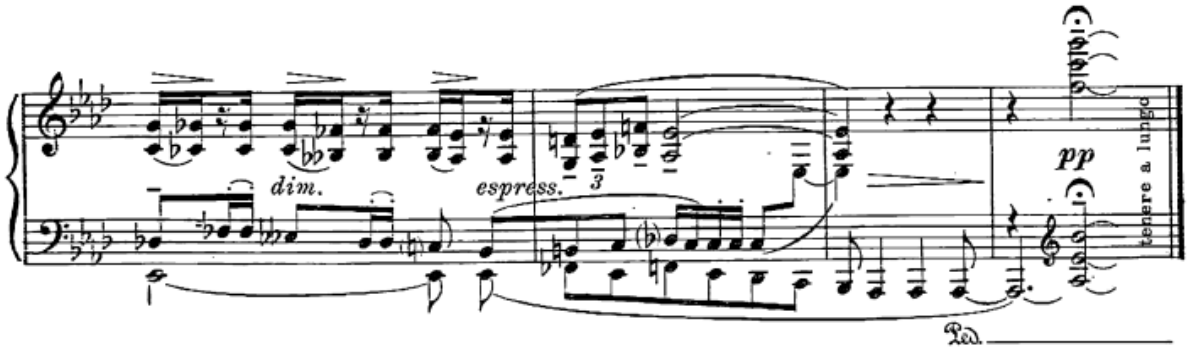


Figure 106: The final four bars of sulle quinte, that hint at a conventional harmonic influence, concluding with a perfect cadence

While the passage above does move chromatically, there is no denying that in the bass line there appears to be a perfect cadence. Yet, without the score, one would be hard-pressed to identify this is a perfect cadence. It is hidden amongst the chromatic movement of both hands, and the final tonality of the A flat is somewhat shrouded by the fact that the final chord is a series of stacked 5ths. This is arguably the sentiment of the entire study: romantic gestures veiled with modern tonalities so that the traditional elements of the work are masked to the listener.

While there is the obvious challenge of playing legato parallel 5ths, this study poses another challenge for performers: how do we interpret it? There are several options open to us. We could interpret the work like Chopin's piano works, requiring gentle touch, excessive rubato, and rich use of pedal. Or we could perform the work as Casella interpreted Chopin, using hints from his editions of Chopin's piano works.

Casella was approached by Edizione Curci to edit the entire piano works of Chopin in the 1940s. Through these editions, Casella wanted to 're-establish the characteristic purity of the original text of the author. No composer' Casella argued, 'has ever been so much the victim of censors as Chopin.'[310] Casella argued that other editors had added incorrect and inappropriate 'improvements', bastardising Chopin's original texts. Casella's Chopin editions were aimed at both the student and the professor, to offer them both a text that was 'absolutely authentic and free from every error, as well as from every preceding caprice, and which is absolutely in conformity with the handwriting of the original by the Master.'[311] Casella revered Chopin as 'one of the most audacious and unprejudiced geniuses ever known in the history of music.'[312] He believed it was necessary to understand Chopin the man, and his life, to best interpret his music and perform it in a sincere and profound manner. In his foreword to the Chopin

[310] Chopin, *Ballate e Fantasia*, ed. Alfredo Casella (Milan: Edizione Curci, 1947), accessed 2nd June 2021, https://ks.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/2/27/IMSLP585413-PMLP941746-Chopin_ballate_e_fantasia_Casella_Jacopo_Tore.pdf
[311] Ibid.
[312] Ibid.

Preludes, Casella notes that the preludes are the 'most unique and perfect moment of Chopin's genius'[313] and that they are 'drawing-room' pieces, looking internally to the character of Chopin, a man who was removed from society.

From this, we can see that there needs to be a negotiation of all three interpretive approaches. Casella was intimately aware of Chopin's views on performance, having investigated and worked extensively with archival sources himself. As a pianist, and one who trained with Cortot and at the Paris Conservatoire (heavily influenced by the legacy of Chopin), he would have been aware of the traditions of performing Chopin – what we traditionally associate as romantic gestures and affectations in performance. Yet there is also Casella in *sulle quintes*: the study has the same irony and playfulness that the other studies do, and this should not be ignored. Thus, a negotiation of these three influences must be included in any interpretation of this study.

Lya de Barberiis (1919-2013) was one of Casella's students in his final years teaching at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia. She is also one of the few pianists to record Casella's entire piano oeuvre.[314] After studying with Casella in Rome, de Barberiis studied with Marguerite Long in Paris. She eventually became a Professor of Piano at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia, following in Casella's footsteps. She was an avid performer of contemporary Italian piano music, recording and performing the complete works of not only Casella, but also Luigi Dallapiccola and Gofredo Petrassi. De Barberiis' playing is mechanical and fast; typical of Italian pianism during the middle of the Twentieth Century. As was noted in a review of his Casella recordings, she does not offer an inspiring entry into Casella's music. Her recordings are 'hard and cramped' and do not offer any beauty or interpretive insight into Casella that endears him to us.[315] Unfortunately, de Barberiis' legacy of playing Casella – uninventive, fast, and hard – is how many have come to view Casella's music itself. Her pianism fails to give us the beauty that is possible to read and hear in Casella's music. It is interesting, then, that Casella would dedicate perhaps the most emotive and romantic of the studies to someone whose playing was the opposite of that – mechanical and unemotive. *Sulle quinte* is marked *grazioso, espressivo*. Perhaps Casella's dedication is a cheeky one, done in a slightly teasing way, for one whom, whilst technically sufficient and skilful, was not an expressive or graceful pianist.

6. *Perpetuum mobile (Toccata), a Pietro scarpini*

[313] Chopin, *Preludes*, ed. Alfredo Casella (Milan: Edizione Curci, 1947), accessed 2nd June 2021, https://imslp.eu/files/imglnks/euimg/6/65/IMSLP406459-PMLP02344-Chopin_-_Preludi_revisione_critico_tecnica_di_Alfredo_Casella_CURCI_1947.pdf

[314] de Barberiis, *Casella: L'integrale dell'opera per pianoforte.*

[315] Bryce Morrison, "Casella Complete Piano Works: A complete Collection of a Musical Magpie – one for completists, perhaps," *Gramaphone*, accessed 2nd June 2021, https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/casella-complete-piano-works.

Casella's last study is a tumultuous, exciting, and energetic finale to the *Sei studi*, and to his piano oeuvre. Like Casella's other toccatas, this work is extremely technically demanding, fast, and virtuosic in moments. However, unlike Casella's other two toccatas, the texture of this study is simpler and less dense. For the majority of the work, each hand is a single moving line, alternating which moves in staccato quavers and which moves in legato, running semiquavers. The movement is written in binary form, AB. Both sections begin with the same heraldic four-bar heraldic motif (Figure 107 below). This introduces the rapidly ascending and descending melodic line, along with dynamics that follow the contours therein.

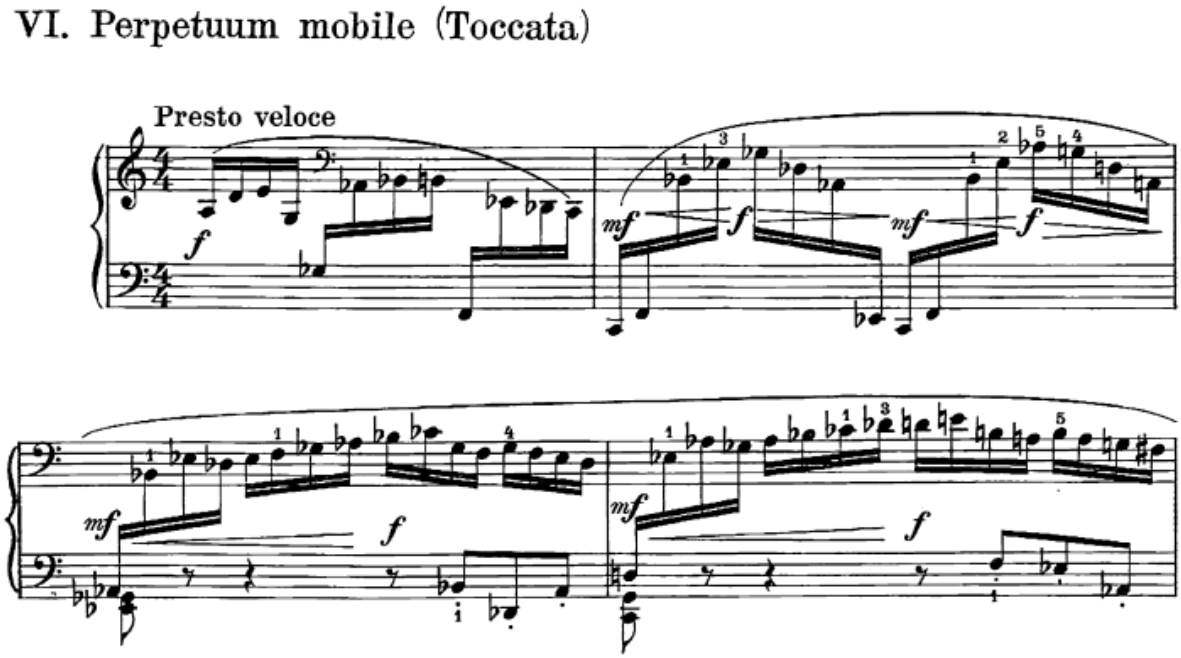


Figure 107: The opening heraldic sequence of the Toccata

The four-bar heraldic motif shown above is part of a longer ten-bar phrase that introduces both the A and B sections of the work. Within the A section, there are three distinct themes which are also each introduced with the first bar from the above figure. Just like in his first *Toccata* Op. 6, here Casella uses a heraldic motif to create continuity and signal to the listener that a new theme is arriving. He uses the extended ten-bar phrase to signal the B section. It is difficult to categorise the structure of this movement, given the many different themes that come up within the short study. The B section could also be viewed as an extended coda rather than an individual section. However, this recurrence of the ten-bar phrase suggests that this is more than just a new theme, but a new section entirely.

The mood of the study is one of finality and joy. It is lively and effervescent. This largely comes from the fast-moving voices in both hands, and the continual motion, the contours of which are mirrored in the dynamics. Yet, the few expressive commands that Casella gives also hint to this mood of bubbling,

growing excitement. After an aggressive and excited opening theme, the *toccata* settles into a light, calmly building second theme that is fluid, smooth, and soft. The third theme brings an agitated energy from the jumping staccati octaves that alternate hands. This third theme gradually builds to the recurrence of the main heraldic theme, and announces the B section forcefully and triumphantly. Casella momentarily returns to the softness and lightness heard before animatedly building bit by bit towards the final shimmering and luminous theme that concludes the work.

Each of the various moods in the 6th study seem to derive from the other studies in the work. After the opening heraldic theme, the soft and light mood is taken from *sulle terze*. As we can see below, it is very similar to the opening motif of *sulle terze* not only in texture and mood, but also in the gesture and technical challenge presented to the performer (Figure 108).

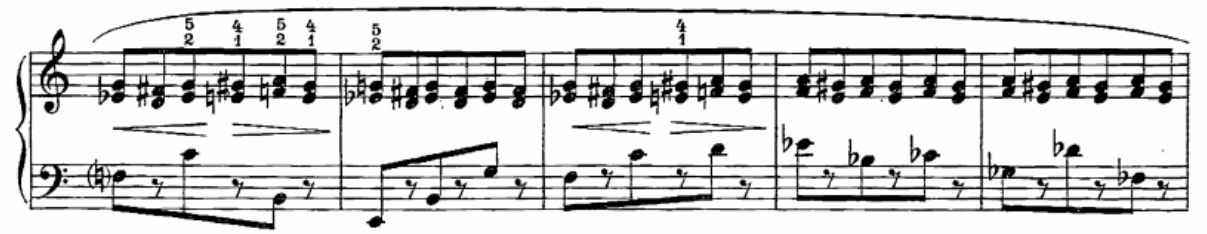
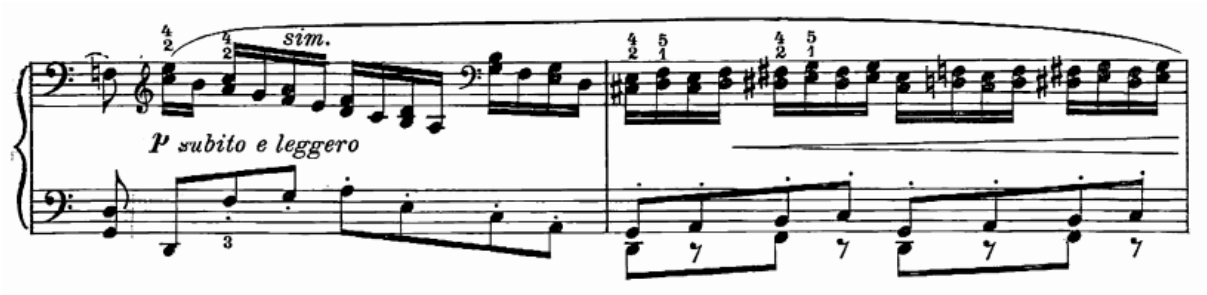


Figure 108: Sulle terze's opening bars with melody (above) compared with the first theme of Toccata, and the similarity in texture and use of thirds



In this first theme, the performer is given a similar technical challenge to the first study: legato, light major thirds. This borrowing from other studies continues. When we come to the second theme of the *Toccata*, there are many gestures within the rapidly moving right-hand passage that are similar to the gestures used by the right hand in *sulle quartes* and *sulle quintes*. As can be seen below (Figure 109), the performer must pivot on the thumb between quickly changing 3rds, 4ths, and 5ths as an entry to the more fluid and floating body of the second theme.

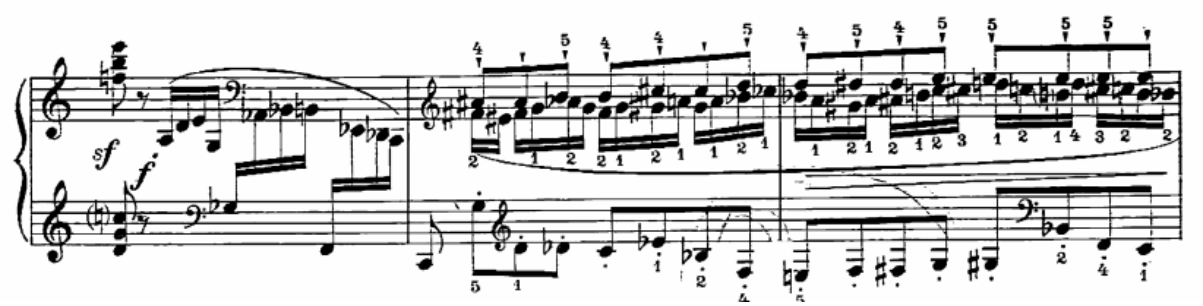


Figure 109: The beginning of the Toccata's second theme, and the pivoting between 3rds, 4ths, and 5ths in the right hand

This passage above incorporates the technical challenges of three of the studies. Both these gestures seen above in figures 108 and 109 reappear throughout the *Toccata*. Finally, the ending of the movement borrows the gestures and mood from the end of *sulle note ribattute*. In the fourth study there was a shimmering, fantastic, and luminous passage of oscillating, alternating chords between the hands. Casella similarly uses this texture and technique at the end of the *Toccata*, and we are reminded of this other study, as well as the ending of the *finale* movement of the *Sonatina*.

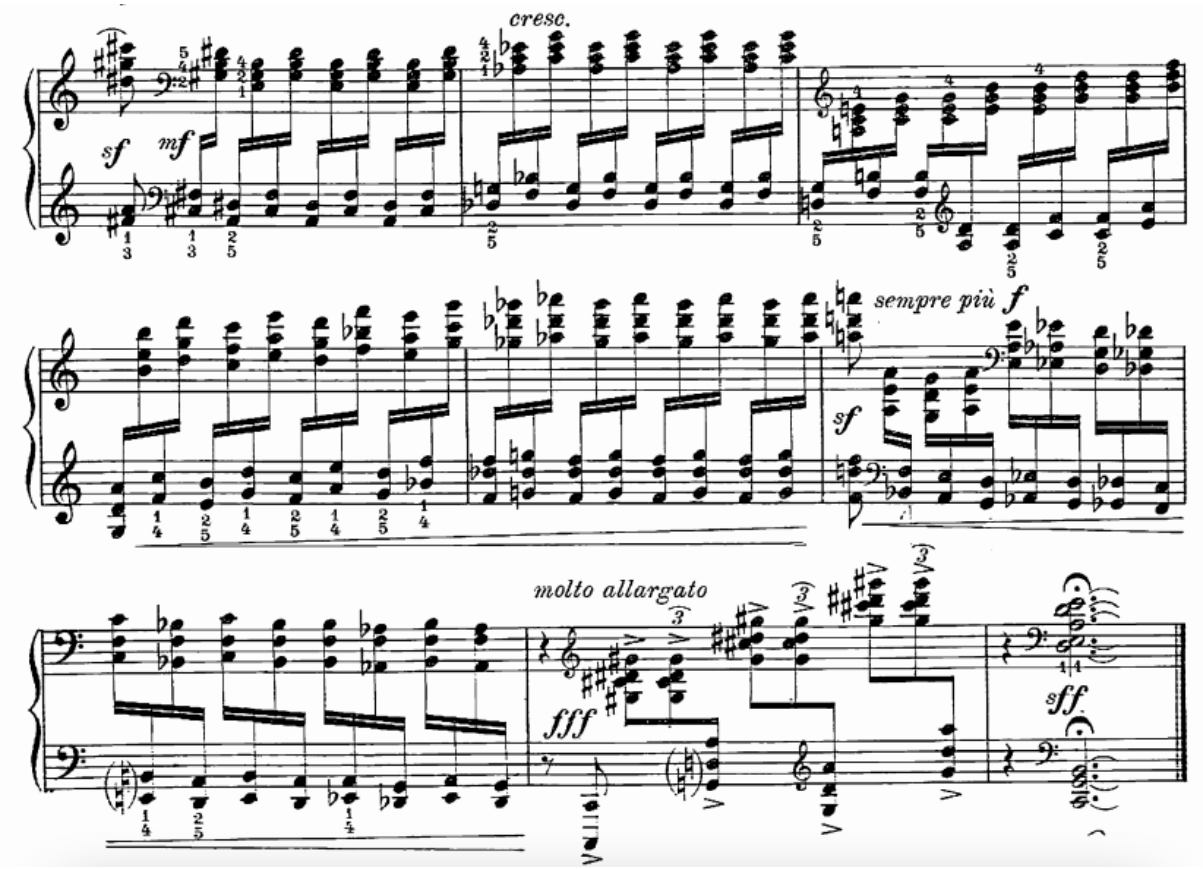


Figure 110: The final passage of the Toccata, with rising oscillating chords alternating between the hands

Yet this passage is not just indicative of the endings of *sulle note ribatutte* and the *Sonatina*. There are also various elements in these final bars that remind us of the ending of *Toccata* Op. 6. Just as in the

Toccata Op. 6, here in the final study is the use of a rapidly ascending then descending chordal passage up and down the piano. The final two bars are also visually and rhythmically similar to the end of Op. 6. Both toccatas use an ascending triplet quaver rhythmic grouping, and end with a long, sustained chord that is left to ring out.

The *Toccata* is a technically challenging and energy-consuming work on which to finish the set of studies on. Casella borrows from the previous studies in terms of moods and technical challenges. He also borrows from his various other piano works, particularly his other toccatas. The challenge for the performer in this one is twofold: they must play all the notes correctly and consistently, having excellent dextrous finger movement, and they must maintain an intense energy and concentration throughout their performance. The movement is exciting, intense, and rapidly moves from one theme and mood to the next. As well as being a culmination of the technical challenges within the studies, it is also a culmination of Casella's writing in toccata form. It is celebratory, grand, and virtuosic in moments. It seems a fantastic and triumphant work with which to finish the set of studies, and to conclude Casella's compositional oeuvre for piano.

There is one final note to be made about the *Toccata*, and that is the dedication. Any work dedicated to Pietro Scarpini is going to be a beast to master and perform. Scarpini (1911-1997) is credited as having cemented the pianistic traditions of Modern Italy, and is known as a unique and virtuosic pianist. Scarpini studied piano with Casella at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia. He is arguably Casella's most successful student.[316] One might hazard a guess that much of Scarpini's virtuosity and talent as a pianist comes from his training with Casella. Like Faini and de Barberiis, Scarpini was a champion of contemporary music, yet he is known best for his performances of the Second Viennese School, and works by Busoni and Schoenberg. He was a Modern virtuoso, attributed as being 'a highly intellectual pianist with a virtuoso technique.'[317] Again, we are faced with a study that would suggest Casella wrote it with the dedicatee in mind. The *Toccata* is technically challenging movement. It is, however, also just as possible that, given the difficulty of the movement, Casella chose the dedicatee after completing the work, and considering which of his students would be most apt to perform this specific study.

Reflections on the *Sei Studi*

[316] Roman Vlad was also a student of Casella's, although his time as a student of Casella's was brief. Vlad is also seen as being one of Casella's most successful students.
Giovanni Carli Ballola, "The Pietro Scarpini Edition," *Arbiter Records* 2001, accessed 2nd June 2021, https://arbiterrecords.org/catalog/the-pietro-scarpini-edition/#:~:text=Pietro%20Scarpini%20was%20a%20founding,Pierrot%20Lunaire%20astonished%20John%20Cage.
[317] Jonathan Summers, "Pietro Scarpini," *Naxos Rights International Ltd,* accessed 2nd June 2021, https://www.naxos.com/person/Pietro_Scarpini/44202.htm

This set of studies – Casella's final work for piano – is a bizarre collection of works that incorporate romantic gestures and ideas with modern tonalities across an interesting array of moods. They present a compositional voice that has achieved a balance of modernity and tradition. Perhaps these works are the best indicator of Casella's compositional style, demonstrating the various recurring elements of his compositional language. Each of the studies borrows from a specific work by another composer, save for the final *Toccata*, which seems instead to borrow from the other studies, and Casella's other toccatas. The studies also borrow from the French tradition of studies and études; short pieces with obvious technical challenges. Yet, they also borrow from the tradition of twentieth-century études. Similarly to Debussy and Scriabin, Casella writes a set of études that have expressive and interpretive challenges alongside the technical ones. Finally, he uses this traditional framework of studies to create a unique work, using modern tonalities and romantic gestures.

These studies are performance pieces as much as they are pedagogical ones to develop pianistic technique. They are indicative of Casella's compositional style. They are also exemplary in terms of the challenges they put to performers as to how to interpret Casella's music. While there is a wealth of detail in the score that gives clear expressive demands, the performer still needs to wade through the many notes, gestures, and sounds, and become intimate with all of these elements before they can form an interpretation of the work and elicit the various moods (or characters) apparent throughout the work. The expressive challenge is to create a rich and convincing interpretation of the work that celebrates Casella's compositional style, rather than just tackles the obvious technical challenges therein.

Conclusion

It is hoped that in reading this research, you have gained a greater understanding of Casella than when you first began. This thesis has done four things: (i) presented a biography of Casella's life, (ii) outlined his compositional process, (iii) presented a possible stylistic reading of his compositions, and (iv) provided a method for interpreting his piano works. This is a new means of understanding a composer who, for too long, has been mislabelled as being a Fascist, whose legacy as a pianist has been overlooked, and whose compositions have been dismissed by scholars and performers alike. It is hoped that from this research, further interest in Casella's music, and *la generazione dell'ottanta* more broadly, will arise, and that performers – especially pianists – will programme this music more.

Facets of Casella's biography have been covered in much of the existing literature. Yet none present a comprehensive biography that includes details from the various archival sources left to us. Many position him as being Fascist, based on his affiliations and activities, and because of various of his articles and written musings leaning to the political right. But this is an oversimplification of Casella's political views, and his life in general. This thesis has covered Casella's life, presenting the various nuances that would have influenced his political views, as well as outlining the various musical influences on him throughout his life. While this has been done briefly, it offers a narrative into the various components that make up Casella the pianist. It goes without saying that there is much more potential for future research and writing to be done on Casella's biography. The focus of the biography in this thesis solely relates to what information was deemed pertinent to Casella's piano compositions and career as a pianist. Yet even this biography could be taken further. It is most definitely time that a concise biography of Casella was written, incorporating more than just his memoir, but also his archives, as well as the testimonies and writings of other musicians on him.

As was outlined in Chapter 2, Casella's compositional process was three-step, comprising sketching and drafting, editing, and polishing. The archival sources demonstrate this process was mostly commonplace throughout Casella's compositional career, excepting some works such as *Sinfonia, arioso e toccata* Op. 59. We can also ascertain through this process that Casella likely did not compose at the piano, but initially drafted works before editing them at the instrument. Without further access to publishers' archives and completed manuscripts, we can only suppose from the sketches how his piano works evolved and changed.

Chapter 3 outlined one possible understanding of Casella's compositional style and language. It was demonstrated that Casella's main compositional tool is to borrow in three different ways: (i) borrowing historical or traditional forms and concepts from music's history, (ii) borrowing specific motifs or phrases or structures from specific works in a quasi-quotational way (although without quoting other

works), and (iii) borrowing the style itself from other composers' works and oeuvres. The most common result of this in his music is that there is a negotiation between traditional forms and structures – generally from the baroque period – with romantic gestures and phrases, written in modern tonalities, typically being chromatic or dissonant. Of course, this style was not established in Casella's first work, Op. 1. Like all composers, Casella's compositional style and language matured and developed across his oeuvre and became more refined in terms of how obviously he borrowed different elements and negotiated with them within different compositions. Chapter 3 also presented an important aspect of style: tactility and gesture. It is hoped that from this initial research, further work can be done investigating the tactile elements, and the gestural means of categorising, style.

This analysis and subsequent understanding of Casella's compositional style is limited, just as any analysis can be. An analysis of Casella's works that included his chamber music and orchestral music would likely result in a different view of his compositional style, especially in terms of elements such as texture and tonality. If that analysis were to include vocal music, it is likely that a third and different reading of Casella's style would emerge from lyricism and prosody alone without discussing other musical elements in those works. Similarly, different styles of analysis would render different outcomes, and, subsequently, varying means of interpreting Casella's music in performances. A Schenkerian analysis, for example, would offer a very different perspective on Casella, especially given his use of harmonic counterpoint and atypical use of traditional voice leading. Again, just as the biography offers further scope for investigation, so too does Casella's compositional style.

Regarding performing and interpreting Casella, Chapter 4 discusses different means of constructing and interpretation with which to perform his piano works. Of all the facets of Casella discussed in this thesis, this is the most interesting, presenting an unpublished article on interpretation by Casella. Casella was, himself, a pianist above all else. He knew how to construct a rich and aesthetically pleasing interpretation of works. Most fortunate for us is that Casella wrote the beginnings of his own treaty on interpretation that scholars can look to. While it is clear from this thesis that a much broader understanding of twentieth-century Italian aesthetics is needed to fully find the centre of Casella's writing on interpretation, we can still elicit the notion that to properly interpret, one must build an individual interpretation around the essence, or character, of a work, which is singular. Casella believed that, while a work had a single character or meaning given to it by the composer, there could be as many different interpretations of a work as there were performers and listeners. Interpretation is a constructed thing surrounding an individual work. According to Casella, it comprises understanding the score, and the sounds and gestures and shapes therein, as well as understanding the context and history of the work and its creator, and then negotiating the performer's creative response to this information.

This constructive approach is the one taken for the recordings submitted as part of this thesis. While the characters of the works have been elucidated through the case studies, the interpretations are presented, in full, in the recordings. It is clear through Casella's various writings, not just his unpublished article on interpretation, that he believed performance was the embodiment of all things: style, compositional output, and interpretation. Performance, and hearing a work, are central to understanding a work.

This idea of performance being central to understanding a work is central to understanding this thesis. As premised throughout, style and interpretation, and arguably also compositional process, can only be realised through performance. Just as Casella was importantly a pianist – and a very active one, at that – so too it is important to remember that this thesis was written by a performer, who places high importance of understanding music through playing. This of course means that the thesis will be biased, positing performance as the best means of understanding works and actualising the research undertaken as part of this project.

Finally, a word on the case studies. While only five of Casella's works are presented in this thesis, a similar analysis and investigation into (almost) all of his solo piano works was done over the course of this project. However, to include them all here would be beyond the scope of this thesis, or result in a very limited and likely descriptive discussion of each work, rather than delving into the interpretive and stylistic elements therein. This is another area for possible study. It would be a wonderful thing to publish a new, critical, edition of Casella's collected piano works (including his four-hand works). Similarly, it is high time that a new recording of Casella's music was done that contains an interpretation, instead of performing the pieces are quickly as possible.

There is huge scope for further research into Casella: different stylistic analyses, different interpretive approaches, and many more performance opportunities. Similarly, there are many further avenues for exploration outside of Casella. This could include researching and analysing the intersections of music with other art forms during the fascist regime. As was hinted at in the limitations mentioned in the introduction, music seems to insect with visual art, theatre, dance, and architecture through the regime, and yet interdisciplinary studies are almost non-existent in English-language scholarship. One may also choose to continue down the path of tactile stylistic analysis. As Chapter 3 demonstrated, there is clearly further need to develop a language by which to discuss tactile and gestural experiences of musical style. This thesis has given potential viewpoints into these topics, yet retained a focus on Alfredo Casella and his piano music.

This thesis will not end with a grand statement on what Casella's piano music means, or how it should best be interpreted. Simply, I have constructed a means of analysing his compositional style, and interpreting his works. This is just one way of analysing and interpreting his music. This research is just

one means of understanding the pianist-composer, and understanding the historical and musical context that he comes from. Hopefully it is not the last.

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