

*New Perspectives  
on the Italian Instrumental Music Renaissance  
Over the Long Nineteenth Century*

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# Contents

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Abstract   | p. 5  |
| List of publications submitted   | p. 6  |
| Acknowledgments  | p. 7  |
| <b>Commentary</b>  |       |
| <i>Introduction</i>  | p. 9  |
| <i>Nineteenth-century Italian nation building and its modern musical culture: themes and correspondences</i> | p. 15 |
| <i>Rome: secularisation and the beginning of a 'new musical life'</i>  | p. 31 |
| <i>Naples: the rebirth of instrumental music in the home of opera</i>  | p. 43 |
| <i>Bologna: an intellectual identity. From papal censorship to artistic-cultural rebirth</i>                 | p. 51 |
| <i>Milan and Turin: music culture in the cities of progress and industrialisation</i>                        | p. 57 |
| <i>Florence: music tradition in the cradle of Italian culture</i>  | p. 65 |
| Bibliography   | p. 71 |



## ***Abstract***

This commentary presents my submitted publications contextualised in a broader study on the resurgence of Italian instrumental music during the 'long nineteenth century'. By exploring the socio-political and economic status of the country over the century, my research acknowledges the pivotal role played by the Risorgimento process in shaping the development of a modern Italian musical culture. The research draws upon previously unexamined primary sources, including letters, concert programs, reviews, and a wide range of secondary literature.

The commentary begins with a broad introduction examining the historical background, aiming to demonstrate the intrinsic connection between the development of an instrumental musical culture in Italy and the corresponding intellectual and cultural advancements.

The commentary then consolidates and develops the research presented in the publications to offer an analysis of prominent Italian cities (Rome, Naples, Bologna, Turin, Milan, and Florence) and their distinctive characteristics. I unveil the diverse responses of each centre (and therefore of different areas of the country) to the challenges posed by the prevailing influence of opera and the political and economic circumstances that allowed the resurgence of instrumental music. I highlight the establishment of pioneering concert and quartet societies in these locations, which served as catalysts for the flourishing of Italian instrumental music. Furthermore, I demonstrate how the reform of school education and conservatories played a crucial role in empowering a new generation of Italian musicians to reclaim and excel in this genre. I throw new light upon those notable Italian composers, particularly Giuseppe Martucci, who played a crucial role in establishing a new and distinct 'non-operatic' image within Italian music culture, with a consequent impact in shaping the perception and reception of Italian music on an international scale. The outcomes of this research establish a groundwork for future investigation aimed at offering a more comprehensive overview of instrumental music culture across the Italian peninsula.

## List of submitted publications

Nardacci, Federica (2021), 'Constructing an English identity in London: Albert Visetti and the Anglo-Italian musical exchanges at the end of the nineteenth century', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, vol. 26, n. 1, pp. 41-53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2020.1859201> **[6,000 words]**

Nardacci, Federica (2021), 'Il 'mito' dell'Inghilterra nel XIX secolo e la diaspora musicale italiana: il caso di Albert Visetti (1844-1928)' [The 'myth' of England in the nineteenth century and the Italian musical diaspora: the case of Albert Visetti (1844-1928)], in *'Symposium Musicae'. Saggi e testimonianze in onore di Giancarlo Rostirolla per il suo 80° genetliaco*, F. Nardacci and B. Cipriani (eds.). Roma: Fondazione Palestrina-Recercare, pp. 337-56. ISBN9788894227659. **[7,600 words]**

Nardacci, Federica (2021), 'Carlo Conti 'Musicae Artis Eximio Cultori'. Una Ricostruzione Biografica Attraverso le Pagine di Francesco Florimo' [Carlo Conti 'Musicae Artis Eximio Cultori'. A Biographical Reconstruction through the Pages of Francesco Florimo], in *Paolo Serra e la musica a Napoli nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento*, M. Distilo, F. P. Russo, A. Pugliese (eds.). Cosenza: Ibimus Calabrese-Università della Calabria, pp. 221-235. ISBN9788894040425. **[7,200 words]**

Nardacci, Federica ed. (2019), *Pagine sparse. Il carteggio di Giuseppe Martucci nei documenti d'archivio del Royal College of Music* [Scattered papers. The correspondence of Giuseppe Martucci in the archival documents of the Royal College of Music]. Firenze: Leo Olschki. ISBN9788822266934. **[70,372 words, of which 9,727 words introduction]**

Nardacci, Federica (2015), 'La centralità di Alessandro Vessella nel panorama della musica romana e le sue relazioni con i Caetani' [The centrality of Alessandro Vessella in the Roman music environment and his connections with Caetani family], in *Al...Lumiere marciando*, J. Herczog (ed.). Roma: Ibimus-Comune di Allumiere, pp. 15-28. ISBN9788888627281. **[3,611 words]**

Nardacci, Federica (2014), 'Roffredo Caetani attraverso le fonti d'Archivio' [Roffredo Caetani through the Archive sources] in M. Caroprese (ed.), in *Roffredo Caetani. Un musicista aristocratico*, M. Caroprese (ed.). Lucca: LIM, pp. 25-45. ISBN9788870967746. **[4,934 words]**

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## Commentary

### Introduction

The nineteenth-century Italian history of music presents a variety of nuances. They stem from the contrast between the dominance of opera and the gradual yet significant resurgence of instrumental music, within the backdrop of a highly complex socio-political context in a fragmented and disunited country. Amidst this historical landscape, my publications explore the lives and works of lesser-known composers who played pivotal roles in shaping the Italian musical heritage during that period. By reconstructing the biographies of these composers/musicians and illustrating the socio-cultural characteristics of the specific centres to which they were connected, my research provides essential elements for a more comprehensive understanding of the Italian music culture during that time. What sets them apart is their reliance on archival materials (especially private correspondence) that have hitherto remained unpublished, thus unlocking valuable insights into the unexplored aspects of musical history.

My book chapter dedicated to the operatic composer Carlo Conti (1796-1868)<sup>1</sup> provides the opportunity to delve into the vibrant Neapolitan context during a period of opera's utmost splendour. It sheds light on how the dominance of this genre exerted an influence over the education and career paths of musicians. Conti, having lived through the Italian Unification process and the subsequent cultural transformations, stands as one of the final defenders of the old operatic musical tradition. When he passed away in 1868, a new generation of musicians, born in the 1850s, was already embarking on a fresh trajectory of instrumental music orientation and appreciation.

The book chapters on Alessandro Vessella (1860-1929) and Roffredo Caetani (1871-1961)<sup>2</sup> show how these cultural transformations in the second half of the century manifested and impacted society. They both focus on Rome during the period when it became the capital of

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<sup>1</sup> F. NARDACCI, 'Carlo Conti 'Musicae Artis Eximio Cultori'. Una Ricostruzione Biografica Attraverso le Pagine di Francesco Florimo' in *Paolo Serra e la musica a Napoli nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento*, M. Distilo, F. P. Russo, A. Pugliese eds. (Cosenza: Ibimus Calabrese-Università della Calabria 2021), pp. 221-235.

<sup>2</sup> F. NARDACCI, 'Roffredo Caetani attraverso le fonti d'Archivio' in *Roffredo Caetani. Un musicista aristocratico*, M. Caroprese ed. (Lucca: LIM 2014), pp. 25-45; F. NARDACCI, 'La centralità di Alessandro Vessella nel panorama della musica romana e le sue relazioni con i Caetani' in *Al...Lumiere marciando*, J. Herczog ed. (Roma: Ibimus-Comune di Allumiere 2015), pp. 15-28.

Italy, in 1871, following the annexation of the Papal State and the completion of Italian Unification.<sup>3</sup> The study on wind bandmaster Vessella provides insight into the progressive popularization of orchestral and chamber music in Rome, achieved through Vessella's transcriptions for wind and brass bands. This study also offers a glimpse into how this repertoire was perceived by the broader audience attending open-air concerts.

The Roman nobleman Roffredo Caetani represents instead the emerging generation of composers who fully dedicated themselves to instrumental music, embodying the significant cultural shift that took place in late nineteenth-century Italy. Caetani also symbolises a significant social change, being a young aristocrat who could now choose to pursue a professional music career. This was an option previously deemed inappropriate for someone of his social rank prior to 1870, as will be discussed later on.<sup>4</sup>

Giuseppe Martucci's correspondence, published in my book *Pagine sparse*, provides both a broader and more intimate perspective of this complex period in Italian music history, thanks to the nature of the archival documents.<sup>5</sup> Martucci (1856-1909) stands as the true emblem of the revival of instrumental music in Italy, and his hitherto unknown correspondence serves as the primary foundation of my research. This extensive collection comprises over a hundred letters addressed to Martucci, spanning from the 1870s until his passing in 1909. A few other letters addressed to Martucci's widow after his death are also included and document the impact he had upon the Italian musical environment. These letters, held at the Royal College of Music in London, originate from various composers, musicians, and music critics, and they provide personal insights into historical events, offering perspectives that are not found in official or public sources. Martucci's correspondence encompasses a wide range of materials, including concert programme plans, personal opinions, and observations on the socio-political climate and cultural scene of the time, offering valuable insights into the cultural developments and changes that took place in the aftermath of Italian Unification. Martucci's extensive involvement in major Italian cities such as Naples, Bologna, Milan, Turin, and Rome, as well as

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<sup>3</sup> The partial Unification of Italy was achieved in 1861, with the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy under Victor Emmanuel II.

<sup>4</sup> The pursuit of a professional career in the arts, including visual arts, was not typically associated with members of the aristocracy. However, they were allowed to engage in artistic/musical activities, either as amateurs or as part-time artists, creating works for personal enjoyment or as a form of cultural expression. They also could be patrons of the arts, providing financial support to artists and commissioning works for their personal collections or public spaces.

<sup>5</sup> F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse. Il carteggio di Giuseppe Martucci nei documenti d'archivio del Royal College of Music* (Firenze: Olschki 2019).

his experiences abroad in Germany and Britain, attracted correspondents from diverse backgrounds. As a result, the letters provide a multifaceted view of the historical context, both in Italy and throughout Europe. Notably, among the correspondents is the singing professor at the Royal College of Music Albert Visetti (1844-1928), an Italian-Dalmatian-born musician (naturalized British in 1884), who received his education at the Milan Conservatoire before moving to London. His letters offer an interesting perspective of Martucci's reputation abroad, where he was well-known for his 'artistic enthusiasm and unparalleled sensibility in music interpretation'. They also inform us about how Martucci was inspired to organise an 'English concert' in Bologna in 1898, which had eventually historical resonance: 'Maestro Commendator Martucci [...], you are the only Italian conductor who can sympathize with the English spirit and, through the audiences you educated, you will be able to highlight the national and aesthetic peculiarities of English music'.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, this correspondence unveils the connection between Martucci and Visetti (and therefore between the Royal College of Music and the Bologna Conservatoire), which ultimately led to the performance of Martucci's First Symphony in London in 1898.<sup>7</sup> This revelation prompted me to delve deeper into Visetti's life, as he exemplified one of the Italian musicians who migrated to the British Isles during the mid-nineteenth century in pursuit of a musical career abroad.<sup>8</sup> This exploration allowed me to uncover interesting insights into the experiences and contributions of Italian musicians abroad after they relocated seeking opportunities beyond their native land.

In this commentary, I am going to further explore the connections and thematic threads that bind my individual publications together and I will demonstrate how they collectively contribute to a unified understanding of nineteenth-century Italian music culture. Moreover, I provide a justification for the selection and arrangement of these publications, showcasing how they complement each other and together form a coherent and significant scholarly contribution. To better understand their place within the broader research landscape, I find it

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from Albert Visetti to Giuseppe Martucci, 10 May 1897 (GB-Lcm, MS 15107), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, p. 37-8. (I shall use my own translation from the Italian for all the quotations in this commentary).

<sup>7</sup> A letter from C. Hubert H. Parry related to this event is also included. Letter from C. Hubert H. Parry to Giuseppe Martucci, 21 March 1898 (GB-Lcm, MS 15105), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, p. 69-70.

<sup>8</sup> F. Nardacci, 'Constructing an English identity in London: Albert Visetti and the Anglo-Italian musical exchanges at the end of the nineteenth century', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, vol. 26, n. 1, 2021; F. Nardacci, 'Il 'mito' dell'Inghilterra nel XIX secolo e la diaspora musicale italiana: il caso di Albert Visetti (1844-1928)' in *Symposium Musicae'. Saggi e testimonianze in onore di Giancarlo Rostirolla per il suo 80° genetliaco*, F. Nardacci, B. Cipriani eds. (Roma: Fondazione Palestrina-Recercare 2021), pp. 337-56.

essential to first analyse the existing literature and trace the evolution of research on this complex topic.

Scholarly interest in nineteenth-century instrumental music in Italy gained significant momentum during the early 1960s. This probably reflected the centenary celebration of the country's Unification (1861-1961), which represented a turning point in the cultural and political history of Italy. A sequence of conferences promoted by the Sienese Accademia Chigiana (1960)<sup>9</sup> and the Società Italiana di Musicologia (1964)<sup>10</sup> gave rise to a host of papers and essays exploring various aspects of this era in Italian music. The research focused on specific themes: the prominence of opera and its political significance during the Risorgimento; the establishment of music journals; the role of music critics and the late reception of Beethoven as evidence of the slow familiarization with the European symphonic repertoire.<sup>11</sup> In addition, there was research into the history of Italian conservatoires as well as new biographies of rediscovered, or newly identified, Italian instrumental composers of the time. Although these studies were individually significant, they provided only fragmentary glimpses into the wider frame of nineteenth-century Italian music culture, rather than a comprehensive perspective.

On the other hand, Sergio Martinotti's *Ottocento strumentale italiano* can be seen as a pioneering attempt to trace the development of a broader musical culture across the century.<sup>12</sup> Martinotti emphasizes the importance of considering the political and cultural diversities among different Italian regions, particularly in the context of changes after Unification. He suggests studying individual Italian centres to ultimately achieve a more comprehensive view of the history of music in Italy. In essence, he paved the way by identifying key topics for exploration, including aesthetic matters. However, due to the complexity of the

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<sup>9</sup> A. Damerini, G. Roncaglia eds., *I grandi anniversari del 1960, e la musica sinfonica e da camera nell'Ottocento in Italia. Per la XVII Settimana Musicale, 24-31 luglio, 1960* (Siena: Accademia Musicale Chigiana 1960).

<sup>10</sup> The Società Italiana di Musicologia (Italian Musicological Society) was founded in Milan on 29 February 1964, on the model of the previous Associazione dei Musicologi Italiani (1908-1942). Guglielmo Barblan was its first chairman. See P. BESUTTI, 'Quarant'anni di "Rivista Italiana di Musicologia"', *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, vol. 40, nn.1-2, 2005, pp. 3-18.

<sup>11</sup> Some studies that appeared in these years suggest that Beethoven and other classic Viennese composers' works started circulating at the beginning of the nineteenth century, although they were performed and appreciated in elite environments only. C. ANNIBALDI, 'Beethoven a Roma nell'Ottocento', *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, vol. 3-4, 1971, pp. 357-91; G. PESTELLI, 'Beethoven a Torino e in Piemonte nell'Ottocento', *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, vol. 6, 1970, pp. 1013-86; L. PINZAUTI, 'Prospettive per uno studio sulla musica a Firenze nell'Ottocento', *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, vol. 2, n. 2, 1968, pp. 255-73. See also L. AVERSANO, 'Il commercio di edizioni e manoscritti musicali tra Italia e Germania. 1800-1830', *Fonti Musicali Italiane*, n. 4, 1999, pp. 113-60.

<sup>12</sup> S. MARTINOTTI, *Ottocento strumentale italiano* (Bologna: Forni 1972).

subject, the numerous essays published during the 1970s, especially in the *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, necessarily focused on specific aspects of it. In 1995, an issue of the *Quaderni del Corso di Musicologia del Conservatorio di Milano* was dedicated to an account of Italian instrumental music (*Musica strumentale dell'Ottocento Italiano*) and was intended to provide a comprehensive study on this topic, as stated in the introductory presentation.<sup>13</sup> However, the criticism of Antonio Rostagno in reviewing this edition highlighted that even this publication could not achieve the overview that it promised. Instead, it mainly focused on the musical analysis of selected compositions and composer biographies.<sup>14</sup> In 2003 Rostagno himself published a volume titled *La musica italiana per orchestra nell'Ottocento*,<sup>15</sup> where he illustrated the development of instrumental and orchestral music in Italy across the nineteenth century. By exploring a vast range of works from both major and minor Italian composers Rostagno traced the historical evolution of orchestral compositions in Italy, providing a clear sense of its progress. He identified three successive (but overlapping) stages of this compositional genre: the symphonic-overture (operatic overture played separately as concert pieces), which held prominence in mid-century Italy; the descriptive symphonic poem, notably those of Antonio Bazzini; and the symphony, primarily associated with Giuseppe Martucci. In his discussion, Rostagno emphasizes the significance played by socio-economic and cultural factors in bringing about these shifts of compositional genre. The incorporation of historiographic elements served in this case to explain and contextualise this music-analytical perspective.

The approach adopted by John Rosselli, in his 1991 *Music & Musicians in Nineteenth-century Italy*, was more explicitly historically centred. He sought to contextualize the work of individuals and institutions in relation to anthropological and socio-political factors.<sup>16</sup> Situating his argument within the broader context of Italian history, Rosselli drew a strong distinction between the pre- and post-Unification periods, emphasizing a cultural shift evident after 1861. He argued that this period saw the emergence of the Italian national identity paralleled by

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<sup>13</sup> G. SALVETTI ed., *Musica Strumentale dell'Ottocento italiano* (Lucca: LIM 1995) - Quaderni del corso di musicologia del Conservatorio 'G. Verdi' di Milano, n. 3.

<sup>14</sup> A. ROSTAGNO, *Il Saggiatore Musicale*, vol. 6, n. 1-2, 1999, pp. 333-36.

<sup>15</sup> A. ROSTAGNO, *La musica italiana per orchestra nell'Ottocento* (Firenze: Olschki 2003).

<sup>16</sup> J. ROSSELLI, *Music & Musicians in Nineteenth-century Italy* (London: B. T. Batsford 1991).

greater receptiveness to European influences.<sup>17</sup> Rosselli's work underlines the complexity of the Risorgimento process, as an aspect that should not be underplayed in exploring the evolving nature of Italian music culture.

My research, as represented in my publications and this accompanying commentary, adopts an approach that is more closely aligned with Rosselli's perspective and with Martinotti's idea of examining individual centres in their unique and diverse aspects. As a primary objective, I aim to emphasize the profound impact made by socio-cultural forces that generated this new interest in instrumental music and significantly shaped this new musical spirit. The underlying purpose of my research is to identify those factors leading to the revival of the instrumental tradition, which experienced a period of decline after being regarded as a distinctive feature of Italian music until the late eighteenth century. With this in mind, my research aims to contribute to a fuller understanding of why this tradition became overshadowed by opera and why Italy did not experience the simultaneous development of instrumental music comparable to Germany and other European nations. Consequently, I argue that the limited attention on instrumental composition in Italy during the nineteenth century reflects the relatively unsophisticated nature of the larger part of the Italian population at that time. The high level of illiteracy and poor level of education stands in support of this argument.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to point out that this status of affairs did not equate to a cultural void. Leading figures like Foscolo, Leopardi, Mazzini, Gioberti, greatly propelled Italian literature and philosophy. Their intellectual contributions flourished, illustrating a vibrant cultural scene. However, it's essential to acknowledge that this cultural growth was largely experienced by a privileged minority, revealing a stark accessibility gap. This further demonstrates the complexity of the historical period, as discussed elsewhere in this commentary and my publications. On the other hand, progress toward an appreciation of instrumental and symphonic music in Italy was only made possible when, after the Unification, the central government planned to bring about a better-educated and more cultivated society. This also explains why the cultural process was essentially led by intellectually inclined musical enthusiasts and well-educated musicians who aimed to develop the public's taste and knowledge of music through the establishment of concert societies and educationally rigorous

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<sup>17</sup> John Rosselli's father, Carlo Alberto Rosselli (1899-1937) was an Italian antifascist philosopher and historian, as was his uncle Nello Rosselli (1900-1937), who made a particular study on the Risorgimento, tracing the origin of Italian socialism in Mazzini's followers and the post-Unification anarchists.

conservatoires. By highlighting the challenges, variations, inconsistencies, and contradictions evident within the Italian aesthetic culture, it starts to become possible to more fully connect the changes in musical life to the social context.

These aspects will be underscored in this commentary. In the following discussion, I focus on six prominent cultural centres: Rome, Naples, Bologna, Turin, Milan and Florence. Although Rome and Naples are more specifically covered by my publications, the other centres are also extensively referenced (especially in *Pagine sparse*) because of their significance in the Italian cultural landscape and their inherent connections. Hence, I believe it pertinent to incorporate them into this commentary, elucidating further their distinctive historical contexts and cultural milieu. By exploring these cities individually, I aim to spotlight their diverse responses to the evolving cultural prospects over the course of the century, influenced by their different political, social, and economic situations. The order in which the examination of the cities is presented does not adhere to a specific chronological or priority criterion, as each centre had its own distinct character, despite their interaction. Nevertheless, I have structured them in a manner that primes the reader for the following cultural centre, and comprises pertinent information that establishes connections between each of them. As I will suggest, this city-focused narrative lays the foundation for a future, larger study, that will permit greater attention to the more hidden interactions between the regions. This study implicitly also offers the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural and political factors which determined the emancipation of instrumental music in Italy throughout the nineteenth century.

### ***Nineteenth-century Italian nation building and its modern musical culture: themes and correspondences***

Before exploring the specifics of the individual cities, it is beneficial to get a glimpse of the wider socio-cultural context of nineteenth-century Italy, acknowledging Hegel's premise that 'every work of art belongs to its own time, its own people, its own environment, and depends on particular historical and other ideas and purposes'.<sup>18</sup> A thorough understanding of the artwork involves knowledge of the social, political and economic situation and an appreciation of how these factors shaped the artistic climate in which the work was created. Such an all-

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<sup>18</sup> G.W.F. HEGEL, *Aesthetics*, T.M. Knox trans. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1998), vol. I, p. 14.

embracing perspective is particularly helpful in discussing Italian music history over the long nineteenth-century, when the condition of the political state strongly affected its artistic life. Mid-nineteenth-century Italy was, in fact, a mosaic of regional centres ruled by foreign powers, with diverse cultures, languages, financial administration, resources, currency, weights and measures systems. Under these circumstances it would have been difficult to foresee how the idea of an Italian nation could be developed ideologically and eventually realized in practice, reaching political Unification in 1861.<sup>19</sup> The Italian Risorgimento stands as a complex process in the annals of history, defying simplistic definitions of "Italy" and Italian identity.<sup>20</sup> However, amidst the fervour of political upheaval and nationalistic aspirations, the cultural landscape of Italy underwent profound transformations. The widespread illiteracy that characterized a significant portion of the population was recognized as one of the major obstacles to achieving a unified country. As Mazzini also pointed out, due to this state of affairs, the ideas of unification widely expressed in Italian literature could not effectively reach everyone. That was actually a 'language' that sounded abstract to most and was certainly not understood by peasants, who formed the majority of the population.

Italy's rich literary and philosophical tradition, spanning centuries, lent the country an aura of distinction and significance on the global stage, but it remained a privilege for only a few for a long time. This dichotomy underscores the complex interplay between education, identity, and societal structures during the era of the Risorgimento. In a way, Italian intellectuals, more than politicians, contributed to forming the idea of a unified Italy. This helps explain why, in post-Risorgimento Italy, the immediate goal was to create a new cultural basis so that the entire population could aspire to the level of cultural sophistication embodied by a few intellectuals.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, since the first third of the century, there had been an increasing availability of literature and theatre works, to develop a national culture. In 1819 Giovan Pietro Vieusseux - a protestant merchant from Geneva who relocated to Florence - founded a cultural salon, known as Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario G. P. Vieusseux, where intellectual and literary

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<sup>19</sup> Z. G. BARANSKI, R. J. WEST, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001).

<sup>20</sup> The concept of 'identity' would also need to be discussed within a separate context to explore the extent to which we can refer to a national identity in Italy and precisely define what we mean by 'identity.' It would also be interesting to explore whether it might be more suitable to talk about 'resemblance' rather than 'identity,' as Francesco Remotti suggests in his article 'Identity Barriers and Resemblance Networks', *Acta Musicologica*, vol. 84, n. 2, 2012, pp. 137-46.

<sup>21</sup> D. WAR, 'Intellectuals, culture, and power in modern Italy', *The Italianist*, vol. 21, n. 1 pp. 291-318.



men used to gather to discuss political and cultural matters. It also included a remarkable library and produced its own periodical called *Antologia*, for the dissemination of literature and political ideas.<sup>22</sup> Another important immigrant to Italy was the French Felice Lemonnier (1806-1884). After establishing himself in Florence in 1831, he founded a publishing house, orientated to the publication of literary works, generating a massive cultural action. Many European works were introduced to Italian readers, acquainting them with historical novels and the Romanticism movement, as well as Italian literature.<sup>23</sup> Lemonnier's publications also played a remarkable role in the unification of language, following the political Unification of Italy.

The need for a more cultured population was felt as essential at some point for the cultural growth of the entire country. On the other hand, the predominantly rural population in Italy during the first half of the 19th century contributed to constraints on the development of an intellectual culture. Almost everywhere, the majority of the population lived outside the urban centres and worked on the land for absent owners, according to the traditional sharecropping system of *mezzadria*. The middle classes lived mostly in cities and could be comprised of entrepreneurs, businessmen, and intellectuals, who formed the bourgeoisie. The rise of the bourgeoisie was actually a phenomenon that mainly concerned the northern areas. In the South the social system remained for a long time based upon landowners' power, therefore its society was largely formed by the peasantry.<sup>24</sup> The poor transportation network throughout the peninsula also contributed to preventing social connection between people from different states, since any travel across the country was extremely difficult.<sup>25</sup> Among the reasons for the slow development of transportation networks were the difficulties in achieving agreements

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<sup>22</sup> *Antologia* played an important role in creating connections with other European countries, and also in the circulation of the Risorgimento ideas. It hosted essays by Foscolo, Leopardi, Mazzini, and many others. In 1833, during the period of the first revolutions, the periodical was censored because of its liberal orientation. It resumed as *Nuova Antologia* in 1866.

<sup>23</sup> More than 2000 copies of Dante's works were published and circulated, and a complete collection of Foscolo's works was edited by Mazzini.

<sup>24</sup> An interesting example of Southern living conditions is depicted in the novels of the Sicilian writer Giovanni Verga (1840-1922), such as *I Malavoglia*. Additionally, the novella 'Cavalleria Rusticana' by Verga served as the basis for the opera of the same name, which was adapted for the stage by Pietro Mascagni in 1890 on a libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci.

<sup>25</sup> Even in the 1840s the railway was at an early stage, with only 620 km of track in operation compared with the 10.000 km in Britain, 6.000 km in Germany, and 3.000 km in France. The first stretch of railway, only 7 Km long, was opened in Naples in 1839. See C. DUGGAN, *The force of destiny. A History of Italy since 1796* (London: Penguin 2007), pp. 102-3; A. GAMBONI, P. NERI, *Napoli-Portici. La prima ferrovia d'Italia. 1839* (Napoli: Fausto Fiorentino 1987).

between one state and another regarding the border crossing, as well as the topography and the inhospitality of some areas.<sup>26</sup>

Linguistic diversity from one region to another was a further peculiarity of a divided Italy, and the proliferation of dictionaries of different dialects is evidence of the complexity of this aspect.<sup>27</sup> The *commedia dell'arte* (Italian Comedy), in vogue in Italy until the end of the eighteenth century, can also be seen as a result of this extraordinary variety of languages – in fact, it put on stage characters who spoke in their own dialects, such as Balanzone (Bolognese), Pulcinella (Neapolitan), Harlequin (Bergamasque), Colombina (Venetian), etc. Even the early stage of Opera buffa (early eighteenth century) was the expression of a particular regional identity, being sung in Neapolitan dialect and called 'Commedeja pe' mmuseca' (commedia per musica), e.g. Michelangelo Faggioli's *La Cilla* (1706), Leonardo Leo's *Lo Pazzo apposta* (1724) or Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *Lo frate 'nnamorato* (1732).<sup>28</sup>

However, the Italian language, as established in the Renaissance from the vernacular Tuscan of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio,<sup>29</sup> was spoken almost exclusively by the more educated bourgeoisie and was not officially recognized as the national language until 1860.<sup>30</sup> Statistical

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<sup>26</sup> The malaria-ridden Pontine marshes in the south of Rome are an example of this condition: 'Between the Tiber and the Garigliano the coast is one of the unhealthiest places in Italy and Europe: fevers dominate especially in the hot seasons, and the inhabitants are rare and miserable'. See C. MINI, *Geografia e Storia militare dell'Italia, ossia breve corso di studi geografici e storici sulla penisola e sull'arte della guerra tra gli Italiani da' tempi più remoti ai giorni nostri* (Firenze: self published 1850), vol. 1, p. 103.

<sup>27</sup> F. CHERUBINI, *Dizionario Milanese-italiano*, 1814; G. BOERIO, *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*, 1829; V. MORTILLARO DI VILLARENA, *Nuovo Dizionario siciliano-italiano*, 1838; B. PUOTI, *Vocabolario domestico napoletano e toscano*, 1841; G. CASACCIA, *Dizionario genovese-italiano*, 1851; G. SPANO, *Vocabulariu sardu-italianu et italianu-sardu*, 1851; V. DI SANT'ALBINO, *Gran dizionario piemontese*, 1859. Many French dictionaries also circulated the country over the century. The most prominent one was considered to be the *Littré*, published by Émile Littré between 1863 and 1872. Almost at the same time (1861-1873) a monumental dictionary of Italian language was published by Niccolò Tommaseo. See N. TOMMASEO, B. BELLINI, G. MEINI, *Dizionario di lingua Italiana* (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice 1861-79).

<sup>28</sup> This successful operatic genre was later adapted from the dialect into Italian in order to have it circulated everywhere in the country. See P. WEISS, 'Ancora sulle origini dell'opera comica: il linguaggio', *Studi pergolesiani*, vol. 1, 1983, pp. 124-48; M. F. ROBINSON, *Naples and Neapolitan opera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1972). For the evolution of this genre during the central years of the Risorgimento see F. IZZO, *Laughter between Two Revolutions: Opera Buffa in Italy, 1831-1848* (Rochester, NY Woodbridge: Suffolk University of Rochester Press; Boydell & Brewer Limited 2013).

<sup>29</sup> The first dictionary of the Italian language was published in 1612 by the Accademia della Crusca, founded in Florence in 1583 with the purpose of maintaining the purity of the Italian language.

<sup>30</sup> Although the educated bourgeoisie could speak Italian, they also used dialect in formal and informal circumstances. See G. CLIVIO, 'Il Piemonte' in *I dialetti italiani. Storia struttura uso*, G. Clivio, M. Cortelazzo, N. De Blasi and C. Marcato eds. (Torino: Utet 2002), pp. 151-84. After the Unification, the poet and writer Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873), the author of *I Promessi Sposi*, who had become an icon of Italian literature, was invited by the Minister of Education Emilio Broglio to join the 'Government Committee for the Unification of the language', which recognized Tuscan as a reference language. As a contribution to this aim, in 1868 Alessandro Manzoni published an essay entitled *Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla* (Milano: La Perseveranza, vol. 10, n. 3039, 20 April 1868).

studies show that even as late as 1861 only 10% of the population spoke Italian. Furthermore, of 22 million Italians registered, almost 17 million could neither read nor write, with a greater percentage of illiteracy in the south of Italy.<sup>31</sup> These figures are clearly in contrast with contemporary Prussia and France where the literacy percentage of the population was respectively 70% and 50%.<sup>32</sup> Because of this high level of illiteracy, a plan for people's education became one of the priorities of the new Italian government after the Unification.

Although during the French occupation of Italy secular and liberal teaching, standardized to the French school system, had been already introduced, it was during the Risorgimento (starting from the 1840s) that major measures were taken. In 1859 a compulsory education system was introduced in some areas of the country and it was then extended to all of united Italy in 1861.<sup>33</sup> However, the mandatory nature of this provision was largely disregarded as children were still most needed to work in the fields, helping families to make their living, reflecting the deep poverty of these regions. The new school system was intended to provide students with basic subjects, such as mathematics, writing and reading as well as general ethics and a sense of civic education. Music played a marginal role in this plan, almost exclusively limited to choral singing, often using a text without music notation, learning in fact by rote.<sup>34</sup>

Prior to the implementation of this national plan, music education provision was quite haphazard and differed according to situation and circumstance. In charitable institutions like the conservatoires (such as the Neapolitan conservatoire), where orphans from the poorest families were raised and received a basic education, music was taught as a 'specialist' subject. The conservatoire was a place where children could find assistance to integrate into society by securing a job to earn a living, and here music was considered a potential means of generating a livelihood.<sup>35</sup> Graduates of the conservatoires could easily find positions as instrumentalists, singers, or composers, mostly in the growing business of opera theatre.

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<sup>31</sup> G. CHIOSSO, *Alfabeti d'Italia. La lotta contro l'ignoranza nell'Italia Unita* (Torino: SEI 2011).

<sup>32</sup> G. SABBATUCCI, V. VIDOTTO, *Storia contemporanea: l'Ottocento* (Bari: Laterza 2020), p. 256.

<sup>33</sup> This system was known as the 'Legge Casati' (Casati Law) n. 3725 of the Kingdom of Sardinia (which included Piedmont, Duchy of Savoy, Nice and part of the Ligurian Apennines). It became an Italian law with the Royal Decree of 28 November 1861, n. 347.

<sup>34</sup> The national hymn, for instance, has always been known by the name of the text's author, Goffredo Mameli (*Inno di Mameli*), rather than the composer's name: Michele Novaro. See L. AVERSANO, 'La musica nella scuola tra Cavour e l'Italia unita' in *Prima e dopo Cavour. La musica tra Stato Sabauda e Italia Unita (1848-1870): Atti del Convegno Internazionale Napoli, 11-12 novembre 2011*, E. Careri, E. Dionisi eds. (Napoli: ClioPress 2015), p. 83.

<sup>35</sup> R. O. GJERDINGEN, *Child composers in the old conservatories: how orphans became elite musicians* (New York: Oxford University Press 2020).

In the Papal States, education remained predominantly under the control of ecclesiastic institutions such as congregations, seminaries, and religious orders, overseen by the clergy.<sup>36</sup> Until at least the end of the century, music education offered in this context was thus predominantly focused on sacred vocal music (masses, graduals, psalms, offertories, hymns, etc.).<sup>37</sup> Although clerical institutions were more attentive to literary education, the general level of literacy among the population in the Papal States was not much higher than in the rest of the country.<sup>38</sup> Aristocrats had the privilege to benefit from a good education and private music tuition, although they were customarily kept away from any professional career.<sup>39</sup>

Generally, all over the country, music education in small towns was normally offered on a friendship basis by a family member or relative, especially in the case of poor families. Municipal schools with their own wind bands represented another option, following the increasing importance of military bands introduced during the Napoleonic period that became essential accompaniments for local celebrations of public holidays.<sup>40</sup> In capital cities, alongside the conservatoire (when there were any), musical education was mostly run by the 'Accademie', originally founded to uphold and support musicians in need.<sup>41</sup> Alternatively, musically gifted children could sometimes be taught *gratis* by a private music teacher who may ask in return for a share of the pupil's future earnings in his music activity. This was more often the case for those apprentices in Opera where prospective business opportunities could be lucrative.<sup>42</sup> As a consequence of this particular operatic bias, young composers often had very little incentive to compose purely instrumental music for its own sake, beyond the use of formal schoolbook exercises.

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<sup>36</sup> After 1870 with the end of the Papal State and the completion of the Italian Unification, religious education was suppressed in Rome and Roman territories by the most anticlerical of the municipal councils.

<sup>37</sup> In these environments, Latin was the official language of the clergy and Masses were therefore celebrated and sung in Latin. This practice was compulsory until the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), which took place from 1962 to 1965.

<sup>38</sup> Clerical education aimed to achieve a level of excellence in the knowledge of rhetoric and grammar as well as 'Boni mores' (good manners). This was essential to form a perfect 'vir bonus dicendi peritus' (well-skilled in speaking), both clerical or aristocratic. See L. AVERSANO, *La musica nella scuola tra Cavour e l'Italia unita*, p. 68.

<sup>39</sup> This state of affairs changed after the Capture of Rome, in 1870, when the aristocracy also changed its role in society. See the case of the aristocratic composer and pianist Roffredo Caetani.

<sup>40</sup> See J. ROSSELLI, *Music & Musicians*, p. 49.

<sup>41</sup> For more on the forms of cultural associations in Italy in the nineteenth century, see D. L. CAGLIOTI, 'Voluntary Societies and Urban Elites in 19<sup>th</sup> century Italy', in *European History* [E-seminars], Institute of Historical Research, 1997 (Unpublished).

<sup>42</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp. 30-42.

On the other hand, during the eighteenth century and for most of the nineteenth, Italy was regarded internationally as the land of opera, which was perhaps, together with the literary tradition in a common Italian tongue and a collective religious denomination (Catholicism), one of the few cultural aspects to contribute to expressing a national identity even when a united nation didn't exist. It is probably because of this iconic role that, during the Risorgimento, opera also became a powerful vehicle for spreading political ideals through the slanted lyrics of its libretti. For this reason, it was also subject to censorship by local authorities.<sup>43</sup> The interaction between culture-politics and the stage, although not necessarily referenced by all the operas composed over the first half of the nineteenth century, was a relevant element that contributed to the popularity of opera itself as a music genre.<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, opera was a remarkable source of musical employment, as well as an occasion for social gatherings and amusement. Singers and orchestral players could be enrolled with a regular contract, albeit seasonal. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, as the house orchestra became more stable, more permanent personnel of instrumentalists became established, enabling the provision of guaranteed pensions and sickness benefits.<sup>45</sup> This made the job of a musician much more appealing considering the general condition of poverty around the country. Additionally, as the majority of the opera audience during that time comprised aristocrats and members of the upper class, musicians often had the chance to showcase their artistic skills, be spotted and be hired for concerts in private venues. Principal players were the ones who could more easily achieve the highest professional prestige and attain an entrée into the world of the upper middle classes.<sup>46</sup> Opera singers, especially the 'virtuosi', traditionally benefited from special economic treatment since they often were the

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<sup>43</sup> See F. Izzo, 'Censorship' in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, Helen M. Greenwald ed. (2014; online edn, Oxford Academic, 7 April 2015), pp. 817-39.

<sup>44</sup> See P. GOSSETT, 'Becoming a Citizen: The Chorus in 'Risorgimento' Opera', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 2, n. 1, 1990, pp. 41-64; R. MONTEROSSO, *La musica nel Risorgimento*, M. A. Bartoli Bacherini ed. (Firenze: LoGisma 2011), pp. 30-8; A. ROSTAGNO, 'Dibattito Politico e melodramma risorgimentale', in *Prima e dopo Cavour*, pp. 176-208; A. ROSTAGNO, 'Musica e politica nell'Ottocento italiano', in *Il contributo Italiano alla storia del pensiero: Musica* (Roma: Enciclopedia italiana 2018), pp. 373-84.

<sup>45</sup> See F. PIPERNO, A. ROSTAGNO, 'The Orchestra in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera Houses' in *The Opera Orchestra in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe*, N. M. Jensen, F. Piperno eds. (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag 2008), vol. 1, pp. 15-6.

<sup>46</sup> An example is represented by Agostino Belloli (1778-1839), principal horn at La Scala, whose portrait is now preserved at Museo Teatrale alla Scala, in Milan. He is shown holding a valuable instrument and wearing elegant clothes, symbols of high social status. The fact that he could afford a personal portrait shows his high socio-economic level and professional prestige. See F. PIPERNO, A. ROSTAGNO, 'The Orchestra in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera Houses', vol. 1, pp. 16-7.

major attraction of the performances. Composers could enjoy the improved social status that came with economic success and the celebrated composers could be given lucrative contracts to produce a certain number of operas per year. However, the whole opera system was managed by the impresarios who were the core of this business. Their success relied on attracting large audiences for income, therefore they focused on providing leisure and amusement to please the spectators.<sup>47</sup>

Yet the commercial orientation of opera was increasingly a matter of discussion for Italian intellectuals. Writing in 1834, Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), who was one of the proponents of the Risorgimento and one of the main figures responsible for Italian Unification, criticised the reduction of opera to a mere commercial product. Being an enthusiastic musician himself,<sup>48</sup> Mazzini was convinced that music was philosophically connected with the essence of human beings and had a 'messianic' character, capable of opening up new horizons to the younger generations. In his *Filosofia della Musica*,<sup>49</sup> he contested the attitude of making music for business only and pointed out that his essay was in fact not addressed to the 'trafficatori di note' (peddlers of musical notes).<sup>50</sup> Mazzini complained about the fact that the 'annoyed, listless, frivolous public' didn't look for an 'idea' behind an opera; nor did many of the composers, who were often 'disheartened and overwhelmed by the greed for gain'.<sup>51</sup> A return to the deep meaning of music, to the philosophical idea of 'Beauty', was therefore considered essential.<sup>52</sup> Looked at from the perspective of early nineteenth-century romanticism, Italian audiences lacked the essential means to appreciate music as an artistic expression in itself. The intellectual awareness and appreciation of beauty and art were often believed to be derived

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<sup>47</sup> The theatre served as an entertainment hub for socializing, conversation, gambling, and seduction. Impresarios' bankruptcy was rare but possible if expectations weren't met, as happened in the case of impresario Vincenzo Jacovacci (1811-1881) who went bankrupt in 1848 and managed to pay his creditors only three years later. See J. ROSSELLI, *The opera industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi: the role of the impresario* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1984), p. 111-34.

<sup>48</sup> Mazzini played guitar and also composed. He is the author of a song for voice and guitar called *Canto delle Mandriane Bernesi*, based on a Swiss folk tune, the manuscript for which is held at Museo del Risorgimento in Genoa. He is included among the celebrated players and composers in Philip J. Bone's publication *The Guitar and Mandolin* (London: Schott & Co. 1954), pp. 229-30. See also B. KING, *The life of Mazzini* (London: Dent 1911).

<sup>49</sup> Mazzini wrote this essay during his exile in Switzerland in 1834 (then published in Paris, in 1836). G. MAZZINI, *Filosofia della Musica*, M. de Angelis ed. (Rimini-Firenze: Guaraldi editore 1977).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35. Even Verdi, a few years later, publicly renounced the 'galley years' (his earliest period of success initiated by *Nabucco* and during which he was compelled to compose operas at the rate of one per year). In March 1859, Verdi declared to the journalist Giuseppe Cencetti that he would no longer accept contracts to compose work intended for mere entertainment. See S. RUOZZO, 'Membranza Sì Fatal: Verdi's 'Va, pensiero' as an Icon of Italian Culture from the 1850s to the Present Date', *Italian Americana*, vol. 36, n. 2, 2018, pp. 154.

<sup>51</sup> G. MAZZINI, *Filosofia della Musica*, p. 42-3.

<sup>52</sup> A. SEAY, 'Mazzini's *Filosofia della Musica*', *Notes*, vol. 30, n. 1, 1973, pp. 24-36.

from the study of literature and philosophy. This perspective could explain the reason why the act of listening attentively and critically was not associated with the generally less erudite audience of the opera theatres at that time. Sitting quietly and listening to a chamber or symphonic concert in a conventional concert hall would have been in general an alien concept to Italian public taste, and in fact, remained so for most of the nineteenth century.

The cultural development, significantly increased in the second half of the century, provided people with opportunities to be better informed about political and social issues through reading newspapers and books. The hope was that this would enable them to become more aware and engaged in the national movement for unity, with the additional consequence of creating more critical public opinion over political and social questions, as well as over arts and music.<sup>53</sup>

The first Italian periodical recorded as specifically dedicated to music was the *Polinnia europea ossia biblioteca universale di musica*, published in Bologna in 1823. It included topics such as acoustics, philosophy of music and aesthetics, as well as a list of music schools, philharmonic institutions, and advertisements for opera performances.<sup>54</sup> It was followed by other periodicals, such as the *Teatri, arti e letteratura* (1826), the weekly *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (then called *Figaro*) in Milan (1832-1834) and the *Gazzetta musicale* in Naples (1838-39). Other periodicals founded at the same time were more literary and mainly related to theatre,<sup>55</sup> but hosted a musical section focused on reviews of the most important opera performances that were held in their respective cities. In some cases, the press was used for promoting and recruiting artists as the journalists were often agents themselves.<sup>56</sup> From the early 1840s onwards, more specialized magazines started circulating, specifically focused on musicological matters and 'serious music'. This was a consequence of a growing (though elitist) interest in the instrumental genre, which was slowly emerging from the private aristocratic salons and forging its own path alongside opera. The pioneering periodicals of this kind were the *Rivista musicale di Firenze* (1840), and the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* (1842). These would have been models for later magazines such as the Florentine *Gazzetta musicale* (1853-56), *L'Armonia*

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<sup>53</sup> J. HABERMAS, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Polity Press 2020), pp. 57-67.

<sup>54</sup> See M. CAPRA, 'La stampa ritrovata: duecento anni di periodici musicali', *La divulgazione musicale in Italia oggi*, A. Rigolli ed. (Torino: EDT 2005), pp. 63-85.

<sup>55</sup> Among them, the Milanese periodicals *I Teatri*, published from 1827 to 1831, and *Il Censore universale dei teatri*, published from 1829 to 1837.

<sup>56</sup> J. ROSSELLI, *The Opera Industry*, pp. 144-5.

(1856-59), *Boccherini* (1862-82); the Milanese *L'Italia musicale* (1847-59), *Il Mondo Artistico* (1865-1914), and a new *Gazzetta musicale* in Naples (1853-68).<sup>57</sup> It is worth noticing that the first generation of Italian music critics were mostly literary men, or professional musicians and composers with a considerable literary background. The chamber and symphonic music promoted in these journals was therefore often identified with the intellectual cognoscenti and, in addition, mainly identified by the general public with the German tradition. Indeed, this limited and very exclusive audience consisted of a few intellectuals well-versed in German literature and philosophy, who could truly appreciate that repertoire. So much so that all music unrelated to the theatre was elsewhere generally described as 'roba da tedeschi' (German stuff), in a derogatory sense, as a letter published in *Pagine sparse* shows.<sup>58</sup>

Around the middle of the century the Accademie Filarmoniche (Philharmonic Academies) attempted to promote instrumental music to a larger audience by organising events called 'esercizi musicali' (musical exercises), featuring what they commonly referred to as 'classic music'.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, in order to increase audience appeal, vocal music (opera arias, vocal duets, oratorio excerpts etc.), as well as virtuosic instrumental music (preferably in the form of fantasias from the most popular opera tunes), were also necessarily included. In fact, such music events were also known as 'accademie vocali e istrumentali' (vocal and instrumental Accademie), or 'accademie di genere misto' (mixed genre).<sup>60</sup>

It was only after 1860, however, that a significant proliferation of Concert Societies was recorded all over Italy, some of them called *Società del Quartetto* (Quartet Society) because of their special focus on chamber music. The first *Società del Quartetto* in Florence (1861) was followed by ones in Naples (1862), Milan (1863), and much later Bologna (1879). Rome never officially acquired its own Quartet Society, but the *Matinées musicales* organised by

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<sup>57</sup> The circulation of newspapers and magazines of all kinds increased remarkably over the second half of the century. If a periodical in the 1850s circulated ca. 1000 copies, by the end of the century it could have reached a circulation of up to 100,000 copies. See M. CAPRA, *La stampa ritrovata*, p. 11; See also U. BELLOCCHI, *Storia del giornalismo italiano* (Bologna: Edizioni Edison 1974).

<sup>58</sup> Letter from Cesare Pollini to Giuseppe Martucci, 22 May 1889 (GB-Lcm MS 14986), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 16-7.

<sup>59</sup> Marquise Alessandro Carcano, chair of the 'maestri compositori' of the Santa Cecilia Academy in Rome, describes as 'classic' those compositions characterised by a 'real beauty', a 'timeless value', and which belonged to the heart of whoever didn't have any prejudice. A. CARCANO, 'I due concerti di musica vocale e istrumentale eseguiti nei giorni 7 e 30 Marzo', *L'Eptacordo*, vol. 3, n. 3, 1857, quoted in D. MACCHIONE, 'Attività concertistica e musica strumentale da camera a Roma (1856-1870)', *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, vol. 37, n. 2, 2002, p. 277.

<sup>60</sup> These concerts were normally held early in the afternoon in order to be able to engage musicians (as well as the audience) who might be busy with operatic commitments in the evening.



Ramacciotti, Pinelli and Sgambati could be considered a close equivalent. Orchestral Societies began to appear in the 1870s: the Orchestral Society of Florence (1874), the Boccherini Orchestral Society in Lucca (1874), the Roman Orchestral Society (1876), the Orchestral Society of La Scala, Milan (1878), and the Orchestral Society of Naples (1880). As with the Accademie Filarmoniche, the Quartet and Orchestral societies were meant to guide their audience through the process of listening, giving them information about the music they were about to hear and some details about the composers. The aim was to achieve a sort of quasi-mystical communion between players, listeners and composers in the moment of the performance. In certain ways, this recalls what John Ella had been doing in London with his Musical Union concerts, pursuing the development of musical taste and the construction of the ethos of concentrated listening.<sup>61</sup> It cannot be ruled out that Ella had an influence on the Italian music community he visited, not least as a representative of the British musical society.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, England was generally a reference model for many political and social aspects at that time. Particularly, the idea of London as a city of astonishing progress was quite apparent in Italian minds, as I explain in my book chapter *Il 'mito' dell'Inghilterra nel XIX secolo e la diaspora musicale italiana*.<sup>63</sup>

As mentioned, the contribution of the professional middle-classes (such as lawyers, literary men, journalists, doctors) - who were in most cases amateur musicians - was crucial to the development and progress of musical culture in nineteenth-century Italy. These musicians embodied an expression of a strong desire to help Italy become a united and highly cultured modern nation, able to compete with other European countries. Instrumental music, it was felt, should be representative of a new status, a new national identity, rather than opera. For some this concept became almost ideological, taking an extreme position against the opera

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<sup>61</sup> See C. BASHFORD, *The Pursuit of High Culture. John Ella and the Chamber music in Victorian London* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer 2007), p. 120.

<sup>62</sup> Ella visited Florence in 1869. In his memoirs, he noted that people there were still poorly acquainted with classical instrumental music and suggested that the Florentine Societies should include in their concerts earlier Haydn and Mozart chamber works rather than a too-sophisticated repertoire. In his view, this would have been the only way to attract the 'fashionable "dolce far niente" [sweet do-nothing] Tuscans', who at that time seemed to have 'no knowledge of high art music, and looked upon these concerts of "musica tedesca" as tedious'. See J. ELLA, *Musical Sketch, abroad and at home* (London: Bridgeway 1869), pp. 197-221.

<sup>63</sup> 'In London where money runs with dizzying speed, where many elements of disparate nationalities exist together, and where everyone who has an idea has also a possibility of seeing it easily accepted than in another country; in London, I say, all musical works, of any nation, are brought before the public: in front of an audience which is in this way accustomed to never asking the composer's origin as a basis for judging his merits', preface in F. HUEFFER, *Studi critico musicali*, Albert Visetti trans. (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli 1883), p. XIII.

industry, which was accused of having hindered the development of the Italian instrumental tradition. The Milanese music critic Aldo Nosedà, for instance, refused to take part in the celebration of the Gaetano Donizetti Centenary (1897) in Bologna, as a personal sign of protest, as unveiled in a letter to Martucci published in *Pagine sparse*. Here, Nosedà explains that for 25 years of his life he had been fighting against opera, recognising it as the reason for being behind in the development of music culture compared with other European countries.<sup>64</sup>

Yet, this was not a complete rejection of a musical genre, but rather an expression of the need for a different approach to the music theatre compared with that of the old-style impresario practice. It was felt that opera should be characterised by a more refined aesthetic thought, having in mind the Wagnerian idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk (Total artwork) in its strong integration of drama and music, its less overtly tuneful musical language and its philosophic meanings. This explains why Wagner's operas were welcomed by the more ardent supporters of Italian instrumental music and rejected instead by the conservatives.<sup>65</sup>

This more intellectual approach to opera, and to music in general, indeed reflects the cultural changes carried out in the second half of the century, thanks in part also to the educational reform put in place in the Italian conservatoires. In fact, they were now obliged to implement their curriculum with subjects like literature and philosophy.<sup>66</sup> If early on, during the process of establishing the Italian state music schools, the Paris Conservatoire served as the primary model, later in the century the main reference became the Leipzig Conservatoire, where many of the most talented Italian musicians were sent to study in order to gain a more thorough musical education. The regulations of the Leipzig Conservatoire (founded by Mendelssohn in 1843) were particularly focused on instrumental music and encouraged students to attend rehearsals of the Gewandhaus Concerts as well as chamber music and choral activities. It also offered them the opportunity to join the orchestra and take part in

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<sup>64</sup> Letter from Aldo Nosedà to Giuseppe Martucci, September 1897 (BG-Lcm Ms 15129), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 63-4. In this same letter, Nosedà describes the then Minister of Education Giovanni Codronchi (1841-1907) as illiterate, because he recommended that young conservatoire students emulate Donizetti.

<sup>65</sup> Conservatives bitterly contested Wagner's music claiming that it was a mere succession of 'sound effects', 'good and pleasurable at times'. Wagner's performances could incite very strong reactions among theatre audiences, dividing those who were enthusiasts from those who were fiercely critical. See G. Rostirolla ed., *Wagner in Italia* (Torino: RAI-ERI 1982), p. 140.

<sup>66</sup> See A. CAROCCIA, 'L'istruzione musicale nei conservatori dell'Ottocento tra regolamenti e riforme degli studi. I modelli di Milano e Napoli' in *L'insegnamento dei Conservatori, la composizione e la vita musicale nell'Europa dell'Ottocento. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Milano, Conservatorio di Musica 'Giuseppe Verdi' (28-30 Novembre 2008)*, L. Sirch, M. G. Sita, M. Vaccarini eds. (Lucca: LIM 2012), pp. 207-328.

performing the symphonic repertoire. Furthermore, this institution was connected with Leipzig's University, which offered the students a broader education in many other subjects (history of music, aesthetics and acoustics were included in the curriculum).<sup>67</sup> This wider educational model, then, seemed now to better match the transformed perspective of the new Italian musical culture, more attentive and focused on instrumental music than in the past. In this way, students could benefit from a broader aesthetic education, which was consequently reflected in the composition and presentation of both opera and serious music. The new generation of musicians born between the 1840s and 1850s and trained in the reformed conservatoires, were, therefore, the ones who contributed particularly to writing this new page of Italian music history. Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924), one of the most successful operatic composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, can also be seen as an example of this new student profile, being well-schooled in opera composition as well as in symphonic and chamber music.<sup>68</sup>

However, many of those students favouring the instrumental genre, both as performers and composers, still tended to move abroad (temporarily or permanently), perhaps suspicious of any possible change in Italian musical culture as a phase. In many cases, they were encouraged by their teachers to leave the country and seek success abroad, mostly in Germany, but also in France (Paris) and in Britain (London was a favourite destination).<sup>69</sup> Albert Visetti, to whom I dedicated my article *Constructing an English identity in London*, is an example of such. Those others who bravely remained in Italy acted as guiding lights of the cultural revolution and sought to bring Italian music onto an equal artistic competitive level with the rest of Europe.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> See L. M. PHILLIPS JR., *The Leipzig Conservatory, 1843-1881* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI 2003).

<sup>68</sup> Puccini's short-lived period of purely instrumental music includes the *Symphonic Prelude* and the *Adagietto* for orchestra (the first Puccini work to be published) both date from 1882, and the *Symphonic Capriccio*, composed for his final exam assignment at the Milan Conservatoire and premiered in 1883, conducted by Franco Faccio. See N. BARAGWANATH, *The Italian tradition & Puccini. Compositional theory & Practice in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2011).

<sup>69</sup> The Neapolitan pianist and composer Michele Esposito (1855-1929), Giuseppe Martucci's classmate, can be taken as an example. He moved to Paris first and then to Ireland, where he stayed for forty years, doing there what probably he thought was not possible to do in Italy. In fact, Esposito became chief pianoforte professor at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in 1882 and devoted himself to the promotion of instrumental music in Dublin. He inaugurated the Royal Dublin Society chamber-music recitals and established the Dublin Orchestral Society in 1898. He returned to Italy only one year before his death. See J. DIBBLE, *Michele Esposito* (Dublin: Field Day 2010).

<sup>70</sup> Among them were, in Milan, Carlo Andreoli (1840-1908), Franco Faccio (1840-1891), Arrigo Boito (1842-1918), whose progress was directed by Antonio Bazzini (1818-1897), Alberto Mazzucato (1813-1877), Lauro Rossi (1810-1885) and Stefano Ronchetti-Monteviti (1814-1882); in Padua, Cesare Pollini (1858-1912); in Rome Giovanni Sgambati (1841-1914), Ettore Pinelli (1843-1915) preceded and supported by Tullio Ramacciotti (1819-1910); in Bologna, Luigi Mancinelli (1848-1921); in Naples, Michele Ruta (1826-1896) and Paolo Serrao (1830-1907), Beniamino Cesi (1845-1907) and Giuseppe Martucci (1856-1909).

The English musicologist and music critic Richard Alexander Streatfeild (1866-1919), in one of his publications from 1895, acknowledged that Italian composers were trying their best but they had barely found their own identity since they could only follow the German tradition: 'Here and there in the Peninsula are composers who have devoted their energies partially or entirely to the composition of abstract music. But in no sense is there an Italian school of instrumental music'.<sup>71</sup> Streatfeild highlights the fact that there had been a time when Italy was the leader in this field with names like Vivaldi, Corelli and Scarlatti; after that 'Italy decided that opera was the truest expression of her musical life, and as year by year opera absorbed more completely the attention and talents of her musicians, abstract music sank into the background'.<sup>72</sup> He ascribes the responsibility of this state of affairs to the Italians' temperament, mostly full of 'fervour or superficiality', characteristics to which, he says, 'the form and science of instrumental music are repellent'. The Italian music critic Luigi Torchi (1858-1920) notes instead that the imagination was a positive peculiarity of Italians, who just needed to create pictorial representations in their minds.<sup>73</sup> This view could find support in the popularity of programmatic symphonies and the symphonic poem for Italian composers in the early years of Unification, as they represented a kind of linguistic and aesthetic osmosis between operatic and symphonic genres.<sup>74</sup> The 'dramatic' element was difficult to eradicate and the concept of 'absolute music' which excluded any reference to a text was still not completely accepted, but through slow and gradual change the season of Italian symphonism eventually began to appear towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>75</sup>

It is worth pointing out, though, that Italian 'pioneers' of the instrumental music renaissance were in fact behind the times: they were only just receiving the romantic wave when in Europe it was almost exhausted. While they were still trying to find their independent expression from the German model, elsewhere in Europe, musical language had already started making a

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<sup>71</sup> R.A. STREATFIELD, *Masters of Italian Music* (London: Osgood Mcllvaine & Co. 1895), pp. 243-68.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>73</sup> L. TORCHI, 'La Sinfonia in Re minore di Giuseppe Martucci', *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, vol. 3, 1896, pp. 128-29.

<sup>74</sup> Antonio Bazzini was one of the major representatives of this kind of symphonism, with his symphonic poem *Francesca da Rimini* (1878) and other orchestral works linked to the theatre, such as the overture *Saul* (1867) and the overture *Re Lear* (1871). See M. PESSINA, 'Antonio Bazzini e la rinascita sinfonica italiana' in *L'insegnamento dei conservatori*, pp. 31-56. Liszt conducted Bazzini's Overture *Re Lear* and congratulated him on this work, as shown by an unpublished letter from Bazzini to Buonamici, 20 July 1874 (GB-Lcm MS 14673).

<sup>75</sup> Antonio Rostagno observes that Italian symphonic production of the second half of the nineteenth century is closer to descriptivism, typical of symphonic poem, and that it is not possible to speak properly of 'absolute music' before the beginning of the twentieth century. See A. ROSTAGNO, *La musica italiana per orchestra nell'Ottocento*, pp. 144-47.

change toward the novelties of the twentieth century. In other words, Italians were late with respect to the general development of the symphonic and chamber genre, therefore they found themselves in limbo between the 'old' and the 'new'. A letter to Martucci from the pianoforte virtuoso and Director of the Paduan conservatoire Cesare Pollini (1858-1912), published in *Pagine sparse*, represents an emblematic example of this state of affairs. In fact, the document reveals how frustrating it had been for Pollini to read a work by Paul Dukas (1865-1935) and not understand it: 'I have been lent a "fanatical" score by the neo-French maestro Ducas [Dukas] (Debussy family). For the first time in my life, I read four pages of sheet music without understanding anything!!'.<sup>76</sup>

As a matter of fact, by the time works like Erik Satie's *Gymnopédies* (1888) or Debussy's *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune* (1895) were published, Italian composers were still trying to find a compromise between the melodic eloquence of Italian melodrama and the great sounds typical of German orchestral works. Giuseppe Martucci, who was considered among his contemporaries to be the most representative of the rebirth of instrumental musical culture, was far-sighted enough to understand the need to look to Europe and be open to different music idioms and cultures. In his capacity as conductor, as well as director of conservatoires and concert societies in both Bologna and Naples, he made it his mission to promote symphonic and chamber music, and to welcome composers and compositions from different European countries. While in Bologna, he introduced French, German, English and Irish composers, still maintaining a deep respect for the old Italian tradition as well as embracing musical innovations. This contributed to gaining him an international reputation and playing a significant role in changing the perception of Italy from being exclusively associated with opera. When Martucci's First Symphony was performed in London in 1898, it was considered by the local press to be an exceptional event.<sup>77</sup> He was celebrated as one of the most erudite Italian musicians and confounded expectations for one whose origins were from 'the Sunny South':

Purely symphonic music does not flourish greatly in the Sunny South, and it is not surprising that Northern influences should be noticeable in Signor Martucci's work, which, it may be said, is very elaborate, admirably written, and often original. This much can be stated after a first hearing. It may be

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<sup>76</sup> Letter from Cesare Pollini to Giuseppe Martucci, 3 November 1908 (GB-Lcm MS 14988), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, p. 119-20.

<sup>77</sup> It was performed the 18 March 1898, by the orchestra of the Royal College of Music, conducted by Charles Villiers Stanford.

hoped, however, that the work will not be laid on the shelf, and that another opportunity will shortly occur of renewing its acquaintance.<sup>78</sup>

Martucci had not actually been the first Italian to present instrumental music in the British capital. Giovanni Sgambati (1841-1914) had already appeared in London in 1885, presenting his First Symphony and his Piano concerto, and had been seen by the British press as a promoter of Italian instrumental music.<sup>79</sup> An article from the *English Magazine of Music*, after recalling that a lot had already been said regarding ‘the inferiority of Italian composers in the purely instrumental forms of music’, claims that Sgambati had ‘the distinction of being the first on the long and shining roll of Italian composers to write with mastery of the symphonic form’.<sup>80</sup>

Nevertheless, it is with Martucci that the concept of an Italian symphonism really began to be discussed. In fact, he was generally recognised as the pioneering force in the re-evaluation of the instrumental genre and as an expression of national music identity. This also aligned with the ideals of Risorgimento, which aimed at achieving cultural Unification. That becomes clear in the words of the Neapolitan noblewoman Adele Pignatelli Strongoli (1843-1932), Lady in Waiting of Queen Margherita of Savoy, as revealed by her letters published in *Pagine sparse*. She urged Martucci to contribute to the Risorgimento of the nation like a ‘beloved son’ who is asked ‘to go to war’ if his country needs him.<sup>81</sup> His contribution would be to leave Bologna, where he had moved in 1886, and return to Naples, as the South of Italy was believed to be in need of the same cultural turnaround that Martucci was achieving in the North. With his cultural influence, Naples, in time, could come to represent the strength of the whole nation.<sup>82</sup>

Martucci moved back to Naples in 1902 where he re-established the Quartet and Symphonic societies (which had failed soon after he had left for Bologna) and initiated important orchestral concert seasons with the same aesthetic aims he had had in Bologna. In doing so, he effectively contributed to achieving, by the beginning of the twentieth century, a

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<sup>78</sup> *Morning Post*, Monday 21 March 1898.

<sup>79</sup> Sgambati’s Piano Quintet Op. 4 was performed at Dannreuther’s semi-private chamber concerts in Bayswater, London as early as 1880, see J. DIBBLE, ‘The Orme Square Phenomenon’ in *Music and British culture, 1785-1914: essays in honour of Cyril Ehrlich*, C. Bashford, L. Langley eds. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press 2000), p. 292.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Giovanni Sgambati. Pianist and Composer’, *Magazine of Music*, November 1885, p. 176

<sup>81</sup> Letter from Adele Pignatelli Strongoli to Giuseppe Martucci, 25 November 1901 (GB-Lcm MS 15132), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 93-4.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from Adele Pignatelli Strongoli to Giuseppe Martucci, 26 August 1900 (GB-Lcm MS 15141), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 83-4.

broad and comprehensive level of symphonic musical culture all over Italy, as per the wish of Princess Pignatelli. Martucci's national role was therefore widely recognised. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Unification of Italy, he was invited to compose a choral symphony based on Giosuè Carducci's poem *Ode to Queen Margherita*.<sup>83</sup> Unfortunately, this composition was left only in sketch form at his death, as also documented in one of Princess Pignatelli's letters.<sup>84</sup> Martucci's death at only fifty-three was considered an enormous loss for Italian culture, leaving it abruptly orphaned by the grand master of the Italian instrumental music renaissance.<sup>85</sup>

With this general historical framework in hand, I now turn to a more detailed survey of key developments in this process of renewal, as they manifested themselves in different Italian cities. This narration will draw out relevant elements of my existing publications, and show how my research is now leading towards a large-scale, synthetic view of the resurgence of instrumental music in Italy, of the kind that has yet to be constructed by any other historian.

### ***Rome: secularisation and the beginning of a 'new musical life'***

The choice to begin with a discussion of Rome comes from the idea of showing the contrast between the city's historical significance as a dominant force, as well as its role as the capital of Italy, and its relatively late attainment of the ideal status of cultural progress compared with other Italian centres. In fact, the presence of the Papal State influenced the city's cultural development and its position within the broader socio-cultural landscape, with a strong effect on the musical culture.

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<sup>83</sup> G. CARDUCCI, *Alla Regina d'Italia*, from *Delle odi barbare di Giosue Carducci* (Bologna: Zanichelli 1893), vol. 1, pp. 89-91.

<sup>84</sup> Letter from Adele Pignatelli Strongoli to Paola Pes di Villamarina, 20 October 1909 (GB-Lcm MS 15131), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, p. 127.

<sup>85</sup> In a letter to Martucci's widow, Maria Colella, Pollini expresses his deep grief for the composer's death and describes him as the great and sincere voice that 'gave advice when in doubt', and encouraged everybody to attempt to do as much as he himself had done. Letter from Cesare Pollini to Maria Martucci, 22 June 1909 (GB-Lcm MS 15016), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, p. 125.

Quite significantly, in an 1878 pamphlet about contemporary musical life in Rome, we can read: 'Fortunately for our instrumentalists, 1870 arrived. A new life stimulated a new art'.<sup>86</sup> Effectively, with the annexation of Rome to the Kingdom of Italy in September 1870 - which ended the Papal domain - followed by its proclamation as the capital of Italy in February 1871, a new scenario was poised to unfold. The reputation of Pontifical Rome reflected the strongly conservative nature of the Papal regime because of its hostility to new liberal and democratic ideals and its resistance to progress and modernization. That reputation had now to be changed in order to create a modern European capital worthy of the new State. Economy, urban setting, social and cultural aspects had to have a new orientation. Ministerial and publishing offices were established in Rome; public buildings, schools, theatres, museums, and squares were built, involving a considerable move of professionals to the capital (mostly from northern Italy), with a consequent urban expansion and population increase. All that meant a remarkable change in Roman cultural life, music included.

Despite the pervasive clerical environment in this most conservative city, opera had found fertile ground even there. Thus, opera theatre represented an important element and an essential means for business in Roman society too. Consequently, when the urbanization project started in the early 1870s and a new area of extensions was planned in the suburb Rione Monti, an Opera Theatre was soon designed to be built there. The entrepreneur Domenico Costanzi who bought the land and financed the construction of the theatre (then known as Teatro Costanzi), intended to attract a new audience made up of the emerging middle/professional classes as well as the historical Roman aristocracy, and also appeal to all those spectators who were less accustomed to the theatre, in a sort of cultural renovation. The Costanzi, which was quite far from the area of the traditional opera houses such as the Argentina, Valle, and Apollo theatres - all located in the historic centre - had its official opening in 1880 with a performance of Rossini's *Semiramide* and became the symbol of a growing city (today it is known as the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma).<sup>87</sup>

The influx of people into Rome from different parts of Italy inevitably produced a cultural osmosis in a new atmosphere free from clerical censorship. Over time, this helped to

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<sup>86</sup> 'Fortunatamente per i nostri istrumentisti venne il 1870. La vita nuova favorì l'arte nuova', G.P. ZULIANI, *Roma Musicale. Appunti, Osservazioni, Notizie* (Roma: Tipografia Eredi Botta 1878), p. 62.

<sup>87</sup> C. NICOLÒ, 'Opere del passato per una nuova capitale: l'inaugurazione del teatro Costanzi' in *Symposium Musicae*, pp. 357-68.



contribute to forming an idea of a common identity. The establishment of a National Library in 1876, named after King Vittorio Emanuele II, was a further significant sign of progress in this sense. It was the largest library in Italy and was to represent the fulcrum of the country's culture and history. On the other hand, education was thought to be the key to achieving a new sense of national identity, therefore it was also considered essential to guarantee its secularism. This implied a significant change in music education too, which had been for centuries primarily dominated by clerical institutions.

Only in the early 1870s, very late with respect to other Italian centres, did a process toward the establishment of a public music school begin, with the opening of a Liceo Musicale in 1877. In 1886 it was officially considered as a 'Conservatoire', finally being named 'Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia' in 1919. Nonetheless, the foundation for the Roman Conservatoire was laid by the pianist Giovanni Sgambati in 1869. Together with the violinist Ettore Pinelli (1843-1915), he established a pianoforte and violin school.<sup>88</sup> Contrary to other Italian conservatoires, it was not intended as a charitable institution (being more selective in its quality of teachers and students),<sup>89</sup> being modelled instead on the Leipzig conservatoire, revealing a clear German orientation.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, theory and composition studies were added to the original instrumental classes, together with the history of music, aesthetics, palaeography, literature, arithmetic, and foreign languages. After the official opening on 16 March 1877, a music library was also established at the music school, comprised of books and manuscripts from other local libraries and private collections. Within a few years, the Liceo Musicale had gained considerable prestige for its work, putting it on a level with the other main Italian centres' music schools.

The process of secularization also seems to have accelerated the development of instrumental music in Rome. Until then Roman tradition was mainly based on polyphonic sacred music, which was an expression of Pontifical Rome, especially represented by the choirs of the Cappella Sistina and the Cappella Giulia (both of them the Pope's choirs). Church choirs were normally formed of amateur singers and were well known for having very good voices

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<sup>88</sup> F. VACCA, 'Purtroppo i geni non son lì che covano...'. Il Liceo musicale di Roma dal 1869 al 1886', *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, vol. 32, n. 4, 1998, pp. 179-205.

<sup>89</sup> T. CHIRICO, 'Il Liceo musicale fra la fondazione e la regificazione' in *Enrico di San Martino e la cultura musicale europea. Atti del convegno di studi Roma, 11-13 maggio 2009*, A. Bini ed. (Roma: Accademia di Santa Cecilia 2012), pp. 525-26.

<sup>90</sup> Ettore Pinelli contributed by creating regulations for the Conservatoire, getting information about the German standards and translating the Leipzig conservatoire regulations into Italian.

and being especially skilled in sight-reading. Musically well-trained members of the aristocracy often joined these choirs, which gave them an opportunity to perform in public, a practice otherwise forbidden by their social rank. In 1875 the music critic Francesco D'Arcais emphasised the importance and excellence of Roman choirs together with the expertise of local composers.<sup>91</sup> Yet, this assessment was occasionally questioned, as it was observed that they often appeared reluctant to rehearse and were not always receptive to the conductor's instructions, which sometimes could prevent performances of a good standard.<sup>92</sup> It might be possible that this was what Albert Visetti experienced in 1895 when he was in Rome trying to perform some English choral repertoire of his time. As I explain in my article *Constructing an English identity in London*, Visetti was a champion of English composers and intended to introduce them to the Italian music environment in order to create an artistic connection between the two countries.<sup>93</sup> Because of Rome's prestigious choral tradition, and probably appreciating its revitalised interest in orchestral music, Visetti proposed a choral-symphonic project there. The plan eventually failed as, apparently, he had considerable difficulty recruiting a good enough choir. He recognized that Roman choirs were endowed with excellent and powerful voices, but they seemed to lack to a certain extent the refined vocal blending which the English were accustomed to achieve in their choral singing.<sup>94</sup> The reason why Visetti's project could not be put in place in Rome is explained better in a letter to Giuseppe Martucci and which was published for the first time in my book *Pagine sparse*: 'The main reason [why these concerts were not given] was the immeasurable difficulty – unless I stayed in Rome for several months to educate choristers and the Roman church singers – to reach the interpretation of a dramatic-religious style that is neither theatrical, as we intend the dramatic style, nor Palestrinian as the spiritual style is intended in Rome'.<sup>95</sup>

While choral music flourished in Rome, instrumental music remained confined for a long time to private aristocratic environments, predominantly within the palaces of foreign

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<sup>91</sup> 'Dei cori è superfluo dire: siamo in Roma e basta' ['It is unnecessary to speak about choirs: we are in Rome and that is it'], see F. D'Arcais's concert review in *L'Opinione*, 5 January 1875, quoted in A. ROSTAGNO, 'Musica e storia nella nuova Italia attraverso la figura di Sgambati' in *La musica di Giovanni Sgambati*, P. Canfora, F. Pollice eds. (Milano: Edizioni Curci 2014), p. 2. About the proliferation and good quality of choral compositions in Rome see A. ROSTAGNO, *ibid.*, pp. 7-10.

<sup>92</sup> G.P. ZULIANI, *Roma Musicale*, pp. 26-7.

<sup>93</sup> F. NARDACCI, *Constructing an English identity in London: Albert Visetti and the Anglo-Italian musical exchanges at the end of the nineteenth century*, pp. 48-9.

<sup>94</sup> This comment appears in the *Glasgow Herald*, 31 December 1895.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from Albert Visetti to Giuseppe Martucci, 10 May 1897 (GB-Lcm, MS 15107), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, p. 37-8.

professionals, diplomats, and artists who had settled in the papal city. Some of them, especially the Germans, were particularly keen to host musical events in their salons. The German diplomat Christian Charles Josias von Bunsen (1791-1860), was one such and his name also appears in Mendelssohn's letters from Rome (1830), showing the regularity of the musical gatherings at his palace: 'Yesterday Palestrina's music was performed at Bunsen's house (as on every Monday), and then for the first time I played before the Roman musicians *in corpore*'.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, the German-born music dealer, collector and musician Ludwig Landsberg (1807-1858) used to gather people in his palace for musical performances, offering them the opportunity to see the autographs from his collection and listen to the music of Beethoven, Schubert, and other Viennese composers.<sup>97</sup> This private circulation of instrumental music and the social exclusivity of those events prompted Mendelssohn to observe: 'There is no encouraging prospect of any public performance here, so society is the only resource, which is fishing in troubled waters'.<sup>98</sup>

The local Academies, like the Accademia di Santa Cecilia and the Accademia Filarmonica Romana,<sup>99</sup> represented the only place where public music events were organised with the aim of training musicians and listeners to practice and appreciate 'pure music'.<sup>100</sup> However, their musical activities were often seen as disruptive by the conservative papal traditionalists and were therefore subject to censorship. In time, the liberal and anti-papal ideas circulating within the Accademia Filarmonica elicited disapproval and in 1860 it was disbanded by the papal government, being considered subversive. It only resumed its activity in 1870 following the end of the Papal State.

The performance of early music was particularly frequent in the events of both Academies. A significant interest in this genre in Rome was stimulated in the first half of the nineteenth

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<sup>96</sup> F. MENDELSSOHN, *Letters from Italy and Switzerland*, Lady Wallace trans. (London: Longman, Green 1862), p. 66.

<sup>97</sup> B. M. ANTOLINI, 'Un musicista tedesco nella Roma dell'Ottocento: Ludwig Landsberg' in '*Vanitatis fuga, aeternitatis amor*'. *Wolfgang Witzemann zum 65. Geburtstag*, S. Hermann-Erfort, M. Engelhardt eds. (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag 2005), pp. 465-87. On more than one occasion Antonio Bazzini also joined Landsberg's ensemble in playing Beethoven's Quartets. See C. ANNIBALDI, 'Beethoven a Roma', *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, vol. 3, 1971, pp. 367-9.

<sup>98</sup> F. MENDELSSOHN, *Letters from Italy and Switzerland*, p. 66.

<sup>99</sup> The Accademia of Santa Cecilia had its origins in the sixteenth century and was strongly connected with the ecclesiastic environment and therefore more conservative. The Accademia Filarmonica Romana was instead more recent. It was founded in 1821 by a few members of the upper class (amateur musicians themselves), including the Marquis Raffaele Muti Papazzurri (1801-1858), who led the initiative.

<sup>100</sup> To gain a more comprehensive understanding of typical Accademia Filarmonica concert programming see D. MACCHIONE, *Attività concertistica*, p. 284 and Appendix, pp. 302-19.

century by the priest, musician, and collector Fortunato Santini (1778-1861),<sup>101</sup> who had an extensive network of connections with musicians and institutions across Europe. Santini collected scores, autographs, and copies of Italian early music from abroad. He regularly hosted exclusive performances of this music at his residence, inviting musicians from different countries (and other Italian states).<sup>102</sup> Mendelssohn was one of his guests: 'The Abbate Santini is a valuable acquaintance for me, as he has a very complete library of ancient Italian music, and he kindly gives me or lends me anything I like, for no one can be more obliging'.<sup>103</sup> The interest in the old instrumental tradition significantly increased (all over Italy, not only in Rome) towards the end of the century when it was associated more with the idea of a national identity rather than just a reconnection with the past. Early music concerts during the last three decades of the nineteenth century were mostly organized and presented in Rome by the Venetian Oscar Chilesotti (1848-1916), one of the first Italian musicologists, as well as a luthier,<sup>104</sup> and Cesare Pollini, as evidenced by his correspondence with Martucci.<sup>105</sup> Alessandro Costa (1857-1953) was another significant Roman advocate of early music. He regarded the rediscovery of baroque and classical composers as crucial for ushering in a new cultural era in music and in 1895 he founded the *Società Bach* (Bach Society), which had its own orchestra, a mixed choir (about a hundred voices) of amateurs and professionals, and a children's choir.<sup>106</sup> The inaugural concert of Costa's Bach Society was attended by Queen Margherita of Savoy, who was herself a well-trained performer and music connoisseur (she played mandolin and

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<sup>101</sup> The musical historian Franz Kandler (1792-1831), after visiting Santini in Rome, described him as a very 'useful man' because of his deep knowledge of literature and music, and his openness to other traditions and cultures. F. KANDLER, 'Ueber den Musikzustand von Rom, München', *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, n. 30, 1828, pp. 174-75. See also F. COLUSSO, 'La via dell'anima: un cammino alla riscoperta della musica antica tra due film italo-tedeschi' in *Symposium Musicae*, pp. 417-38.

<sup>102</sup> William Gardiner reports that in 1847 in Santini's house was performed for the first time the first movement of Beethoven's piano Sonata op. 26, played by a not identified French-German pianist who was touring Italy. See C. ANNIBALDI, *Beethoven a Roma*, p. 35. See also W. STASOV, *L'Abbé Santini et sa collection musicale a Rome* (Florence: Lemmonier 1854) and G. ROSTIROLLA, 'Musica Antica. Collezionismo e biblioteche musicali nella Roma di metà Ottocento. Il contributo di Fortunato Santini', *Nuova rivista musicale italiana*, vol. 1, n. 1, 2008, pp. 5-56.

<sup>103</sup> F. MENDELSSOHN, *Letters from Italy and Switzerland*, p. 53.

<sup>104</sup> He was educated as a lawyer and only later went into music, playing several instruments but mainly researching the history of music. His lectures and publications on lute and tablature notation were particularly appreciated.

<sup>105</sup> In his letters, Pollini enthusiastically recounts his experience in Rome, which earned him the admiration of Queen Margherita and an invitation to serve as a court musician in the royal residences of Monza and Stupinigi. See Letter from Cesare Pollini to Giuseppe Martucci, 22 May 1889 (GB-Lcm MS 14986), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 16-7.

<sup>106</sup> Performances took place at the Sala Costanzi, a hall adjacent to the Costanzi Opera Theatre. See E. SIMI BONINI, 'Alessandro Costa e la Società J. S. Bach' in *Tra musica e storia - Saggi di varia umanità in ricordo di Saverio Franchi*, G. Rostirolla, E. Zomparelli eds. (Roma: IBIMUS 2017), p. 15.

lute, as well as piano), therefore very keen to support the music activity in the Capital. With her, the Royal Palace, also known as Palazzo del Quirinale,<sup>107</sup> started hosting regular instrumental music concerts, diverging from the court's customary military band tradition.<sup>108</sup>

The process that ultimately led to the increased prominence of instrumental music by the end of the century was actually initiated during the 1850s and mainly developed in the 1870s, with a gradual shift from private concerts to larger symphonic performances in public halls. A significant step forward occurred in the late 1860s when, despite its notorious cultural conservatism, Rome was inspired by the examples set by other major Italian cities such as Florence, Milan, and Naples. These cities had seen the establishment of several concert societies during that period.<sup>109</sup> The newly founded Florentine Quartet Society (1861) offered a model for the Romans to emulate and, soon after 1870, when the new political situation allowed, they followed them by creating institutions like the Roman Orchestral Society, founded by Pinelli in 1874, and the Quintet Society, founded by Sgambati in 1881.

At this time Sgambati had already become a leading figure. His concert seasons at Palazzo Poli, in the Sala Dante,<sup>110</sup> also known as Concerti Popolari (Popular Concerts), could be seen as a sign of the ongoing transformation of a musical tradition in Rome. They represented a more developed stage of instrumental music appreciation, which allowed the performance in 1866 (year of its official opening) of Liszt's *Dante* Symphony and Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony. These concerts continued to be the object of severe criticism by all those who still could not understand the meaning of certain music. Furthermore, Sgambati was blamed for favouring

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<sup>107</sup> Until Porta Pia siege (1870), and therefore the annexation of Rome to the Italian Kingdom, the Quirinale Palace was the pontiff's summer residence. After the Unification, it became the residence of the Royal family. Margherita became the first Queen Consort of United Italy in 1878, when Umberto I of Savoy (married in 1868) was crowned king, succeeding his father, Victor Emmanuel II. About Queen Margherita's musical activity at court, see A. DE ANGELIS, *La Regina Margherita e la musica in Roma* (Roma: La Tribuna 1924).

<sup>108</sup> Giovanni Sgambati was often invited at court to perform both as an orchestra conductor and pianist – his newly founded Quintet (1881) became, in 1893, the official *Quintetto di Corte* (Quintet of Court). His Symphony in D for a large orchestra was performed in 1881 on the occasion of the first symphonic concert at the Palazzo. See G. SALVETTI, 'Musica da camera: le specifiche ragioni' in *Enrico di San Martino e la cultura musicale europea. Atti del convegno di studi Roma, 11-13 maggio 2009*, A. Bini ed. (Roma: Accademia di Santa Cecilia 2012), pp. 287-304.

<sup>109</sup> One of the oldest programmes (1862) of the Roman *Matinées musicales* preserved in the National Archive shows a selection of pieces including Beethoven's Trio 'Ghost' (op. 70, n. 1), Haydn's Quartet op. 76 n. 4, Mozart's Quartet with piano K 478: 'Première Matinée Musicale / Le Mercredi 10 Décembre 1862 à 2 heures et demie', quoted in A. ROSTAGNO, 'Sgambati, Giovanni', *Dizionario Biografico degli italiani*, vol. 92, 2018, [www.treccani.it](http://www.treccani.it). Retrieved 31 March 2023. Concert programmes were mainly written in French, commonly spoken in Rome at that time on account of the French occupation since 1849, and French was also considered an international cultural language.

<sup>110</sup> The Dante Hall is located in Poli Palace, at the back of Trevi Fountain. The Hall hosted a permanent exhibition of paintings related to Dante Alighieri, hence the name.

German composers to such an extent that local critics highlighted a consistent prioritization of German music whenever he was involved.<sup>111</sup> However, the fact that Italian composers were seldom featured in these concerts could easily be attributed to the fact that a new wave of chamber and symphonic music composers required more time to establish themselves. In the meantime, Sgambati and his contemporaries endeavoured to forge stronger ties with Europe, thereby breaking Italy's cultural isolation.<sup>112</sup> In a letter from 1884 addressed to Miss Hutton (probably the singer Mary Hutton, based in Rome at that time), the Irish composer and musician Robert Prescott Stewart (1825-1894) describes Sgambati as a 'citizen of the wide world', a 'cosmopolitan rather than an Italian'.<sup>113</sup> Referring to Sgambati's wide-ranging knowledge and his European culture, Stewart points out that he was probably the only Italian composer to choose Goethe and Heine's lyrics to set to music, rather than Metastasio's. Indeed, Sgambati's receptiveness to foreign cultures was absolutely beneficial to the Roman environment, gradually creating a better cultural outlook.

That was probably what Franz Liszt appreciated when he moved to Rome in the early 1860s, himself contributing to Rome's cultural life.<sup>114</sup> Liszt's arrival in late October 1861 stirred controversy, disrupting existing patterns. While he cannot be solely credited for generating the newfound enthusiasm for instrumental music, his presence undeniably nurtured the movement and facilitated international connections among local composers and musicians. Liszt's stay attracted pianists from across Europe and Italy, and numerous piano works by European composers circulated in Rome. With his charismatic personality, intellectual prowess, and virtuosic pianism, Liszt infused a refreshing energy into the Roman music scene, captivating both mystics and worldly individuals alike. Despite his sympathy towards Pius IX and later joining the Roman clergy, Liszt received a warm welcome from the anti-papal and liberal music circle in Rome, which included Sgambati. In truth, Liszt held liberal political views closely aligned with the socialist philosophy of Lamennais (1780-1860), advocating for

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<sup>111</sup> 'Dove c'entra il chiaro prof. Sgambati si è sicuri a priori che la musica italiana è messa al bando, e che si apoteizza la musica tedesca' ['Wherever prof. Sgambati is involved, you can be sure that Italian music is banned and that German music is greatly celebrated'], *L'Osservatore romano*, vol. 21, n. 240, 21 October 1881.

<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, Sgambati grew up in an international and cultured environment. He was born to an English mother, Mary Ann Gott - the daughter of the English sculptor Joseph Gott - and to a Roman lawyer.

<sup>113</sup> See O. J. VIGNOLES, *Memoir of Sir Robert P. Stewart* (London: Simpkin, Marshall Hamilton 1898), p. 139-40.

<sup>114</sup> 'When Liszt first came - a Roman newspaper correspondent wrote some years ago - all the young instrumentalists grouped about him. It was his presence, his residence here, that gave courage to the new students and lovers of that style of music. [...] From the epoch of his coming can be dated the existence of the present excellent School of chamber music in this city, the finest orchestral concert societies, etc.'. See A. DE TERNANT, 'Some Pupils and Proteges of Franz Liszt', *Magazine of Music*, August 1895, p. 175.

individual freedoms and social dignity.<sup>115</sup> Liszt's vision of the composer as a poet, fostering a humanitarian mission of engaging and educating people, resonated with supporters of the Risorgimento and liberal Roman salons. His enthusiasm for popular songs, national anthems, and Italian cultural icons like Dante and Petrarch earned him admiration. In these salons, Liszt discussed art, literature, philosophy, politics, and performed, seeking to recreate the vibrant ambiance of his friend George Sand's Parisian circle.<sup>116</sup>

One of the most renowned cultural salons in Rome was at the Palazzo Caetani where Liszt was a regular visitor. The Caetani family, descendants of two Popes (Gelasius II and Boniface VIII), were all intellectuals and music lovers. Michelangelo Caetani, Duke of Sermoneta (1804-1882), was a moderate liberal, a Dante expert and a musician himself. His son, Onorato (1842-1917), was also a liberal (and active politician after the Italian Unification), erudite, and a trained musician. He played an important role in Roman musical circles, becoming chair of the Accademia Filarmonica Romana from 1879 to 1883 and again in 1893.<sup>117</sup>

The Caetani Palace (via delle Botteghe oscure, just behind Fori Imperiali), was a crossroads for scholars, philosophers, literati, and musicians from all over Europe, especially Germans and British. Onorato, who was married to an English woman, Ada Bootle Wilbraham, was convinced that German culture was particularly stimulating for the intellect, as the English culture was for social customs. In his opinion, Italians should have had, from time to time, a 'bath of German philosophical idealism' and reached a 'better balance between the sensual and the sensitive'.<sup>118</sup> It is not surprising that his son Roffredo, who was destined to become a talented musician, received his earliest education from German and English teachers and had, since his childhood, Bach, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and Beethoven as his musical models.

My article on Roffredo Caetani (1871-1961) aims to reconstruct the biography of the 'aristocrat musician' by utilizing the correspondence and archival documents from the Caetani family.<sup>119</sup> It sheds light on one of the most exemplary cases of the new generation of musicians who were wholly dedicated to instrumental music. In fact, young Roffredo was clearly drawn

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<sup>115</sup> P. MERRICK, *Revolution and Religion in the music of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008).

<sup>116</sup> M. CAROPRESE, *George Sand, la musica e il solcialismo* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane 2004).

<sup>117</sup> R. GIRALDI, *L'Accademia Filarmonica Romana dal 1868 al 1920. Memorie storiche raccolte da Romolo Giraldi* (Roma: Edizione della R. Accademia Filarmonica Romana 1930), p. 202.

<sup>118</sup> Letter from Onorato Caetani to his daughter, Giovannella Caetani Farnese, St Moritz, 17 August 1899, quoted in P. OP DE COUL, *Roffredo Caetani compositore. La vita, le opere, il tempo* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura 2022), p. 11.

<sup>119</sup> The correspondence is held at Pallazzo Caetani, in Rome. See F. NARDACCI, 'Roffredo Caetani attraverso le fonti d'Archivio' in *Un Musicista aristocratico*, M. Caroprese ed. (Lucca: LIM 2014), pp. 25-45.

to instrumental music composition and was trained as a pianist following the advice of Liszt (who was also his godfather) and Sgambati, who became his mentor. Roffredo never attended the newly founded conservatoire nor any other music school in Rome and his case clearly represents an example of the old aristocratic tradition of 'home education', with private tutors. Nevertheless, Roffredo benefited from the post-Unification changes whereby it was more socially acceptable for aristocrats to take part in musical events as well as political matters. Born in 1871 and so in the post-Risorgimento generation, Roffredo grew up in a new artistic and cultural era with an almost fully established public concert life in his city. As mentioned above, Roffredo was among those young musicians who formed the new generation of composers almost completely devoted to the development of instrumental music. He approached opera composition only later in his life with *Hypatia* (1918) and *L'Isola del Sole* (1939), both modelled along Wagnerian lines. In fact, Roffredo was a Wagner enthusiast and spent a long time in the 1890s in Bayreuth attending performances and studying Wagner's operas. On the other hand, like many of his contemporaries, urged by their own Italian maestros, Roffredo also felt compelled to move abroad. In a letter to Martucci, published in *Pagine sparse*, Cesare Pollini writes that 'Study is not enough, for those who devote themselves to practical music. Listening to a lot and in good quality is needed', suggesting that young musicians should have gone to Germany to learn from teachers there and to absorb its musical culture.<sup>120</sup>

After his debut at the Sala Dante in 1888 with his *Tempo di Quartetto* in D major,<sup>121</sup> and other performances of his chamber music in private concerts,<sup>122</sup> Roffredo had the chance to present the Roman public an orchestral work in 1890 (aged eighteen), the *Intermezzo* for orchestra, performed by the Società Orchestrale Romana at the Sala Palestrina,<sup>123</sup> conducted by Ettore Pinelli. Both the Quartet in one movement and the *Intermezzo* represented a novelty in terms of music structure: the quartet did not have the classical division in four movements and clearly referred to Liszt's cyclic elaboration of a theme, in a single one; the second had a

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<sup>120</sup> In this document, we read about the case of Guido Alberto Fano (1875-1961) to whom it was suggested to go to study abroad. In the same letter, Pollini mentions Roffredo Caetani, inviting Martucci to examine his piano Sonata for an assessment. See Letter from Cesare Pollini to Giuseppe Martucci, 24 December 1894 (GB-Lcm MS 14985), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 38-40.

<sup>121</sup> Published by Schott's Söhne in 1889 as Quartet in D major op. 1. It was Sgambati to introduce Roffredo to the German publisher, to whom he had been in turn introduced by Wagner.

<sup>122</sup> P. OP DE CUL, 'Le composizioni di Roffredo Caetani. Catalogo' in *Un Musicista aristocratico*, pp. 115-23.

<sup>123</sup> This hall, designed by Francesco Borromini (1599-1667), is the largest room in Pamphilj Palace, at Piazza Navona. It was chosen to host the concerts of the Roman Orchestral Society.



title used before only for piano compositions (Schumann op. 4, or Brahms op. 76), and seems to follow the model of Richard Strauss' symphonic poems for grand orchestra.<sup>124</sup> One of his most successful orchestral works was the *Prélude symphonique pour orchestra*, no. 1, op. 8, which had its première in New York in 1902, at the Carnegie Hall, performed by the Philharmonic Society's orchestra, conducted by Walter Damrosch.<sup>125</sup> It was then followed by other performances in Europe, including the 1909 performance in London, at the Queen's Hall, with the New Queen's Hall Orchestra, conducted by Henry Wood.<sup>126</sup>

The positive reception of Caetani's work in the foreign press suggests that Italian orchestral music was attaining the favourable interest of critics who were just beginning to discover a new aspect of Italian composers. As in *Le Figaro*: 'After Beethoven's Fourth Symphony was performed a Symphonic Prelude by a young Italian composer. We are far from Italian music as we are used to hearing it. A Wagnerian breath passes through it without tarnishing the native sun and we mainly like it for its excellent quality musicality'.<sup>127</sup>

Roffredo's *Prélude symphonique* was performed in Rome only in 1907 at the Teatro Argentina, conducted by Alessandro Vessella (1860-1929), one of the champions of symphonic music in Rome and principal conductor of the Municipal Symphonic Orchestra (founded in 1905).<sup>128</sup> Before then, Vessella had undertaken a significant project of symphonic and chamber music performances with the Roman Municipal wind band which he had conducted since 1885. One could speculate that the reason Vessella had not performed Roffredo Caetani's works before then was that he never obtained permission to do so from Roffredo's father, Onorato, who acted as his agent. It is possible that Caetani senior might have considered a première of his son's work, arranged for a wind band, to be inadequate. In fact, only when Vessella was

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<sup>124</sup> P. OP DE CUL, *Roffredo Caetani compositore*, pp. 16-28.

<sup>125</sup> Its European première took place in Paris on 14 December 1902, at the Nouveau Théâtre, by the Orchestre Lamoureux, conducted by Camille Chevillard.

<sup>126</sup> Thus, Henry Wood recalls in his memoir: 'What a delightful person that Roman aristocrat Don Roffredo Caetani turned out to be! His full title was Principe di Bassiano. He was the son of the ducal house of Sermoneta, though his mother was English. Dear old Elgar brought him to me and I looked over his orchestral compositions (he was a pupil of Sgambati) and became so much interested in his Prelude Symphonique that I produced it on October 5. This work was one of a set of five, lyrical and charming in character, showing great imagination and excellent workmanship. I am sorry no opportunity has occurred of introducing more of this highly-cultured and keenly intelligent musician's work', H. J. WOOD, *My life of music* (London: Victor Gollancz 1938), pp. 238-9.

<sup>127</sup> *Le Figaro*, 15 December 1902.

<sup>128</sup> Count San Martino, chair of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, was responsible for the foundation of the Municipal Orchestra, which performed at the Teatro Argentina. In 1908 that orchestra became the National Orchestra of Santa Cecilia, performing at the Teatro Augusteo; Martucci was invited to conduct the opening concert. See U. NICOLETTI ALTIMARI, 'Le scelte artistiche: Le stagioni sinfoniche' in *Enrico di San Martino e la cultura musicale europea*, p. 374.

appointed chief conductor of a Symphony Orchestra did Roffredo have the *Prélude symphonique* performed in his home city.

The relationship between Vessella and the Caetani family is explored in my article *La centralità di Alessandro Vessella nel panorama della musica romana e le sue relazioni con i Caetani*. This analysis is based on the study of correspondence found at the Archivio Storico Capitolino in Rome. Through my research, I highlight Vessella's significant influence within the Roman music scene and emphasize the importance of his project aimed at popularizing instrumental music.<sup>129</sup> In his role of Maestro di Banda of the Municipal Wind Band in Rome he carried out a radical transformation of the wind band repertoire, providing numerous transcriptions of chamber and orchestral works, which he used to perform alongside, or in place of, the usual marches.<sup>130</sup> His first public open-air concert in Piazza Colonna, on 5 July 1885, showed already his innovative programming for such events, featuring works by Wagner, Mendelssohn, and Mozart.<sup>131</sup> Vessella was convinced that the wind band was the most direct way to reach people and complete the process of music education started in the private salons and sophisticated concert halls: 'The wind band was born from the people, therefore it is a powerful voice in the open air, in the squares, and it remains, in fact, one of the most direct means for music education'.<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, his project met resistance and opposition from many. In giving these public performances Vessella was attempting to radicalize a well-established and more popular type of concert.<sup>133</sup> Sometimes the dissatisfaction caused by Vessella's concerts generated real unrest, violent enough to require police intervention.<sup>134</sup> A review of one of his concerts, published in the Journal *Antologia Romana*, accused him of 'torturing people' with an 'avant-garde French-German programme', maybe imagining 'to sit in front of a piano Erard in Sala Dante, with a big mophead, performing to an exotic audience,

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<sup>129</sup> F. NARDACCI, *La centralità di Alessandro Vessella nel panorama della musica romana*, pp. 15-28.

<sup>130</sup> Vessella's arrangements for wind band are still in use today among the Italian National Wind Bands. See A. VESSELLA, *La banda dalle origini fino ai nostri giorni. Notizie storiche con documenti inediti e un'appendice musicale* (Milano: Istituto Editoriale Nazionale 1935), p. 213.

<sup>131</sup> In detail, the programme featured: A. Vessella, *Campidoglio Marcia trionfale* and *Casamicciola Ouverture*; G. Meyerbeer, *Deuxième marche aux Flambeaux*; R. Wagner, *March from Tannhäuser*, W. A. Mozart, *Ouverture from the Magic Flute*; F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Ouverture from Ruy Blas*.

<sup>132</sup> A. VESSELLA, *La banda dalle origini fino ai nostri giorni*, p. 185.

<sup>133</sup> C. CIMAGALLI, 'Musiche in piazza nella Roma del primo Ottocento', *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, vol. 43-5, 2008-2010, pp. 155-180.

<sup>134</sup> P. SCARPA, *A piazza Colonna con Vessella* (Roma: Libreria dell'800 1945), p. 54.

formed by fat nabobs and lanky ladies, rather than standing in Piazza Colonna performing to an audience used to listen to good and simple music'.<sup>135</sup>

This comment reveals the challenging situation in 1880s Rome regarding the reception of symphonic music and the prevailing prejudice against practitioners and listeners. It also suggests that the 'popular concerts' at Sala Dante were not so 'popular' and that they still attracted a cultured, exclusive audience, mainly composed of foreigners or those sympathetic to foreign culture. Furthermore, the image of the alien *artistic* haircut ('mophead') there described - clearly referring to Liszt - suggests how effectively Liszt's presence in Rome caused censure and opprobrium among conservative people. Giuseppe Prospero Zuliani, professor of aesthetics and history of music at Rome's Liceo Musicale of Santa Cecilia, described 'conservatives' as all those people tied to the past and reluctant for any change. They were therefore in contrast with the 'progressives', identified with whoever had instead a good education, literary knowledge, and aesthetic tastes. This shows further evidence of the fact that toward the end of the century instrumental music was still generally regarded as an expression of intellectualism and therefore often considered 'an incomprehensible jumble of notes, a succession of complex chords without melody'.<sup>136</sup> In conclusion, despite the challenges in re-evaluating its instrumental repertoire, Rome's cultural perspective still required substantial efforts. Nevertheless, thanks to the synergistic relationships and connections with other Italian cities following the 1870 Unification, Rome had made significant progress in this direction and was poised to gain a future place among other prominent European musical centres.

### ***Naples: the rebirth of instrumental music in the home of opera***

The city of Naples, in the aftermath of the 1861 Unification, experienced a comparable potential for growth and transformation, although it had to face other substantial political and social issues.<sup>137</sup> Despite the high illiteracy rates, particularly pronounced in the southern

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<sup>135</sup> Quoted in A. DE ANGELIS, *La musica a Roma nel secolo XIX* (Roma: Bardi 1944) p. 109.

<sup>136</sup> G.P. ZULIANI, *Roma musicale*, pp. 9-14.

<sup>137</sup> The Tuscan writer Renato Fucini (1843-1921) in a memoir written after visiting Naples, in 1878, describes it as 'a huge junk shop' and he feels himself to be surrounded by horrendous, frightening misery. Fucini presents a picture of a post-Unification City in a state of 'barbarism' from which he looked forward to escaping and returning to 'civilized' Tuscany. See R. FUCINI (Neri Tanfucio), *Napoli a occhio nudo. Lettere ad un amico* (Firenze: Le Monier 1878).

regions, Naples had always boasted a rich and sophisticated cultural heritage, playing a significant historical role in the realms of art, and music specifically. It had gained a strong European reputation from the sixteenth century, renowned for the 'Neapolitan school' led by Alessandro Scarlatti. For a long time, then, this city had been influential in both opera and instrumental music which had seen considerable growth throughout the eighteenth century, until the rise of 'opera impresariale'. In fact, from the end of the eighteenth and for much of the nineteenth century, Naples was considered one of the major European opera centres, well represented by two institutions: the conservatoire (founded by Joseph Napoleon in 1807 as a Royal College of Music and named 'San Pietro a Majella' in 1826), and the San Carlo Theatre. The conservatoire was the training ground for future opera singers, composers, and musicians; the San Carlo Theatre, for many, was the place where successful careers were launched and consolidated.

In its origins, the Neapolitan conservatoire was the result of a merger of three orphanages (the generic term was *conservatorio*), whose original role was to offer charity and assistance to abandoned children.<sup>138</sup> As such, it had to provide an education that could help them, once out of the orphanage, to work and make a living.<sup>139</sup> Music was one of the subjects taught, with the aim of offering children future employment, training them for careers as performers or composers in opera theatres, in an ecclesiastic or aristocratic environment. The opera industry, which had become one of the most important employers of musicians, would have always been a first career choice, given its lucrative opportunities. This is also reflected in the music education system practiced by the orphanage itself which was indeed more oriented toward opera.

Music students received a basic general education as well as a music one. Italian poetic forms, metrical schemes and literature were also often included because they were considered useful subjects for working with operatic text.<sup>140</sup> Musical study was based on solfeggio, singing, and composition with secondary studies on strings and wind instruments, whose study was restricted to specific times of the day. An 1848 curriculum reform introduced subjects like aesthetics, music history, and logic, but they were not put into practice as they were

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<sup>138</sup> It was founded as a Royal College of Music and later named 'San Pietro a Majella' (1826). See F. FLORIMO, *Cenno storico della scuola musicale di Napoli* (Napoli: Tip. di Lorenzo Rocco 1869), vol. 1, pp. 51-80.

<sup>139</sup> Even when the conservatoire ceased to be an institution for orphans and became a state music school the original principle remained unchanged.

<sup>140</sup> See A. CAROCCIA, *L'istruzione musicale nei conservatori dell'Ottocento*, pp. 208-18.

considered non-essential. For those students who were learning an instrument and whose only ambition was to join a theatre orchestra or a wind band, it was felt that such educational advancement was unnecessary.<sup>141</sup> Things changed soon after the Unification of Italy when the conservatoire had to adhere to the national standardization of the educational music system.<sup>142</sup> Particularly during the directorships of Lauro Rossi (1810-1885), who succeeded Saverio Mercadante in 1871, significant efforts were made to enhance the intellectual development of music students. Prior to his role in Naples, Rossi had been the Director of the Milan conservatoire since 1850. There, he dedicated much of his energy to promoting young talented musicians and modernizing the school curriculum. Rossi, an accomplished orchestral conductor and successful operatic composer, brought his valuable experience to enrich the Neapolitan institution. His principal aim was to turn the conservatoire from a school of craftsmen into a school of well-educated music professionals, in order to refute the strong criticism that Italian music schools were not adequate to be compared with any of the European music schools and were 'far from being able to equal the Germans in the knowledge and handling of harmony, counterpoint and instrumentation'.<sup>143</sup>

Yet, this criticism seems not to take account of the long and prestigious Neapolitan tradition of *partimenti*, which had informed the training of many illustrious Italian and European performers and composers, including Haydn.<sup>144</sup> *Partimenti* was a teaching method from the late seventeenth century, aimed to develop improvisation, accompaniment, and composition skills, along with acquiring musical styles, rules, and patterns practically through keyboard exercises.<sup>145</sup> The adaptability of the method meant that it was a useful aid for expediting opera

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<sup>141</sup> Atti sovrani riguardanti il riordinamento del Real Collegio di musica di Napoli (Napoli: Stamperia reale 1859), pp. xii-xiv, cited in A. CAROCCIA, *L'istruzione musicale nei conservatori dell'Ottocento*, p. 220.

<sup>142</sup> On 15 September 1864, an Italian music Congress was held in Naples to discuss the reorganization of the Italian conservatoires across the state, reflecting the enthusiasm of some of the Neapolitan musicians to take part in the debate of national education.

<sup>143</sup> See G. A. BIAGGI, 'I Conservatori di musica in Italia e il loro riordinamento', *La Nuova Antologia*, vol. 16, 1871, p. 897.

<sup>144</sup> In a letter, Haydn reports that he 'wrote diligently, but not quite correctly', until he had 'the good fortune to learn the true fundamentals of composition from the celebrated Herr Porpora' [Nicola Porpora (1686-1768)], one of the main representatives of the Neapolitan school of *partimenti*. See H.C. Robbins Landon ed., *The collected correspondence and London notebooks of Joseph Haydn* (London: Barrie and Rockliff 1959), p. 19.

<sup>145</sup> The Italian *partimenti* scholar Giorgio Sanguinetti gives the following definitions: 'A *partimento* is a thread that contains in itself all, or most, of the information needed for a complete composition [...]; it is a linear entity that runs from the beginning to the end of a (potential) composition [...];' and 'A *partimento* is a track, written on a single staff, with frequent changes of clefs and with elements of basso continuo, whose main purpose is to be a guide for improvisation on the keyboard'. See G. SANGUINETTI, 'The Realization of Partimenti. An Introduction', *Journal of Music Theory*, vol. 51, n. 1, 2007, pp. 51-83; G. SANGUINETTI, 'Bassi senza numeri, teoria senza parole' in *L'insegnamento dei conservatori*, p. 505.

compositions, addressing the demands imposed by tight production schedules in theatres.<sup>146</sup> That might explain the reason for the widespread use of the ‘art of partimenti’ (even after the post-Unification reforms) in other Italian music centres and abroad.<sup>147</sup> It is thus understandable that the most conservative musicians kept defending the Neapolitan tradition, especially praising those composers who kept faith with this style of teaching. This is the case with Carlo Conti (1796-1868), a successful operatic composer who was a student first, and then a professor, at San Pietro a Majella Conservatoire.<sup>148</sup> As my reconstructed biography shows,<sup>149</sup> Conti himself wrote a treatise on *partimenti* and, when he died in 1868, Francesco Florimo (1800-1888), librarian at the Neapolitan Conservatoire, praised him for having been able to keep himself away from the so-called ‘music of the future’. Conti’s conservative attitude in this regard made his music free of ‘deafening sounds, typical of the Oltremontani’,<sup>150</sup> representing, therefore, the last bastion of the old Neapolitan school and aesthetic which ‘many who masquerade as progressives would plan to demean and sell off; but let the so-called innovators, the Wagnerians [Wagnerians] of the day, be persuaded, and once and for all, that true art is immutable and what was beautiful and sublime two centuries ago is still, and will always be, so’.<sup>151</sup>

It is worth noting, however, that although opera had always been a priority in the Neapolitan conservatoire, instrumental music (composition and performance) had never been entirely neglected throughout its own history. Selected students’ instrumental works were in fact regularly performed at the conservatoire’s informal or public concerts, organized by the so-called *maestrini* or *mastricelli* (a title given to the best and elder students who got the role of

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<sup>146</sup> There seems to have been an upsurge of interest in the *partimenti* as several recent publications on this topic show: G. SANGUINETTI, *The art of Partimento. History, theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press 2012); N. PARASCHIVESCU, *The partimenti of Giovanni Paisiello: pedagogy and practice* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press 2022); R. O. GJERDINGEN, *Child composers in the old conservatories: how orphans became elite musicians* (New York: Oxford University Press 2020); B. CIPRIANI, ‘Le Regole per ben sonare il cembalo di Alessandro Scarlatti’ in ‘*Symposium Musicae*’, pp. 305-34.

<sup>147</sup> See G. STELLA, ‘Partimenti in the Age of Romanticism: Raimondi, Platania, and Boucheron’, *Journal of Music Theory*, vol. 51, n. 1, 2007, pp. 161-86.

<sup>148</sup> In 1846 Conti succeeded Donizetti in the role of counterpoint professor.

<sup>149</sup> F. NARDACCI, *Carlo Conti ‘Musicae Artis Eximio Cultori’*, pp. 227-41.

<sup>150</sup> The Italian term ‘Oltremontani,’ which translates to ‘people from beyond the mountains,’ has historically been used to refer to individuals from other countries or regions located beyond the Alps, in this case, the Germans.

<sup>151</sup> See F. FLORIMO, *Cenno storico della scuola musicale di Napoli*, vol. 2, p. 692 and F. FLORIMO, *Riccardo Wagner ed i Wagneristi* (Napoli: Tip. G. De Angelis 1876). However, in the 1883 revised edition of his pamphlet *Riccardo Wagner ed i Wagneristi*, Florimo’s anti-Wagnerian position seems to be softened.

‘teaching assistants’).<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, until the second half of the nineteenth century piano recitals in Naples were quite rare. As late as 1877, the Neapolitan music critic and pianist Michele Ruta (1826-1896), taking stock of the musical situation in Italy, and in Naples specifically, noticed that the pianoforte had been neglected for a long time and the ‘musica classica’, namely sonatas and concertos, had been disregarded.<sup>153</sup> Despite the fact that the first-ever piano recital in Naples was given back in 1804, by the Neapolitan musician Francesco Lanza (1783-1861), there was no chance for this musical genre to establish itself properly. The effective development of new pianoforte schools in Italy was only possible when there was a significant resurgence of interest in instrumental music in general. Lanza tried to disseminate the modern piano repertoire, also introducing Muzio Clementi’s methods and compositions,<sup>154</sup> but it would seem that the time was not yet right to establish a pianoforte culture comparable to the one already rooted in the rest of Europe. A change toward this direction started only later, with the generation of composers born around the 1850s, including Lanza’s student Costantino Palumbo (1843-1926),<sup>155</sup> Beniamino Cesi (1845-1907)<sup>156</sup> – with whom the Neapolitan pianoforte school had a real start – and later Giuseppe Martucci, Michele Esposito (1855-1929), Alfonso Rendano (1853-1931) and Alessandro Longo (1864-1945).<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Instrumental music activity external to the conservatoire was restricted to the more intimate environment of the royal court, or in private aristocrats’ and foreign diplomats’ venues. See R. CAFIERO, M. MARINO, ‘La musica della Real Camera e Cappella Palatina di Napoli fra Restaurazione e Unità d’Italia: documenti per un inventario (1817-1833)’, *Studi Musicali*, vol. 38, 2009, pp. 133-82; A. R. DELDONNA, *Instrumental music in late eighteenth-century Naples: politics, patronage and artistic culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2021), pp. 22-6.

<sup>153</sup> He also points out that other countries such as Germany already had proper music schools and choral societies with regular instrumental performances in concert halls. There was nothing comparable in Naples and so, much was needed to be done to be competitive with other European centres. See M. RUTA, *Storia critica delle condizioni della musica in Italia e del Conservatorio S. Pietro a Majella di Napoli* (Napoli: Dekten e Rocholl 1877), p. 82.

<sup>154</sup> L. PATI, ‘Paolo Serrao alla scuola pianistica di Francesco Lanza’ in *Paolo Serrao e la musica a Napoli*, pp. 53-62.

<sup>155</sup> Palumbo entered the Naples Conservatory where he studied composition with Mercadante and piano with Francesco Lanza and Michelangelo Russo.

<sup>156</sup> He taught at the Palermo conservatoire and then at Naples, having among his students Giuseppe Martucci, Giuseppe Esposito, and Ruggero Leoncavallo. Cesi was then invited by Anton Rubinstein to join the St Petersburg Conservatoire, where in fact he taught from 1885 to 1891.

<sup>157</sup> Longo combined a career as a pianist with musicological work, which included his modern edition of Domenico Scarlatti’s works. In 1914 he founded a monthly journal called *L’arte pianistica*, entirely dedicated to the piano, with little attention to operatic and symphonic music. It represents an invaluable source of information on musical activities that took place in Naples at the beginning of the twentieth century and shows how musical culture was changed. In one of his articles Longo describes Rendano as one of the most cultured Italian musicians with a good knowledge of Italian and foreign literature. A. LONGO, ‘Alfonso Rendano’, *L’arte pianistica nella vita e nella cultura musicale*, n. 4, 1917, p. 5.

Rendano in particular gained a significant European reputation as a virtuoso pianist. In 1868, when he was only fifteen years old, he moved to Paris on the recommendation of Sigismond Thalberg (1812-1871), who was based in Naples at that time. He then started touring Europe, spending most of his time between London and Vienna and occasionally going back to Italy.<sup>158</sup> My recent study on Rendano, which is going to appear in a forthcoming publication, shows how the young composer gained his reputation in London in the early 1870s, representing one of the emblematic examples of Italian instrumental musicians who, in a way, were forced to seek success abroad.<sup>159</sup> Rendano appeared at John Ella's Musical Union concerts, performing both in chamber works and as a soloist,<sup>160</sup> and featured at the Crystal Palace and the Philharmonic Society's concerts, where he performed the two Mendelssohn piano concertos. It is interesting to note how the local press showed surprise to see 'a man from the South' performing so remarkably a pianoforte repertoire. Assuming that his 'artistic manner' could not be from an Italian piano tradition, the critics argued that Rendano was surely influenced by the atmosphere of Leipzig, where he went to study.<sup>161</sup> Rendano went back to Naples only in 1887, when he was given the position of piano professor at the conservatoire.<sup>162</sup>

Meanwhile, during his time abroad, the solo piano recital tradition in Naples had had a spur, thanks to the contribution of Thalberg who had moved to the city in 1858, making Naples his new home for the rest of his life.<sup>163</sup> Beniamino Cesi became Thalberg's protégée and, over time, a leading Italian pianist. When Cesi was appointed piano professor at San Pietro a Majella, in 1863, he assiduously promoted the works of composers from the Baroque to the early Romantic era and strove to establish the piano recital as a more regular musical event among students.<sup>164</sup> In the same year, pianist Ferdinando Bonamici (1827-1905) founded the Circolo

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<sup>158</sup> A biography of Rendano is also significantly included in A. EHRlich, *Celebrated Pianist of the Past and Present. A collection of one Hundred and Thirty-Nine Biographies, with portraits* (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser 1894), pp. 283-93.

<sup>159</sup> F. NARDACCI, 'I successi di Alfonso Rendano nella Londra di fine Ottocento attraverso la stampa inglese' in *Atti del Convegno Università della Calabria 2021*. Forthcoming publication (Cosenza: Ibimus Calabrese-Università della Calabria 2024).

<sup>160</sup> 'Alfonso Rendano, of Neapolitan reputation, cannot fail to attract those lovers of musical art who are fortunate enough to belong to Professor Ella's Musical Union', *Morning Post*, Friday 19 April 1872.

<sup>161</sup> *The Musical Union Matinée*, 1871, p. 8.

<sup>162</sup> In Naples at the beginning of the twentieth century Rendano organised a series of concerts with performances of all of Beethoven's Sonatas and Chopin's Studies.

<sup>163</sup> V. VITALE, 'Sigismondo Thalberg a Posillipo', *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, vol. 4, 1972, pp. 503-11.

<sup>164</sup> In a way, Thalberg's influence on Cesi reflected Liszt's significance for Sgambati in Rome around the same time (the 1860s). See M. DISTILO, *Sigismund Thalberg: primordi e sviluppi della scuola pianistica napoletana* (online-BookSprint Edition 2016).



Bonamici. It was meant to run an intense concert activity, parallel to the one of the conservatoire, and to host music lectures and conferences in order to contribute to the improvement of musical culture in Naples. Similarly, aristocratic salons had become more and more musically engaged and their events were gradually extended to a larger audience. It was at the initiative of a few members of the Neapolitan aristocracy and some foreign diplomats that a Quartet and a Philharmonic Society were established (respectively in 1862 and 1867). Unfortunately, they did not last long, despite the programming deliberately appealing to the audience's taste by including excerpts from Italian and French operas alongside the Viennese classics. The reason for their failure was largely attributed to a lack of good management and the absence of a charismatic leader. It was only in the late 1870s, with the appearance of Giuseppe Martucci, that Naples finally acquired someone with sufficient musical stature to begin to reorientate its musical culture. The Quartet Society was then resumed, and in 1880 the first Neapolitan Orchestral Society was officially founded with Martucci as conductor.<sup>165</sup>

Martucci began his career as a virtuoso pianist after his training with Cesi at the San Pietro a Majella conservatoire.<sup>166</sup> However, after a music tour in Europe in the 1870s he altered his focus more to composition and conducting, becoming one of the first Italian musicians of his time to devote himself entirely to instrumental music. While his very first compositions were short pieces for piano, between 1876 and 1878 he committed himself to more extended instrumental forms: the piano sonata op. 34, the Fantasia for two pianos op. 32, and the Quintet for strings and piano op. 45 which won the first prize in the Milan *Società del Quartetto* competition.<sup>167</sup> In 1879 Martucci composed a Piano Concerto that was performed in Naples in that same year. Interestingly, this composition was not published until a century afterward (Suvini Zerboni, 1979) and it remained largely unknown to his contemporaries. In fact, as if this composition had never existed, in 1886 the Milanese music critic Filippo Filippi, who was one of Martucci's strongest supporters, urged him to compose a piano concerto, as a letter published in *Pagine sparse* reveals: 'it seems to me that your Sonata for [pianoforte] and [violoncello] is a worthy sister of the Trio, the Quintet, the Variations: now you have to add a

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<sup>165</sup> P. DE MARTINO, 'Martucci e la Società Orchestrale Napoletana' in *Giuseppe Martucci e la caduta delle Alpi*, A. Carocchia, P. Maione, F. Seller eds. (Lucca: LIM 2009), pp. 35-63.

<sup>166</sup> He actually received his very first musical education in Capua (his hometown, near Naples) from his father, who was a trumpet player in the military Bourbon wind band. A complete biographical account has been given in F. PERRINO, *Giuseppe Martucci* (Novara: Centro Studi Martucciani 1992-2002), 4 vols.

<sup>167</sup> Among his chamber works, the Cello Sonata op. 52, from 1880, is considered one of the most remarkable. This composition particularly shows the influence of Schumann, Brahms and Wagner.

concerto for piano and orchestra and the family will be complete, and you will have no one to envy'.<sup>168</sup> A few songs, an unpublished Oratorio and a Mass (among his juvenilia works), and his work *La Canzone dei Ricordi* op. 68a, for voice and orchestra, are his sole contributions to vocal music. Martucci never wrote an opera, although he produced numerous transcriptions of arias and paid tribute to operatic masterworks of the past as well as Wagnerian music dramas.

In 1880 Martucci was appointed piano professor at his old school San Pietro a Majella and soon he became a leading proponent in the emancipation of instrumental music. The programming of the Orchestral Society he had founded clearly shows how ambitious his project was; he even managed to bring his orchestral concerts to the San Carlo Theatre, the Neapolitan home of opera.<sup>169</sup> However, his Orchestral Society's existence did not go uncriticised and unchallenged. Its concerts were said to be too expensive (with admission tickets up to ten thousand Lira),<sup>170</sup> and the expectation that audience members should listen silently without moving was considered too strict. This requirement, in particular, was criticised as showing a 'typically German attitude' with programmes comprising 'a prevalence of German music'.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, Martucci's own enthusiasm for Wagner was not shared by the majority of the Neapolitan musical community who were prejudiced against Wagner's music, despite the fact that it was little known and rarely heard.

Nevertheless, Martucci attained an unprecedented musical authority in Naples, and over time became widely recognized throughout Italy. In 1886 he was appointed director of the conservatoire of Bologna, moving away from Naples, to the disappointment of Neapolitan colleagues and music lovers. Without his strong leadership, all the important achievements in instrumental music activities would have lately declined. And indeed, soon after he left Naples, the concert societies he had started were forced to cease.

Yet in 1902 Martucci returned to Naples, accepting the role of Director of the conservatoire San Pietro a Majella. He was expected to restore the conservatoire's artistic prestige and

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<sup>168</sup> Letter from Filippo Filippi to Giuseppe Martucci, 30 May 1884 (GB-Lcm MS 14804), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>169</sup> The first concert at the San Carlo theatre was given on 18 April 1884, featuring Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and *Euryanthe* Overture, Schumann's *Bilder's aus Osten* (in Reinecke's transcription), Anton Rubinstein's *Oceano* Symphony, and Wagner's Overture from *Fliegende Holländer*. For the programming of the Naples Orchestral Society see A. CAROCCIA, 'Ho proprio bisogno di una assoluzione plenaria': presenze martucciane a San Pietro a Majella' in *Giuseppe Martucci e la caduta delle Alpi*, pp. 65-100.

<sup>170</sup> It corresponds to about forty-six Euros nowadays. Information retrieved from [inflationhistory.com](http://inflationhistory.com) on 31 July 2023.

<sup>171</sup> This assessment is reported by an article in the journal *L'Occhialetto*, vol. 13, n. 20, 23 May 1885.

dignity, lost as a result of continuous financial irregularities and cash shortages. Martucci was in fact considered the only 'illustrious man', who had 'the highest and purest ideals of art' as well as the value of honesty.<sup>172</sup> Once back in the city, he immediately revitalised its musical life and founded a new Concert Society in 1903, which was intensely active over the next five years, featuring orchestral music such as Schumann's Symphonies, Berlioz, Wagner, and classics by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.<sup>173</sup>

As previously mentioned, Princess Pignatelli's letters, published in *Pagine Sparse*, provide evidence of the persuasive efforts that led Martucci to eventually return to Naples, which included appealing to the composer's latent yearning for his hometown.<sup>174</sup> Nevertheless, his departure from Bologna, a city where he had forged a brilliant career over fifteen years, was not an easy decision. Bologna's historically distinguished reputation as a bastion of culture (famously known for establishing one of the oldest universities in the world in 1088)<sup>175</sup> and a respectable musical epicentre, made the prospect of leaving quite daunting for the composer. The city, with its vibrant artistic ambiance and erudite musical community, had welcomed Martucci and offered him the opportunity to find professional success and a profound sense of belonging and creative fulfilment. The decision to leave came after almost ten years of insistent invitations, during which time Martucci had to weigh the magnetic pull of Naples against the cultural liveliness of Bologna.

### ***Bologna: an intellectual identity. From papal censorship to artistic-cultural rebirth***

Bologna's historical cultural prominence can be attributed to its local intellectual vitality, despite papal censorship. Once it achieved independence from the Papal State in 1859 (after

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<sup>172</sup> Letter from Princess Adele Pignatelli Strongoli to Giuseppe Martucci, 26 August 1900 (GB-Lcm MS 15141), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 83-4.

<sup>173</sup> See A. DELLA CORTE, 'I concerti Martucci al Politeama di Napoli', *Rivista Teatrale Italiana*, 1905, pp. 123-4. Martucci's last great musical endeavour was the performance of Wagner operas at the San Carlo Theatre, *Tristan* (December 1907) and *Twilight of the Gods* (December 1908). He became seriously ill and died on 1 June 1909. Soon after, on the 24 of June, the Concert Society was dissolved.

<sup>174</sup> 'The Italians (above all the Neapolitans), in order to be productive, need to live in the open air, in their own good climate, with the roots planted in the beautiful fatty soil of our marshes. Over there, close to the Alps, you might benefit from the heat of a stove for some time, but then it will give you strained anxiety and you'll feel your soul bitter'. Letter from Princess Adele Pignatelli Strongoli to Giuseppe Martucci, 1 August 1889 (GB-Lcm MS 15133), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>175</sup> The University of Bologna, founded in 1088, has played a pivotal role in the development of higher education and academic traditions. It attracted scholars and students from various parts of Europe, contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and cultural exchange.

almost 300 years),<sup>176</sup> the city's cultural scene flourished, especially among the middle class, fostering a vibrant atmosphere of artistic and intellectual pursuits.<sup>177</sup> The process of cultural secularization took place soon after Unification, exemplified by the appointment of the anti-clerical and liberal intellectual Giosu  Carducci as a professor at Bologna University in 1860. This political change marked a rebirth for the Bolognesi, providing them with the opportunity to openly express their liberal cultural identity.

As in Rome, Papal supremacy had also been reflected in Bologna's music, which focused primarily on sacred polyphony.<sup>178</sup> However, during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, Bologna distinguished itself from the Roman tradition by welcoming the Venetian 'cori battenti' and the 'concertato' style. Furthermore, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, instrumental music was introduced alongside the vocal, and new forms, such as the Concerto Grosso, began to be developed. The Accademia Filarmonica in Bologna (founded in 1666), encouraged instrumental music even in the Mass. This shows how the Academy, despite its strong connection with the Church and having influential Bolognese cardinals, like Pietro Ottoboni (1667-1740), among its patrons, tried to maintain a secular outlook. It also served eventually as a vital music education institution; in fact, the cleric Giovanni Battista Martini (1706-1784), a prominent member of the Academy since 1730, was an influential figure in music education and composition.<sup>179</sup> As well as his scholarship on the history of music, which enabled him to found a solid tradition of historical and theoretical studies, Martini was also an acknowledged master of counterpoint, having among his more illustrious students Johann Christian Bach, Gassmann, Gretry, Jommelli and even W. A. Mozart, who also became a member of the Filarmonica in October 1770.

During the Napoleonic rule (1796-1814), the Accademia Filarmonica was chosen to be responsible for the first state music school. The Liceo Filarmonico, as it was renamed, was officially opened on 30 November 1804 under the umbrella of the Accademia and offered

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<sup>176</sup> Bologna and its territory were annexed to the Papal State in 1506 and administered for centuries by a single papal legation. On 19 June 1796, following Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of northern Italy, the Papal state lost its domain, which was restored from 1816 until 1860.

<sup>177</sup> Bologna was known as 'Alma mater Studiorum' (nourishing mother of studies) and by the nickname 'la dotta' (the erudite).

<sup>178</sup> The Cappella di San Petronio, considered the oldest musical institution in Bologna founded in 1436 by Pope Eugene IV, was the equivalent of the Sistine Chapel in Rome.

<sup>179</sup> Martini himself composed concertos and symphonies as well as hundreds of keyboard sonatas and miscellaneous chamber works. See H. BROFSKY, 'The Symphonies of Padre Martini', *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 51, n. 4, 1965, pp. 649-73.

counterpoint, piano, singing, violin, oboe, and cello classes, and included part of Martini's own collection as the foundation of its music library. All the students' instrumental works were performed at the Pubbliche Accademie (public concerts) held at the end of the academic year. The best compositions were awarded and then held in the historical archive of the school. Alongside students' works were also performed music by other established composers like Paisiello, Cimarosa, Clementi, Pleyel, Dussek, and lesser-known German composers.<sup>180</sup> Following the Restoration of the Papal State (1815), the Liceo Musicale went into a steady period of decline which led to managerial difficulties and to a final split between the Accademia itself and the teaching school, which later attained independence.<sup>181</sup>

In 1830 Gioachino Rossini, a former student and member of the Accademia Filarmonica, was appointed Treasurer of the Liceo Musicale and in 1839 he was also appointed as Honorary Councillor of it, with the expectation that he could help it to regain its old prestige. As the role of a director at the Liceo had not yet been formally established, Rossini could act as 'super partes' in the management of the school. In this role, albeit being by then a celebrated opera composer in his own right, Rossini wanted particularly to improve the standard of orchestral and chamber music, introducing the students to German composers such as Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.<sup>182</sup> This reflected his personal interest in German instrumental music (with a special predilection for Haydn), in which he was educated from a young age, gaining him the nickname 'tedeschino' ('little German').<sup>183</sup> Rossini's contribution was therefore important for outlining the orientation of the Bolognese music school, which would gradually build up a more modern profile, changing the cultural life of the city and achieving over time a considerable standard in the instrumental music tradition with a wider openness to European novelties.

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<sup>180</sup> The 12 June 1823 concert programme reports the performance of a 'Sonata a piano-forte accompagnata dal clarinetto e violoncello, del Maestro Beethoven' [Sonata for pianoforte with clarinet and cello accompaniment, by the Maestro Beethoven]. This seems to have been an exceptional event as Beethoven's name will not feature again until after the 1830s. See C. SARTORI, *Il Regio Conservatorio di musica 'G.B. Martini' di Bologna* (Firenze: Le Monier 1942), p. 133.

<sup>181</sup> It had different names over time: 'Liceo Filarmonico', 'Liceo Comunale di Musica', 'Rossini' (from 1869 to 1871), and eventually 'Conservatorio G. B. Martini', as it is known today.

<sup>182</sup> An examination of these programmes has been made by Nicola Gallino in N. GALLINO 'Lo scolaro Rossini e la musica strumentale al liceo di Bologna: nuovi documenti', *Bollettino del Centro rossiniani di studi*, vol. 33, nn. 1-3, 1993, pp. 5-55.

<sup>183</sup> 'Not only I do love the great German musicians - I studied them with predilection since my very early youth and I have never neglected an opportunity to get to know them better', quoted in G. J. JOERG ed., 'Gli scritti rossiniani di Ferdinand Hiller' in *Bollettino del Centro rossiniano di studi*, vol. 32, 1992, p. 75. See also F. GON, 'Le rossiniane Sonate a quattro (1804): alle origini del "Tedeschino"', *Ad Parnassum*, vol. 14, n. 27, 2016, pp. 89-121.

Alongside the Liceo's musical activities, private instrumental music concerts in the 1850s proliferated in aristocratic salons; by the 1860s they started to be extended to a larger audience within the newly established gentlemen's club, called Domino Club (1866).<sup>184</sup> That reflected what was happening in other cities like Florence, Naples, or Milan, where Quartet societies were gradually appearing. However, Bologna established its own Quartet Society only in 1879, although it was merely a matter of acquiring official recognition in the name. Among the founders were the aristocrat Marquise Camillo Pizzardi and Count Agostino Salina, who benefited from the expertise and contribution of the composer and orchestra conductor Luigi Mancinelli (1848-1921). Director of the Liceo musicale of Bologna in the years 1881-86, Mancinelli became a pivotal figure in the development of instrumental music culture in Bologna. He was admired both as composer and orchestra conductor and later described as 'an elegant and refined symphonist, with a spontaneous and delicate melodic, and, where necessary, robust vein; he had a powerful and very clear music doctrine, capable of yielding to modern progress'.<sup>185</sup>

The Quartet Society soon expanded the scope of its concerts beyond chamber to symphonic music and although for almost a decade its concerts were held at the Liceo musicale, in 1888 they were moved to the Teatro Comunale (until then an exclusive venue for opera), having a greater capacity for a larger audience. The change in venue reflected the increased popularity of these concerts. The growing interest in orchestral music since the early 1880s also led to the establishment of the Concerti Popolari at the Teatro Brunetti (also known as *Concerti del Brunetti*), intended to attract a wider social audience, including the working class, students, and music lovers of all backgrounds. At the Brunetti Theatre, Mancinelli presented the major orchestral works of the European classical repertoire as well as more contemporary works.

Meanwhile, Bologna also welcomed Wagnerian opera with Angelo Mariani (1821-1873), who had been director of the Liceo musicale in the 1860s. Mariani conducted the première of *Lohengrin* at the Teatro Comunale in 1871 and *Tannhäuser* in 1872, rapidly establishing Bologna as a Wagnerian city. Richard Wagner was even awarded Honorary Citizenship in 1872. Further Wagnerian performances were given by Mancinelli and then Giuseppe Martucci, who

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<sup>184</sup> F. DE BOSDARI, *Dalla società del casino al Domino Club*. Pubblicato in occasione del Convegno dei circoli italiani a Bologna, giugno 1955 (Bologna: Tip. L. Parma 1955).

<sup>185</sup> U. FALENA, *Discorso commemorativo in occasione delle onoranze a Luigi e Marino Mancinelli* (Foligno: F. Campitelli 1923), p. 14.

was already well known for his enthusiasm for Wagner. In fact, when Martucci succeeded Mancinelli in 1886 as Director of the Liceo musicale and of the main Bolognese music institutions, he even managed to establish in Bologna a *Società Wagneriana* (Wagnerian Society), giving the Italian première of *Tristan und Isolde* (2 June 1888).<sup>186</sup>

By this point, the Bolognese audience had become familiar with a range of orchestral music and was able to accept some dismantling of old musical ideologies, aesthetics and standards. Works like *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and *Parsifal*, staged by the Wagnerian Society, as well as *Scenes* from Schumann's *Faust* (1895) and all of Beethoven's symphonies, performed at the Quartet Society, were now very well received by audiences. The Bolognesi's progressive attitude was widely acknowledged, as in the words of the Milanese music critic Aldo Noseda who, in a letter to Martucci, published in *Pagine Sparse*, pointed out that 'Milano non è Bologna' ('Milan is not Bologna'), for which reason a Schumann Symphony would not work for the Milanese audience as for the Bolognese audience.<sup>187</sup>

One of Martucci's main projects was to connect Bologna more directly to the wider European musical culture, reflecting the particular inclination of this city to openness towards other cultures. He organised a series of thematic concerts, each one dedicated to a different European country and its composers. The 'English Concert' was one of those events. It took place at the Teatro Comunale in April 1898, featuring music by Hubert Parry, Arthur Sullivan, Frederic Hymen Cowen, C. Villiers Stanford, and Alexander Mackenzie. A few letters published in *Pagine Sparse* reveal that Martucci was introduced to these British composers by Albert Visetti who had been trying to promote English music in Italy for a long time, as mentioned in the earlier discussion of Rome.<sup>188</sup> The critic's reaction to this event was positive and dismantled a bias against English music, which was considered until then 'without sensitivity and inspiration'.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> See L. VERDI, 'Martucci a Bologna' in *Giuseppe Martucci e la Caduta delle Alpi*, p. 153.

<sup>187</sup> 'We must not forget that we are at La Scala and not at the Quartet Society and that moreover Milan is not Bologna: so, a Schumann Symphony, for example, would be a mistake'. Letter from Aldo Noseda to Giuseppe Martucci, April 1890 (GB-Lcm MS 15112), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 25-6.

<sup>188</sup> See the letters from Visetti to Martucci published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 37-8 and 68.

<sup>189</sup> 'The Concert of English music must be considered a most important artistic event, giving us the opportunity to eradicate a deep-rooted prejudice that English composers are without sensitivity and inspiration', *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, n. 17, 28 April 1898. And also 'We discovered that English music deserves the same respect as it does in the visual arts, in literature and poetry', *Il Resto del Carlino*, 25 April 1898. The phrase 'Das Land ohne Musik'n – referring to England – was first coined by Oscar Schmitz in his book *Das Land ohne Musik: Englische Gesellschaftsprobleme*, which however was not in fact about music at all.

Bologna's inclusive attitude and openness were revealed to be beneficial for both the economy and culture, and the 1888 Great Exhibition was designed to show off this progress. The musical section within it was particularly enhanced by the presence of Martucci, who was indeed the central figure.<sup>190</sup> The Music Exhibition was intended to highlight the progress made in music in Bologna over time. Scores, manuscripts and historical instruments were put on display, and a number of performances featuring works by Italian and foreign composers from different eras and composing styles were given.<sup>191</sup> Echoing the intense early music performances and research activity going on in Rome in those years, these Bolognese music events also included a series of early music concerts, using original instruments from the Brussels conservatoire collection, played by Belgian musicians.<sup>192</sup>

Opera, of course, was significantly represented, but alongside piano recitals, chamber and orchestral music.<sup>193</sup> Furthermore, Martucci chose to perform works from the previous century, like Gluck's *Alceste* and Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*, rather than operas of his contemporaries. His selection inevitably divided audience opinion: there were some who considered the chosen operas outmoded and therefore unrepresentative of 'progress' in art; others believed the works to be important in showing the origins of the modern musical quality. However, it was soon clearly understood that Martucci's musical choices were rooted in intellectual pursuits, with a particular focus on expanding Italy's musical horizons and championing symphonic music as an essential aspect of Italian culture. In doing this, Martucci most notably advocated for Brahms's symphonies, which were relatively unknown in Italy at the time.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> The Grand Opening ceremony of the Exhibition took place on 6 May 1888. See E. MARCANTE, D. TONINI, 'Bologna 1888: la grande impresa dell'Esposizione Internazionale di Musica' in *Expo Bologna 1888. L'Esposizione Emiliana nei documenti delle Collezioni d'Arte e di Storia della Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio in Bologna*, B. Basevi, M. Nottoli eds. (Bologna: Bononia University Press 2015), pp. 31-41.

<sup>191</sup> The project recalled in some way the London's Academy of Ancient Music (1726-1802), whose aim was to 'promote the study and practice of vocal and instrumental harmony'. H. DIACK JOHNSTONE, *The Academy of Ancient Music (1726-1802): Its History, Repertoire and Surviving Programmes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2020).

<sup>192</sup> They were called 'Mahillon concerts'. Charles-Victor Mahillon (1841-1924) was one of the most established European experts in the field of musical instruments. He was a scholar of acoustics and organology, a maker of woodwind instruments, and a collector of modern and ancient instruments.

<sup>193</sup> The opening concert featured Mozart's Symphony in G minor, Beethoven's *Coriolanus* overture, a Siciliana for strings by Boccherini, and Schumann's Symphony in B flat. See E.M. STEVENS, 'The Bologna Exhibition', *The Musical World*, 30 June 1888, p. 513.

<sup>194</sup> On the occasion of the Great Exhibition Brahms visited Bologna and showed gratitude to Martucci for promoting his music. In 1895 Brahms was also given honorary membership of the historical Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna.



Indeed, Martucci's time in Bologna was both formative and beneficial to the musical community, but it was also a significant period with regard to his own artistic output. He composed some of his most important works for piano (such as the two *Nocturnes* op. 70 and the Piano Concerto, op. 88) and chamber music (the *Three pieces* for violin and piano, op. 67, and the *Three pieces* for cello and piano, op. 69). The *Canzone dei Ricordi*, considered one of his masterpieces, and his First Symphony, which is widely held to be the first real expression of Italian symphonism, are also products of Martucci's Bolognese experience.

Martucci's personality, vision, and expertise greatly contributed to the cultural enrichment not just of Bologna but also other music societies in Northern Italy, such as Milan and Turin. He was in high demand in these cities, serving as both a performer and a music advisor. Consequently, when he returned to Naples in 1902, his absence was keenly felt in the North, while his presence in the South was eagerly anticipated.

### ***Milan and Turin: music culture in the cities of progress and industrialisation***

In the mid-nineteenth century, both Milan and Turin had become key commercial and financial hubs, experiencing a rapid growth in industrialisation. They were dynamic cities, characterized by an innovative spirit, particularly connected with other European capitals. The development of industrial manufacture in these Northern centres, which led in particular to the foundation of the automobile company FIAT (Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino) in Turin, in 1899, created a wave of migration towards the north and a consequent increase in the population in those areas. Since many of these new incomers were going to be employed in the factories, they needed to receive training to acquire the essential technical skills. As a result, in the government's post-unification educational reform plan, technical subjects were prioritized over humanities and the arts, including music.<sup>195</sup> This also explains, to some extent, the reluctance of the local municipalities to support certain musical initiatives promoted by the newly founded concert societies over the second half of the nineteenth century. In this regard, Aldo Nosedà questioned Martucci about his success in securing substantial public funding for concerts in Bologna, while concert societies in Milan constantly struggled to survive due to a lack of municipal financial support: 'Where the hell do you find so much "tobacco"? Is it the

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<sup>195</sup> In Turin the specialized school *Regia Scuola di Applicazione per gli Ingegneri* was established in 1859. It was the first Italian university faculty for the training of engineers, known today as the Polytechnic University of Turin.

municipality that helps you? In Milan there would be no case! I would like to see the Mayor's face if I were to ask him for some money to get Faust performed at the Quartet [Society]!'.<sup>196</sup>

Indeed, as these initiatives were not even connected with the opera theatre, they were not considered part of a business strategy aimed at increasing the economy of the city, and therefore were not supported enough. On the other hand, even the Milan conservatoire was likely founded, in 1807, with this same vision. It was conceived by Count Carlo Brentano de Grianty (1795-1801), director of the Milan Theatres, and was clearly motivated by the need to train professional musicians to supply the opera theatres (although the official motivation was to save musical art from decadence).<sup>197</sup> Therefore, while the Milanese music school was originally modelled on the Paris conservatoire, it ended up having a different ethos; in Paris the aim was to train a generation of musicians educated to form a sort of 'national school', while in Milan the focus was much more practical and locally centred. Consequently, the Milan conservatoire did not initially feel the need to include subjects such as philosophy and literature, which were part of the Paris conservatoire curriculum.<sup>198</sup> The process of becoming more aligned with European standards started in Milan in 1850, with the curriculum reform put in place by the director Lauro Rossi who wanted to include literature, history, and aesthetics among the school subjects.<sup>199</sup> In this way, the Milano conservatoire presently changed its nature, turning into a real cultural hub, even nurturing the ground for various artistic movements.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> 'Ma dove diavolo trovi tanto tabacco? È il comune che vi aiuta? A Milano non ci sarebbe caso! Vorrei vedere la faccia del Sindaco se gli andassi a dire di darmi qualcosa per eseguire il Faust al Quartetto!', Letter from Aldo Nosedà to Giuseppe Martucci, 8 agosto 1895 (GB-Lcm MS 15126), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, p. 45.

<sup>197</sup> See D. DAOLMI, 'Uncovering the Origins of the Milan Conservatory: The French Model as a Pretext and the Fortunes of Italian Opera' in *Music Education in Europe (1770-1914). Compositional, Institutional and Political Challenges*, M. Fend, M. Noiray eds. (Berlin: Berlin Wissenschafts-Verlag 2005), vol. 1, pp. 1-14. Regarding the topic of 'music as a craft' see E. SURIAN, 'L'operista' in *Storia dell'opera italiana. Il sistema produttivo e le sue competenze*, L. Bianconi, G. Pestelli eds. (Torino: EDT 1987-89), vol. 4, pp. 293-345; J. ROSSELLI, *Il cantante d'opera. Storia di una professione (1600-1990)* (Bologna: Il Mulino 1993).

<sup>198</sup> M. VACCARINI GALLARANI, 'Modelli culturali e contenuti dell'istruzione musicale' in *Milano e il suo conservatorio 1808-2002*, G. Salvetti ed. (Milano: Skira 2003), pp. 126-27.

<sup>199</sup> He continued his work in Naples from 1871 where he was appointed director at Naples Conservatoire, as mentioned earlier in this commentary. Among those responsible for the music education reform in Milan were Alberto Mazzucato (who was appointed teacher of aesthetics and history of music, then director from 1872 to 1877), and Stefano Ronchetti Monteviti, counterpoint teacher (director in the years 1878-1881).

<sup>200</sup> Arrigo Boito and Franco Faccio (both of whom were students at the time) particularly contributed, together with the poet and literature professor at the Milan conservatoire Emilio Praga (1839-1875), to the *Scapigliatura* art movement. See P. NARDI, *Vita di Arrigo Boito* (Verona: Mondadori 1942)

Public concerts, called ‘saggi’ or ‘esperimenti’, established in the conservatoire since 1814, began to be more regular in 1850. It was then proposed to create a concert society within the music institution, which led to the foundation of the ‘Società dei concerti Classici del Conservatorio’. This very much recalled the Paris Conservatoire’s concert organization and involved all of the teachers and students.<sup>201</sup> The chamber and orchestral repertoire continued to be emphasised by Antonio Bazzini, who, in his role as Director of the conservatoire, strongly wanted to make sure that even those students who were going to pursue an operatic career had adequate knowledge of composition in the instrumental genre.

In such a way, in the late nineteenth century, Milan also came to experience a thriving instrumental music activity with the formation of several concert societies. Music critics like Filippi and Nosedà contributed to this enthusiasm through their newspapers and journal articles, providing accounts of concerts, new compositions, and discussions of their musical and aesthetic qualities. Their mission was to educate and support the growing music-loving public while promoting a new generation of Italian composers. The publisher Giovanni Ricordi had astutely foreseen that increasing the number of publications of chamber and symphonic music could be profitable for his business, because it would appeal to a new branch of the market along with operatic music. In 1863, Tito Ricordi, son of Giovanni, sought to expand this new market by setting up a Quartet Society to organise more public concerts and composition competitions.<sup>202</sup> He also established a musical journal, called *Giornale della Società del Quartetto*, to which Society members – renowned musicians, music critics and music lovers from the nobility – could contribute. According to the Society’s Rules, the Quartet Society concerts were obliged to programme music by acknowledged German masters (Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn etc.), alongside the best of contemporary Italian composers. Although the Quartet Society was primarily focused on chamber music, it soon wanted to include orchestral works, with a particular interest in Beethoven’s symphonies, recognising the German composer as an icon and a model of the genre.

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<sup>201</sup> The first concert was given on 23 February 1851. See A. ESTERO, ‘Quale musica e in quale conservatorio’ in *Milano e il suo conservatorio*, pp. 86-93.

<sup>202</sup> Martucci was one of the young composers to be awarded a prize in the Quartet Society’s composition competition, winning the first prize in 1877 with his Piano Quintet in C major, op. 45. The German composer and conductor Martin Roeder, at that time in Milan as chorus master at the Teatro dal Verme and a founder member of the Quartet Society, was in the jury on the occasion of the competition and personally wrote Martucci a congratulatory letter, holding him in great esteem. Martucci’s Piano Quintet was then performed in one of the Society’s concerts on 17 March 1878. See Letter from Martin Roeder to Giuseppe Martucci, 23 March 1878 (GB-Lcm, MS 15027), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, p. 3.

In 1877, Carlo Andreoli, a piano professor at the Milan conservatoire since 1871, and his brother, pianist Guglielmo Andreoli, founded the Società dei Concerti Popolari (Popular Concerts' Society), focusing on orchestral repertoire. Despite its initial success, including nearly a hundred symphonic concerts during its ten-year existence, the Concerti Popolari faced criticism from conservatives and dwindling financial support.<sup>203</sup> As a result, the society closed in 1887. Simultaneously to the Andreoli's Concerti Popolari, Franco Faccio – in collaboration with Ricordi – founded the *Società Orchestrale del Teatro alla Scala* (Orchestral Society of La Scala), which lasted from 1878 to 1898. It was supposed to run symphonic seasons, parallel to the operatic ones. It can definitely be seen as an exceptional cultural operation, given the historical association of the Milanese theatre with the opera. In fact, it aroused amazement when the symphonic orchestra of Teatro alla Scala appeared at the 1878 Paris Exposition Universelle, showcasing a new music identity for Milan, even for Italy.<sup>204</sup> Nosedà contributed to the foundation of the La Scala Orchestral Society and became its chair in 1889, showing particular care for concert programming. In this regard he often relied on Martucci's expertise, frequently inviting him to Milan, both as a performer and composer.

What Nosedà most appreciated about Martucci was his ability to meet audience expectations whilst maintaining a rigorously intellectual approach to the programming choices. His advice was considered precious for implementing the project of re-educating the Milanese audience to appreciate orchestral music. Particular care was given to selecting the instrumental repertoire, with a focus on creating programmes that were appealing, easy to listen to, and preferably in the Viennese classical style to attract the audience.<sup>205</sup> Nosedà's letters published in *Pagine Sparse* clearly show his intention 'to make programmes definitely artistic: possibly varied, new (we have already done a lot!), and if we have to move away from classical rigorism, a concession can be made to the public, only if it is artistically conceived'.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> The main reason for the closure of several Concert Societies established in Italy was essentially the lack of financial support, coupled with general negative criticism. However, the survival of these societies often depended on the presence of strong personalities and valuable artists in leadership roles.

<sup>204</sup> The Paris Exhibition took place in May-November 1878.

<sup>205</sup> See F. BASCIALLI, 'L'attività concertistica: la programmazione' in *Milano Musicale 1861-1897*, pp. 81-146.

<sup>206</sup> Letter from Aldo Nosedà to Giuseppe Martucci, April 1890 (GB-Lcm MS 15111), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, p. 22-4.

Not only did Nosedà secure Martucci's presence and support for the Milanese Orchestral Society,<sup>207</sup> he even managed for the Society to present the première of Martucci's First Symphony, thereby depriving Bologna of the opportunity.<sup>208</sup> Martucci's Symphony No. 1, Op. 75, had its première in Milan on November 29, 1895, leaving a significant international impression and even drawing the interest of German musicians.<sup>209</sup> In fact, Hermann Wolff, the financial manager of the Berlin Philharmonic, sought to include Martucci's composition in the upcoming concert season conducted by Arthur Nikisch.<sup>210</sup> A letter from Wolff to Martucci, published in *Pagine Sparse*, reports the impressive outcome of this work in Germany showing evident interest of Germans in Italian symphonic compositions. Considering that Italians had been looking until then at the tradition of German music as a model to emulate, this can be seen as a significant achievement indeed.<sup>211</sup>

Similar to Milan, Turin also looked at Martucci with admiration and as a reference point. It was in fact at the 1884 Turin National Exhibition that Martucci was officially recognised as a respectable orchestra conductor and musician. On this occasion, Martucci performed conducting his Naples orchestra and stood out for his exceptional artistic abilities, profound musical knowledge, open-mindedness, and dedication to cultural advancement.<sup>212</sup> It was consequently widely acknowledged that Naples had reached a higher standard of music under Martucci's leadership, and his capacity to inspire and initiate cultural transformations was seen as crucial in facilitating the renaissance of Italian instrumental music.<sup>213</sup> An 1892 article in the

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<sup>207</sup> 'A good orchestra, at La Scala, in Milan, among friends who appreciate it, must tempt an artist as you are. And for us, Martucci's name in the programme will be an excellent guarantee of income'. Letter from Aldo Nosedà to Giuseppe Martucci, April 1890 (GB-Lcm MS 15111), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 22-4.

<sup>208</sup> 'Everyone is happy about the really artistic event that I am preparing for them featuring your Symphony. Let the Bolognese not be jealous: they will listen to it later!'. Letter from Aldo Nosedà to Giuseppe Martucci, October 1895 (GB-Lcm MS 15124), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 46-7.

<sup>209</sup> The performance of instrumental works in Germany, notably Berlin, was generally considered the ultimate level of recognition, not only for Italian composers but also for composers from other European countries, as in the case of Arthur Sullivan (1886) and Charles Villiers Stanford (1889).

<sup>210</sup> Herman Wolff's letters to Martucci about the arrangements for the performance of Martucci's symphony have been published for the first time in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 52-4.

<sup>211</sup> Conversely, this document also significantly shows that even the German audience was not necessarily comprised of erudite and musically cultivated people: 'There was less applause during the concert. The audience is less musical: it is made up of bankers, men of the world (who get bored) etc.'. Letter from Hermann Wolff to Giuseppe Martucci, 3 March 1896 (GB-Lcm MS 15097), published in F. NARDACCI ed., *Pagine sparse*, pp. 53-4.

<sup>212</sup> See G. DEPANIS, *I concerti popolari ed il teatro Regio di Torino*, vol. 2, pp. 211-86.

<sup>213</sup> In his memoirs, Giuseppe Depanis describes the arrival of the Neapolitan orchestra in Turin by saying that there were no great expectations either for the quality of orchestral playing or the abilities of its conductor, Martucci, who was considered too young and inexperienced. Musicians arrived at the station, unkempt and tired after the long train journey, and utterly disoriented. They looked comical to the Turin committee, and their homesickness for their native place aroused genuine sympathy all around the city. Nonetheless, they made a brave

*Gazzetta Piemontese* described Martucci as one of the best ‘modern conductors’, with a great knowledge of the classics, and praised him for keeping himself away from opera - which would have been ‘an unnecessary distraction to his art’.<sup>214</sup> This comment highlights a change in how the role of the conductor was conceived, which marks a further stage in the development of Italy’s musical culture. The conductor was no longer confined to simply leading the orchestra with a steady beat and added expression but now was at liberty to impose his own vision and interpretation of the music as it was happening elsewhere in Europe.

This shift is most evident in the career of Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957), who began his orchestral career in Turin. Toscanini was involved in the symphonic concerts for the Concerti Popolari Society,<sup>215</sup> founded by Giuseppe Dejanis (1853-1942), a lawyer and amateur violinist of sophisticated cultural tastes who acted as a pivotal figure in Turin's historical context.<sup>216</sup> As with the other Italian orchestral societies mentioned in this commentary, Dejanis’ Society was more inclined to feature German composers, with the main ambition of performing all of Beethoven’s symphonies. With Toscanini the programming was extended to a wider range of composers, including alongside the Viennese classics, also Wagner, Brahms, Schumann, Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Grieg, Chabrier, Smetana, Saint-Saëns, Bruckner and Tchaikovsky, whose first Italian performance of the *Pathétique* Symphony was in Turin in 1898.<sup>217</sup> However, even Toscanini consulted Martucci for advice on concert programming, becoming later a strong promoter of Martucci’s music in the United States when he moved there in 1908.<sup>218</sup>

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attempt at the concert, and Martucci was said by the critics to be ‘marvellous without exaggeration’. See G. DEPANIS, *I concerti popolari ed il teatro Regio di Torino*, vol. 2, pp. 244-9. See also F. PERRINO, *Giuseppe Martucci*, p. 120.

<sup>214</sup> *Gazzetta Piemontese*, 28 November 1892.

<sup>215</sup> The Concerti Popolari Society was modelled on Padeloup's Parisian Concerts Populaire. Among the founders were the composer Gualfardo Bercanovich (1840-1908), the pianist Carlo Rossaro (1827-1878), the music critic Ippolito Valetta (1848-1911), Vittorio Radicati di Marmorito (1831-1923) and the composer and violinist Stefano Tempia (1832-1878).

<sup>216</sup> E. QUADRONE, ‘Giuseppe Dejanis, questo grande sconosciuto’, *Torino – Rivista mensile della città e del Piemonte*, vol. 30, n. 12, December 1954, pp. 23-5; D. SORANI, *Giuseppe Dejanis e la società dei concerti. Musica a Torino fra Otto e Novecento* (Torino: Centro Studi Piemontesi 1988).

<sup>217</sup> R. C. MARSH, *Toscanini and the Art of Orchestral Performance* (London: George Allen and Unwin 1956), p. 17; H. SACHS, *Toscanini* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1978), p. 53.

<sup>218</sup> On the occasion of the 1898 Turin Great Exhibition concerts, for instance, Toscanini included British composers, in a similar programme to Martucci’s Bolognese ‘English Concert’. This information is deduced from an autograph letter from Martucci to Dejanis (31 May 1898) reproduced in G. DEPANIS, *I concerti popolari ed il teatro Regio di Torino*, vol. 2, p. 248. Martucci suggests performing Stanford or Cowen’s works, rather than Parry’s Symphonic Variations, which he considered to be a great and important piece of music but not appropriate for the audience of the Exhibition.

Toscanini's musical vision, aligned with Depanis' idea of music as 'pure art' (intended not as mere entertainment) and emphasizing the cultivation of the audience's musical taste, proved to be highly appealing to the Milanese musical milieu, which consistently sought such visionary figures. Not surprisingly then, in 1898, he was given the highly prestigious role of chief conductor at La Scala in Milan. It can be argued that Arturo Toscanini ended up personifying the Turinese serious musical culture that Depanis had foreseen as a possibility and had been working towards. On the other hand, it was thanks to Depanis that a process of music education started in Turin and a good level of sophistication was eventually achieved between 1880 and 1900.

The foundation of a Liceo Musicale in 1866 was a consequence of Depanis' efforts.<sup>219</sup> Municipal authorities originally provided funding and support for the music school but on the condition that the focus should emphasize its practical benefit to the city. Interestingly, the city governors refused to allocate funds for a violin course, perceiving the violin as an instrument associated purely with personal enjoyment, and considering the lengthy time of study required to train professional violinists as a burden, not a benefit to the city's economy.<sup>220</sup> However, it was not the case that violin instruction was excluded from the school, because the violin remained an integral instrument in theatre orchestras. Rather, the funding for violin instruction had to come from private sources instead of public funds – in this the city governors demonstrated their misunderstanding of the objectives of a conservatoire education. The perplexing position of the Turin governors becomes further evident through their decision to establish a different school dedicated to the teaching of wind and brass instruments, run in association with the Municipal Wind Band.<sup>221</sup> This may have reflected a deliberate social distinction, as students learning wind and brass instruments were often identified with the working classes and individuals who had grown up in orphanages. In other words, the school was not designed to be inclusive, either socially or musically.

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<sup>219</sup> The Liceo Musicale was founded in 1866 and officially inaugurated on May 15 1867. See A. BASSO, *Il Conservatorio di musica Giuseppe Verdi di Torino: Storia e documenti dalle origini al 1970* (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese 1971).

<sup>220</sup> 'È questa un'arte di diletto ed i diletto chi vuol procurarseli è giusto che se li paghi e non li faccia pagare dai contribuenti. D'altronde per formare professori di violino ci vogliono dai cinque ai sei anni e pochissimi riescono, cosicché il Municipio avrà speso troppo denaro prima di poterne vedere i frutti', ['This is an art of pleasure and those who want to obtain pleasures should be paying for them and not expecting the taxpayers to pay for them. On the other hand, it takes five to six years to train violin teachers and very few succeed, so the Council will have spent too much money before being able to see the fruits of their investment']. From the Minutes of the Turin Municipal Council 1868, C-CL, quoted in A. BASSO, *Il Conservatorio di musica Giuseppe Verdi di Torino*, pp. 61-2.

<sup>221</sup> See L. AVERSANO, *La musica nella scuola tra Cavour e l'Italia unita*, p. 76.

Literary subjects were also absent from the Turin Liceo's curriculum. This prompted composer Gaetano Foschini (1836-1908) and lawyer/music enthusiast Francesco Villani to remedy the situation in 1891. They offered to give lectures and a series of conferences on music history and aesthetics to the students studying counterpoint and composition. While the Liceo's governors accepted this proposal to provide teaching in academic music subjects, the local government representatives later refused that the school should itself continue to fund these classes, because of the additional expense.<sup>222</sup>

In light of this, it may seem surprising that Turin should have been the birthplace of the first musicological journal, the *Rivista Musicale Italiana* (1894). It was founded by a group of music scholars and intellectuals from across Italy,<sup>223</sup> inspired by Guido Adler's *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft*.<sup>224</sup> As a quarterly publication, the *Rivista* provided a platform for young Italian musicologists and historians, influenced in their study of primary source materials by Adler's precepts about musicological scholarship and his tabulation of its fields of study.<sup>225</sup>

In conclusion, Milan and Turin's historical reputation for progressiveness and business acumen did not eventually prevent cultural development, thanks to the visionary efforts of select individuals. By establishing music societies and organising orchestral concert seasons, these pioneers fostered an environment where entrepreneurship and artistic expression coexisted easily. Their determination to bridge the gap between business and culture ensured that these cities flourished artistically while maintaining their status as economic centres. The bigger success was therefore to nurture a dynamic synergy that enriched the cultural environment, demonstrating that progress and artistic growth could go hand in hand.

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<sup>222</sup> By 1911 the history of music was still not included in the Turin Liceo's curriculum. The occasional musicological conferences hosted in the institution were in fact considered enough to enrich the students' knowledge.

<sup>223</sup> It included the philosopher and musicologist Romualdo Giani (1868-1931) of Turin and the musicologist and music critic Luigi Torchi (1858-1920) of Bologna.

<sup>224</sup> G. ADLER ed., *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, vol. 1, 1885. Guido Adler (1855-1941) was among the pioneering contributors to the *Rivista Musicale Italiana*. One of his earliest translated articles (by Luigi Torchi), appeared in the third volume of the *Rivista* in 1896, titled 'I "Componimenti musicali per il cembalo" di Teofilo Muffat e il posto che essi occupano nella storia della Suite per pianoforte' (*Rivista Musicale Italiana*, vol. 3, 1896, pp. 1-35).

<sup>225</sup> See B. BUJIĆ ed., *Music in European thought, 1851-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988), pp. 348-53.



### *Florence: Music tradition in the cradle of Italian culture*

In contrast, Florence stood out for its thriving intellectual and artistic milieu, its literature, art, and classical music heritage.<sup>226</sup> It was a symbol of Italy's past, considered the cradle of the Italian cultural tradition. Furthermore, its flourishing economy and liberal activities made it particularly welcoming to the influence of foreign cultures. Tourism was especially fostered, becoming a primary resource and many of the visitors who settled in Florence also contributed to the intellectual growth of this city. For instance, we may point to the Protestant merchant from Geneva, Giovan Pietro Vieusseux (1779-1863) who founded the *Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario Vieusseux* (1819),<sup>227</sup> or the Frenchman Felice Lemonnier (1806-1884), who established a publishing house that introduced a vast array of European literary works.<sup>228</sup> Furthermore, the proliferation of libraries, academies, educational institutes, and universities contributed to making Tuscany a stronghold of culture.<sup>229</sup>

In this context, the long-standing tradition of music patronage in Florence, dating back to the era of the Medici Court, was highly relevant. In particular, the Habsburg-Lorraine family, a branch of the royal Habsburg lineage, played a significant role in promoting the circulation of Austro-German instrumental music in Florence over time. Interestingly, while Florence has a historical association with opera, it also contributed to the growing enthusiasm for modern instrumental music, establishing itself as a leader in the Italian resurgence of this genre.

The reception Franz Liszt received upon his arrival in October 1838 demonstrates how Florence set itself apart from other Italian centres. In fact, Liszt discovered there a more sophisticated musical environment than he had encountered in the other Italian cities he had visited.<sup>230</sup> While touring Italy in that same year, and just before arriving in Florence, Liszt wrote to Robert Schumann saying 'I will not induce you to come to Italy. Your sympathies would be

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<sup>226</sup> L. PINZAUTI, 'Prospettive per uno studio sulla musica a Firenze nell'Ottocento', *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, vol. 2, n. 2, 1969, pp. 255-73.

<sup>227</sup> The *Gabinetto* hosted Italian and foreign leading literary men, poets, and intellectuals. Within this environment, the periodical *Antologia* was founded with the purpose of circulating literary and political ideas. In 1833, during the period of the first revolutions, the periodical was censored by the Austrians because of its liberal orientation. It started to be published again, as *Nuova Antologia*, in 1866.

<sup>228</sup> Lemonnier also contributed to circulating Italian literature: more than 2000 copies of Dante's works were published and a complete collection of Foscolo's works was edited by Giuseppe Mazzini.

<sup>229</sup> G. MANICA ed., *Firenze Capitale Europea della cultura e della ricerca scientifica. La vigilia del 1865* (Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa 2014).

<sup>230</sup> See G. NARDI, *Con Liszt a Firenze. Il soggiorno di Franz Liszt e Marie d'Agoult negli anni 1838-1839*, R. Mascagni ed. (Firenze: LoGisma 2015), pp. 38-9.

too deeply wounded there. If they have even heard that Beethoven and Weber ever existed, it is as much as they have done'.<sup>231</sup> However, Liszt eventually chose to prolong his stay in Florence beyond his initial plans, establishing connections with local artists and intellectuals and leaving an impact on the city's music environment.<sup>232</sup>

In 1840, soon after Liszt departed from Florence, the musical periodical *Rivista Musicale di Firenze* was founded by Ferdinando Giorgetti and Luigi Picchianti and launched by the publisher and musician Maximilian Leidesdorf (1787-1840).<sup>233</sup> An introductory article on the first issue, written by the chief editor Andrea Luigi Mazzini (1818-1849),<sup>234</sup> stated quite clearly that the aim of the journal was to rediscover the concept of 'real Art', focusing on instrumental music. Mazzini asserted that artists must possess literary and philosophical knowledge, emphasizing the importance of these aspects in their work. Therefore, he urged Italians to change their reputation as musicians with limited cultural depth, as this was a major criticism levelled by the 'Oltremontani' against Italian music.<sup>235</sup>

The *Rivista* also included articles dedicated to opera composers and reviews of modern opera performances discussed in a more analytical and critical way, instead of a mere reportage of the event.<sup>236</sup> The aim was to give the reading public a more intellectual insight into musical works, inviting them to take a more philosophical approach, so that its impact and significance for the individual hearer lasted beyond the performance event itself. The invitation to a different approach to music was not only addressed to listeners but to composers too. From the perspective of *Rivista* contributors, Italian composers lacked the superior artistic outlook and ideals of the best German composers. It was as though Italian music was not ambitious enough to embrace aesthetic or philosophical conceptions, but simply followed

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<sup>231</sup> Letter to Robert Schumann, May 1838, in LA MARA ed., *Letters of Franz Liszt*, C. Bache trans. (London: H. Grevel 1894), vol. 1, p. 25.

<sup>232</sup> Liszt's first public recital in Florence took place on 8 November 1838 at the Teatro Standish, a very small and 'intimate' venue more akin to a salon, located inside a private palace, owned by the English Lord, Rowland Stephenson Standish (1788-1843). According to the review, Liszt's performance aroused such great enthusiasm among the 'amazed' audience that he was called back to repeat his virtuosic *Galop Chromatique*, with 'endless applause'. See G. NARDI, *Con Liszt a Firenze*, pp. 108-11. Nardi refers to *Il Giornale di Commercio*, n. 46, 14 November 1838 and *Gazzetta di Firenze*, n. 133, 6 November 1838.

<sup>233</sup> See G. NARDI, *Con Liszt a Firenze*, pp. 115-18.

<sup>234</sup> Luigi Mazzini was a lawyer and literary man, particularly interested in German Romanticism, and married to the daughter of Leidesdorf.

<sup>235</sup> See *Rivista Musicale di Firenze*, vol. 1, n. 1, 1840, pp. 1-2.

<sup>236</sup> 'Analysis' in this context meant a survey of the plot of each opera, followed by an annotated list of the numbers that make up each act, observations on form, rhythm, texture, and harmony, as well as an assessment of the dramatic appropriateness or originality of the music.

compositional practicalities. In reviewing Mercadante's opera *Le due illustri rivali*, for instance, it was acknowledged that this work was one of the best that the Italian repertoire could boast, but proposed that the work's harmonic beauty was the result of theoretical calculation to satisfy operatic requirements, rather than sublime inspiration: 'It seems to us to be somewhat lacking in pure and original melody, which is the same as to say: all its harmonic beauty is more the result of theoretical calculations aimed at developing material effects or forms, rather than a truly harmonious whole, originating from a sublimely inspired and creative capability'.<sup>237</sup>

This more philosophical orientation is particularly reflected by Abramo Basevi (1818-1885), one of the leading Florentine music critics of the 1850s. Basing his views about music appreciation on the Kantian idea of 'perception' as an activity of consciousness that elaborates empirical sensations,<sup>238</sup> he made a distinction between 'absolute' judgments and judgments of taste, criticizing the attitude of current audiences whose preference was for lighter types of music that did not require demanding listening. Basevi argued that only a more attentive and engaged type of listening could make possible a true understanding of the process of abstract instrumental music. His arguments were influenced by the ancient Greek concept of the ability of the 'power of music' to act on humans.<sup>239</sup> Building upon this perspective, Basevi elaborated his own concept of harmonic theory, which proposed that psychological feelings/sensations were generated in the human brain by certain harmonic combinations of musical sounds.<sup>240</sup>

His contribution to the new musical culture in Florence was also practical. In 1859 Basevi established the Beethoven Matinée, which offered an opportunity to popularise chamber music repertoire. It later developed into the *Società del Quartetto* (1861), the first Quartet Society in Italy, founded in collaboration with the publisher and musician Gualberto Guidi (1817-1883). It also included a competition for composers; the winning piece would be

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<sup>237</sup> *Rivista Musicale di Firenze*, vol. 1, n. 4, 1840, p. 12.

<sup>238</sup> See A. CHEGAI, 'Sui progressi della percezione. Abramo Basevi e i fondamenti psicologici dell'armonia', *Acta Musicologica*, vol. 72, n. 2, 2000, pp. 121-43; see also J. ROSENBERG, 'Abramo Basevi: A Music Critic in search of a Context', *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 86, n. 4, 2002, pp. 630-88.

<sup>239</sup> 'The influence of music on human beings cannot reasonably be questioned. History, tradition and daily experience show the power that music exerts on the passions, by exciting or calming them, on feelings and affections by increasing their energy'. See A. BASEVI, 'Potenza della musica', *Gazzetta musicale di Firenze*, vol. 1, n. 23, p. 17. November 1853, pp. 89-90; n. 24, 24 November 1853, pp. 93-4; n. 25, 1 December 1853, p. 97; n. 26, 8 December 1853, pp. 101-2.

<sup>240</sup> *L'Introduzione ad un nuovo sistema d'armonia* (1862), *Studi sull'armonia* (1865) and *Beethoven op. 18 con analisi dei sei quartetti* (1874), are among his main publications. For a complete list of Basevi's publications on the theory of music see G. SANGUINETTI, 'Un secolo di teoria della musica in Italia. Bibliografia critica (1850-1950)', *Fonti musicali italiane*, n. 2, 1997, pp. 155-248.

published as a miniature score by Guidi. In addition, an official music journal was established. Named *Boccherini*, in tribute to the Tuscan composer Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805) who was identified as a representative of Italian instrumental music,<sup>241</sup> the journal included essays on aesthetics, critics, theory and early music. It also discussed opera matters, and opera composers, including Giuseppe Verdi, who represented at the time the image of Italian music all over the world. Yet, Verdi faced criticism from the Florentine 'radical wing' for being too conservative and unsupportive of music culture progress. That stance was often interpreted as a lack of openness towards musical advancement. In 1859, Basevi published his work *Studio sulle Opere di G. Verdi* which meticulously analyses Verdi's operas from *Nabucco* (1841) to *Aroldo* (1857). While Basevi's analytical methods were appreciated, his evident animosity towards Verdi's music sparked considerable disagreement and criticism among Verdi's supporters.<sup>242</sup>

In terms of music education, Florence had a longstanding tradition rooted in the Accademia delle Belle Arti, where instruction in various musical disciplines was provided since 1811. However, a dedicated music school, the Istituto Musicale, was founded in 1849, becoming the Regio Istituto Musicale di Firenze after Italy's Unification in 1860.<sup>243</sup> Under the guidance of Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata (1807-1881), a talented composer, lawyer, and music critic, the institute flourished. Collaborating with Basevi, Casamorata particularly promoted instrumental music through the concerts he organized at his villa near Santa Croce and by founding an association for wind instruments called the Società artistico-musicale degli strumenti a fiato, in 1864. He also established a museum of historical musical instruments within the Istituto Musicale and donated his private collection to it. Furthermore, he enriched the curriculum by introducing music history and aesthetics, adopting a musicological approach that improved students' training in the orchestral repertoire. The Regio Istituto Musicale became in effect a catalyst for substantial changes in Florence's musical landscape and encouraged the

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<sup>241</sup> The *Boccherini* was however preceded by the *Gazzetta musicale di Firenze* (active from 1853 to 1855) and *L'Armonia*. It circulated mainly in the northern areas, with little presence in the main southern centres: Rome and Naples.

<sup>242</sup> See A. BASEVI, *Studio sulle Opere di G. Verdi* (Firenze: Tipografia Tofani 1859) and A. BASEVI, *The operas of Giuseppe Verdi*, E. Schneider, S. Castelvechchi trans., S. Castelvechchi ed. (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press 2014).

<sup>243</sup> In 1910 the Institute was renamed Luigi Cherubini and remained so to the present day. See A. DAMERINI, *Il R. Conservatorio di musica 'Luigi Chrubini' di Firenze* (Firenze: Felice Le Monnier 1941).

proliferation of additional orchestral societies, like the Società Orchestrale Fiorentina, led by Jefte Sbolci.<sup>244</sup>

Indeed, Florence stood as a reference point in the nineteenth-century renaissance of instrumental music. Florentines demonstrated that an elevated intellectual approach was the only path to compete with other European countries in the realm of music. With this in mind, future research aimed at a more fully elaborated history of the instrumental music renaissance in Italy will need to take into account the importance of the sophistication and ambitions of Florence's cultural environment, which influenced the diverse and interconnected realities of the Italian centres elaborated in this commentary.

In conclusion, by recognising the significance and distinctiveness of the musical cultures of individual centres, and the transformative changes they underwent after 1860, we achieve a more profound and multifaceted appreciation of Italian musical history. My work partly aims to investigate the extent to which the late development of Italian instrumental music and music culture during the nineteenth century can be attributed to political instability and a lack of general education among the population. By emphasizing the progress made in this field after the post-Unification educational reforms, I intend to provide evidence that the limited education of the Italian population had hindered until then the equal development of the instrumental genre compared with the rest of Europe. Hence, a comprehensive and comparative examination of the nineteenth-century Italian education system, encompassing both musical and general aspects and the institutions involved, will be essential in future research for a deeper understanding of this historical subject.

Furthermore, it becomes clearer how the distinct economies and political status of different cities played a crucial role in shaping musical opportunities. The presence or absence of foreign influences as well as the nature of existing pedagogical institutions (clerical or secular) also determined the extent to which formal music education could flourish.

Ultimately, the actions of key individuals had a profound effect on the varying timelines of instrumental music's development throughout Italy over the course of the nineteenth century. Innovators who championed music education, composers who pushed the boundaries of composition, and conductors who introduced new styles all left their imprints. The support or

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<sup>244</sup> The Sbolci's Orchestral Society formed the basis of the future Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, founded in 1928 by Vittorio Gui. Sbolci particularly encouraged the performance of Italian contemporary instrumental music.

resistance they encountered from local authorities, patrons, and communities played a vital role in either hastening or impeding the progress of instrumental music. In essence, the evolution of this genre in Italy during the nineteenth century was a complex interplay of political, educational, economic, and individual factors.

Researching the influence of all these aspects on Italian musical culture will provide a much-needed complement to the large body of existing scholarship. So far, the focus of most musicological attention has been on opera's relationship with Italian nation-building, with Verdi serving as a key reference. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier in this commentary, opera's contribution in various ways to the Risorgimento process of unification explains its strong identification with the country worldwide. However, from the preliminary research I have conducted, it emerges that Risorgimento ideas were deeply absorbed in instrumental music as well. In fact, individuals and concert societies desperately strove to make this genre both 'national' and 'popular' as a contribution to the formation of a new national identity. Given instrumental music's association with literature, philosophy, and a cultivated audience, its promoters aimed to redefine Italy as a cultured nation with a refined musical taste, well-able to hold its own in the European context.

The case of composer Giuseppe Martucci (1856-1909) is central to this discussion, as he effectively contributed to achieving a broad and comprehensive level of symphonic musical culture throughout Italy by the end of the 19th century. While my edited book, 'Pagine sparse,' sets the context in which Martucci operated, my future study will delve deeper into his activities as a concert organizer and conservatoire director in Naples and Bologna, as well as his influence on Italian contemporary music. I intend to demonstrate how Martucci managed to connect the North with the South, making a significant contribution to the unification of Italian musical culture, producing a sort of 'Risorgimento' of instrumental music.

With this knowledge in hand, we can also better appreciate the resilience of those composers and musicians who challenged these circumstances to make their newly unified country a European musical and cultural hub. Hence, they deserve to be rediscovered and granted a place in the history of Italian and European music during the long nineteenth century. Studying this period from a different perspective would be valuable, and the development and future completion of this preliminary research will contribute to achieving this goal.

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