NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

SELECTED EARLY ITALIAN SONGS OF MARIO CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO

A RESEARCH DOCUMENT

SUBMITTED TO THE BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

For the degree

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

Program of Voice and Opera

By
Klaus Georg

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS
August 2014
ABSTRACT

Selected Early Italian Songs of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco

Klaus Georg

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco is remembered best today as an important composer of music for guitar and a respected pedagogue. His substantial contribution to the repertoire of songs for voice and piano has been relatively neglected.

This document focuses on the songs for voice and piano written by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco in Italian before the year 1921. Common themes that emerge by investigating the songs of this period are an emphasis on Florentine works, the prevalence of Catholic imagery, and a shift towards using important works of poetry as source texts for the song.

The emphasis of this document is to provide background, translations, and performance suggestions for musicians interested in preparing these works for performance. Those songs that are in the public domain are reproduced in the appendix. The songs from this period not written in Italian and those discussed at length by other authors are only briefly mentioned. Songs discussed include Ninna nanna, Fuori i barbari!, Girotondo dei golosi, l’Infinito, Sera, 3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco, and Briciole.
DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my wife Marie Patricia Worley Georg, without whose constant support this degree would not have been possible.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to my committee, for being so generous with their time and expertise and so responsive during the revision process: Karen Brunssen, Theresa Brancaccio, and Jesse Rosenberg. Donna Su was also very helpful in the myriad administrative tasks this project entailed.

I have had many musical mentors over the years to whom I am eternally grateful, especially Karen Brunssen, Alan Darling, Arnold Rawls, John Harger Stewart, and Emilia Santo. Thank you to my mother, Anna Maria Georg, for her constant support of my singing over the years, for advising on Italian translations, and of course for watching Oliver during the final phases of this project. A heartfelt thank you to my aunt, Francesca Cundari, for having the courage to tell me what I needed to hear and for providing a wonderful place to stay while I was studying in Rome. Thank you also to Rebecca Shelley for making me join choir over 20 years ago, William Funke for teaching me to express poetry in music, and James Brink for showing me that making good music is its own reward. Those early influences shaped my subsequent career.

In memory of Kurt Georg.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION** .................................................................................................................. 6
  - Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 6
  - Review of Literature ............................................................................................................... 7
  - Life ........................................................................................................................................... 10

**CHAPTER II: DISCUSSION OF THEMES IN THE SONGS** .............................................................. 18
  - “È sì grande Firenze!” ............................................................................................................ 18
  - The “Purest and Highest Poetry” .......................................................................................... 19
  - A Jewish Composer in a Catholic World .......................................................................... 23

**CHAPTER III: BRICIOLE** ............................................................................................................... 28
  - Background ............................................................................................................................ 28
  - The Texts ............................................................................................................................... 32
  - Analysis of the Songs .......................................................................................................... 33

**CHAPTER IV: 3 FIORETTI DI SANTO FRANCESCO** ...................................................................... 40
  - Background ............................................................................................................................ 40
  - The Texts ............................................................................................................................... 43
  - Analysis .................................................................................................................................. 47

**CHAPTER V: INDIVIDUAL SONGS** .......................................................................................... 62
  - Ninna Nanna ........................................................................................................................... 62
  - Fuori i barbari! ....................................................................................................................... 64
  - Girotondo dei golosi ............................................................................................................ 67
  - L’Infinito ................................................................................................................................ 69
  - Sera ......................................................................................................................................... 73

**CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS** .................................................................................................. 78

**APPENDIX A: COMPLETE LIST OF SONGS** ........................................................................... 81

**APPENDIX B: TRANSLATIONS OF EXCERPTS FROM UNA VITA DI MUSICA** .............. 87
  - In C Major .............................................................................................................................. 87
  - On Faith .................................................................................................................................. 88

**APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF SONGS DISCUSSED** ................................................................. 90

**APPENDIX D: COPIES OF SONGS DISCUSSED** ....................................................................... 92

**BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES** ............................................................................ 120

**BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MUSICAL EDITIONS** .............................................................................. 124

**RECOMMENDED DISCOGRAPHY** ............................................................................................ 125
Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction

The musician Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, despite being most famous today for his extensive works for guitar and for his towering influence as a teacher of an entire generation of Hollywood composers, was actually most prolific in the genre of art song for voice and piano, a genre he loved and admired. Italian by birth and American by circumstance, Castelnuovo-Tedesco set to music hundreds of poems in many different languages. The earliest of these songs are predominantly in Italian. Many of these early songs have not been the subject of scholarly investigation and do not occupy the place in the song repertoire that they deserve. This paper aims to fill some of the lacunae in extant scholarship on the songs of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, focusing primarily on those written in and before 1921 and in his native Italian. This date serves as a convenient point of separation between Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s promising but youthful compositional style and the mature style of songwriting that would last the rest of the composer’s career.

This paper will serve primarily to provide historical context and background for the songs and their texts, as well as light analysis and general interpretative guidance that may hopefully be of use for performers preparing Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s works.

Chapter I is a summary of the life of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and a general discussion of the historical context in which he was composing.

Chapter II consists of a brief investigation of themes common to all of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s compositional output and to his early Italian songs, specifically.
The balance of the paper, Chapters III-V, deals with specific songs and sets of songs, the majority of which have not been studied in any previous scholarly work. All of the songs in this study are translated with a word for word (rather than an idiomatic or poetic) approach. As much as possible, I have attempted to identify mistakes in the published scores.

Furthermore, those chapters of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s extensive autobiography that pertain to the songs from this period are translated in their entirety in the appendix. The appendix also includes a list of all known songs written by the composer, both published and unpublished, with information on language, source text, instrumentation, publication information where applicable, and copies of some of the music here discussed.

Review of Literature

The two most valuable sources in any investigation of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco are his posthumously published memoirs, *Una vita di musica*,¹ edited by James Westby, and *Censure di un musicista*² by Cosimo Malorgio. The latter book discusses in depth not only Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s career, but also his relationships with his two greatest mentors, Pizzetti and Casella, and the political situation in Italian music during the fascist years, 1922-1943. Though difficult to find outside of Italy, Alberto Compagno’s self-published book *Gli anni fiorentini di Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* (a revised and expanded version of his graduating thesis) is another valuable source of biographical information and historical context for the composer’s early career.³

---

Several studies of songs by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco have already been written. The book *Italian Art Song* by Ruth C. Lakeway and Robert C. White contains a type of analysis similar to that provided here, and includes the entirety of the song cycle *Stelle cadenti*. This book serves as a model for the structure of Chapters III-V of this paper. Because of the cycle’s inclusion in that book, *Stelle cadenti* is excluded here. The book additionally discusses the songs *l’Infinito*, *La barba bianca*, *Due preghiere per i bimbi d’Italia*, *Sera*, and *Cinque poesie romanesche*. Of these, *L’infinito* and *Sera* are also discussed here because of their chronological placement and their relative importance within my discussion. Besides *Italian Art Song*, no other sources were found that specifically investigate Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s songs in Italian specifically.

In 1981 Sylvanna Prechtl wrote a DM dissertation on the *Shakespeare Songs* as well as the unpublished *Shakespeare Sonnets*. This is a substantial and comprehensive work and has served as a significant source for my study.

David Lee Alt also did a study of five of the *Shakespeare Songs* in his 1980 DMA dissertation. Significantly less ambitious in scope, Alt’s work nevertheless has additional insights to offer for the songs he selects. Neither Alt nor Prechtl lists the other as a source, and all the songs covered by Alt are also discussed in Prechtl’s more comprehensive work.

In 2001 Oliver Wendell Worthington II wrote a DMA dissertation on the Spanish cycle *Coplas*, also from this early period of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s career.

---

6 David Lee Alt, “Analysis of five Shakesperean settings by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco” (DMA diss., University of Iowa, 1980).
Eric Robles’s 2004 DM dissertation on the cycle for voice and guitar *Vogelweide* is relevant to the discussion as well. However, *Vogelweide* is for different instrumentation, in German, and from much later in Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s career than the songs here investigated and therefore will not be considered here.

Though not dealing with his songs specifically, a number of other studies on Castelnuovo-Tedesco have been conducted. Notable among these are Burton Scalin’s Ph.D. dissertation from 1980 on the composer’s operas and Paolo Gualdi’s 2010 DMA dissertation *A Study of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s Piedigrotta 1924: Rapsodia Napoletana*, which is commendable for its clarity of purpose and direct writing style.

Harriette Mildred Rosen’s 1991 Ph.D. dissertation *The Influence of Judaic Liturgical Music in Selected Secular Works of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Darius Milhaud* was also of particular interest during my own writing of Chapter II.

David S. Asbury’s 2005 DMA dissertation *20th-Century Romantic Serialism: The Opus 170 Greeting Cards of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* is also tangentially applicable, and of particular interest because James Westby, the editor of *Una vita di musica*, served on Dr. Asbury’s committee.

---

Life

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco was born in Florence on April 5, 1895. His family traces its roots back to Sephardic Jews who left Spain in 1492, and changed their name from Castella Nueva to Castelnuovo in the process. Tedesco was added to the family name by Mario’s grandfather Angelo, whose sister married a banker, Samuel Tedesco. When the Tedesco family remained childless, they left all their property to Angelo Castelnuovo’s family with the stipulation that the Tedesco name be carried on.

The young Mario was a prodigy on the piano and a hard and conscientious worker. His father was originally opposed to his son studying piano, an instrument he considered an important part of a female education, but not a male one. He preferred his son pursue athletic endeavors. However, at the age of nine, the young Mario studied piano secretly with his mother for a few months, and was able to play two pieces by Chopin to his father as a birthday gift. After this, his father recognized his son’s obvious talent and interest and relented. He let the boy begin private lessons in earnest with Mario’s distant cousin Eduardo Del Valle de Paz, who would later become his piano teacher at the conservatory as well.13 From the beginning, Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s interests tended towards improvisation and composition. His first official composition teacher was local composer Gino Modona, who encouraged the young composer and allowed him to begin finding his own signature style.14 Before studying composition officially at the conservatory level, Castelnuovo-Tedesco first completed a piano degree with Del Valle de Paz at the Istituto Cherubini in Florence. His solid piano technique would serve as the foundation for

13 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Vita, 68.
14 Ibid., 75-6.
the rest of his musical career; he went on to perform as a pianist, although performance was never his primary musical outlet.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco then went on to study composition with Ildebrando Pizzetti, the director of the Florence conservatory. Only fifteen years Mario’s senior, he was to be a lifelong friend and mentor to the young composer. From Pizzetti he learned to balance classical rigor with freedom of personal expression. Castelnuovo-Tedesco always remained grateful to Pizzetti for not attempting to crush his own individuality as a composer while at the same time firmly grounding him in compositional technique. Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s later success as a pedagogue in his own right surely stems in part from the pedagogical excellence of this early and influential teacher. In addition to a teacher and friend, Pizzetti was also an important early musical influence. The young composer was able to discuss his more established mentor’s works with him, review their manuscripts, and attend their premieres.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco took Pizzetti's technical exercises to heart. In one telling anecdote, when it came time for Mario to take his fugue exam, the young student explained to the maestro that he did not feel ready and that he'd like to wait another year to take the exam. Pizzetti replied, "If you are not ready, then who in this class is?" But Mario insisted, and he spent the next year writing one fugue per day in preparation for the exam. Pizzetti would later hold up this work ethic as a model for his students, adding "But I don't have to tell you he did this. You can hear it in his music." Contrapuntal rigor is a foundation of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s style. Similar to Brahms before him, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was an accomplished craftsman sometimes accused of being old-fashioned but certainly admired for his technical mastery.

---

15 Ibid., 88-9.
His early influences, besides Pizzetti, were Debussy and the French impressionists, and the Italian pianist and composer Casella, who went on to champion the young composer’s piano works. Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s early works tend toward the grandiose and abound with ideas not always expertly controlled, but as he matured as a composer, he began to strive towards greater simplicity and clarity. His youthful impressionism eventually matured into what is best described as a romantic neoclassical style. Despite his admiration for Casella, Castelnuovo-Tedesco never really attempted to write in the more austere neoclassical language of the Stravinsky-influenced composer. Similarly, despite respecting the members of the second Viennese school, Castelnuovo-Tedesco never really embraced serialism, although he did experiment with it on occasion.

Politically, Castelnuovo-Tedesco generally attempted to remain neutral. This applied to the politics of music in Italy as well, which were particularly tense in the inter-war years. During the 1920s Italian composers of the Generazione dell’Ottanta (The Generation of 1880)\(^\text{16}\) were at odds over the future of Italian music.\(^\text{17}\) Neoclassicists like Casella, many with French ties, encouraged a return to the golden age of Italian music in the time of Palestrina and Frescobaldi, rejecting the tradition of Italian romantic melodrama and verismo in particular. This faction also had a more cosmopolitan view of the direction in which Italian music should grow, looking for integration with the rest of Europe and to pure instrumental music as the path for the future. Pizzetti and his supporters, on the other hand, saw that the future of Italian music had much to

\(^{16}\)Important Italian composers born in this decade include Pizzetti, Casella, Respighi (who was actually born in 1879), and G. F. Malipiero. The term generazione dell’Ottanta is not well-defined but generally includes at least those four composers.

learn from the success of late nineteenth century Italian opera. While agreeing that verismo was a stepping-stone, they tended to see a more lyrical and explicitly Italian future for Italian music.\textsuperscript{18}

This disagreement culminated in a 1932 manifesto by Pizzetti and Respighi. Despite being grouped by others with his master Pizzetti, Castelnuovo-Tedesco also admired the neoclassical Casella and the French impressionists, and steadfastly refused to choose sides in the growing divide. Consequently, he refused to sign the manifesto. However, he stood relatively aloof from most other neoclassicism as well, especially that neoclassicism which associated itself with J. S. Bach while really only imitating the embryonic musical forms of the eighteenth century such as the Partita, Sonatina, or Concerto.\textsuperscript{19} Later on Castelnuovo-Tedesco himself wrote that he rejected labels and “any kind of ism.”\textsuperscript{20}

All of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s early works are either for solo piano or for voice and piano, and the influence of his beloved Florence is evident in many of them. Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s first important publication is Fuori i barbari! (Out with the Barbarians!), which is influential less from a musical perspective than a historical one. It became a well-known patriotic song during the First World War and was sung by soldiers throughout Italy. His earliest songs tend to be on texts of limited poetic value. During the mid-1920s Castelnuovo-Tedesco began finding inspiration for his songs in the works of great poets in general, and William Shakespeare in particular. Works from this early period include his first opera, La Mandragola, based on the Machiavelli play, and the Shakespeare Songs for voice and piano.

\textsuperscript{18} Gualdi, “Piedigrotta,” 15-6.
Around 1925, he discovered a book of Jewish prayers set to music by his grandfather in his grandfather’s library. These inspired him to write a suite for piano on Jewish themes (though not on his grandfather’s actual music, which Castelnuovo-Tedesco deemed of insufficient quality.)\(^{21}\) This work, *Le Danze del Re David*, is the first of many which drew on his Jewish heritage. In the late 1920s Castelnuovo-Tedesco came into his own as an orchestral composer, and his fame began to spread through Europe. His two violin concerti, the first composed in 1924 on Italian themes, the second in 1931 on Jewish ones, are important works from this period and were championed by the famous violinist Jascha Heifetz. These were followed by other significant concerti, including the cello concerto written for and premiered by Gregor Piatigorsky with Arturo Toscanini, who had also become a champion and friend to Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

During this period, the increasingly famous composer also occasionally performed as a concert pianist, mostly in his own works, those of his boyhood inspiration, Debussy, and a handful of contemporary Italian composers, Casella primary among them.

During the rise of Fascism in Italy in the 1930s, Castelnuovo-Tedesco managed to stay relatively clear of trouble, and in 1935 was actually invited by Benito Mussolini himself to compose incidental music to Rino Alessi’s play *Savonarola*, to great success.\(^{22}\) However, with the passing of the *leggri razziali* (racial laws) in November 1938, it became more difficult for the Castelnuovo-Tedesco family to continue living in Italy. The first of these laws to directly affect the family was the decree that Jews no longer attend public schools. That was enough to propel Castelnuovo-Tedesco to seek refuge elsewhere.

\(^{21}\) Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Vita*, 194-5.
\(^{22}\) Malorgio, *Censure*, 5.
In 1939 Castelnuovo-Tedesco fled Italy with his wife, Clara, and his two sons, Pietro and Lorenzo. Escaping first to Switzerland, they then emigrated, with Toscanini’s help, to upstate New York, where they spent part of a year. During this period Castelnuovo-Tedesco made his American debut playing his second piano concerto with the New York Philharmonic under Toscanini. The family eventually settled in Beverly Hills and Toscanini helped the expatriate composer find a position at MGM. Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s exile from his beloved Italy was very difficult at first. The irony that he, who first became known for a patriotic song around which anti-Austrian Italian soldiers rallied during the First World War, and later wrote a well-received Concerto Italiano, should be accused of being un-Italian and un-patriotic was not lost on Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Deeply wounded by this betrayal by his countrymen, Castelnuovo-Tedesco nevertheless continued to compose with undiminished fervor and also began writing music for the movies and teaching. Despite working on dozens of movies at MGM, the composer never fully embraced this career and regarded these compositions as works apart from his real output. Walter Arlen, New York Times music critic and friend of Castelnuovo-Tedesco, describes the composer’s relationship to his commercial music as follows:

He composes constantly, in ink, without piano, and, if for orchestra, directly into the score. What has been finished is neatly recorded, with dates and opus numbers, in two small books with florid covers.

There is a third book. Its cover matches the others. Its title is “Hollywood.” Its contents record a chapter of activities that Castelnuovo-Tedesco likes to keep strictly separate. He speaks of it with the same gentle amusement and disarmingly charming sarcasm he is wont to bestow upon compositions by some esteemed colleagues whose musical paths he deems in error.23

Perhaps stimulated by his exile, he increased his output of explicitly Jewish music, composing both a Sacred Service for the Sabbath Eve, only excerpts of which have ever been

published, and a *Memorial Service for the Departed*, in addition to several minor works on Jewish themes.

An important friendship with Andres Segovia inspired Castelnuovo-Tedesco to begin writing for guitar, and changed the course of his career. He began in 1932 with a set *Variations à travers les siècles*. His subsequent guitar concerto is a seminal work, considered the first of its kind. He also wrote many pieces for both solo guitar and for voice and guitar. He wrote a set of 24 guitar duets in all major and minor keys called *Les guitars bien temperées*, modeled on the *Well-tempered Clavier* of J.S. Bach. In fact, he is best remembered for his guitar music, both because of its quantity and quality and because Segovia was a strong champion who performed it frequently. He wrote several sets of songs with guitar accompaniment, including two major cycles, *Vogelweide* and *The Divan of Moses-Ibn-Ezra*.

Even after the war Castelnuovo-Tedesco remained in his adopted country, becoming an American citizen in 1946.\(^{24}\) Although the decision caused him and his wife some personal turmoil, in the end, they felt they owed America a debt of gratitude for receiving them when they had been treated as second class citizens in their native land. Castelnuovo-Tedesco also felt he could not trust in the Italian government, which, at the time, was in disarray.\(^{25}\) He did, however, make frequent visits to Italy in the 1950s and ‘60s and was frequently involved in the *Maggio Musicale Fiorentino*. His opera *The Merchant of Venice* won first prize in the *Concorso Campari* of 1958. After it was rejected by La Scala due in part to Pizzetti’s recommendation against its performance, a betrayal which caused Castelnuovo-Tedesco great anguish, it was performed at

\(^{24}\) *Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Vita*, 464.  
\(^{25}\) Ibid., 464-6.
the *Maggio Musicale* in 1961. Castelnuovo-Tedesco taught at the Los Angeles Conservatory and privately, counting among his pupils Andre Prévin as well as the influential film score composers Henry Mancini, Jerry Goldsmith, and John Williams, to name only a few of the most famous. His movie career wound down in the mid 1950s. While remaining active with teaching, he continued composing “serious” music throughout his life, though his style tended to be considered old-fashioned and his later work enjoyed limited success. His style did, in fact, remain uniform through his entire career. Perhaps as a consequence, a much higher fraction of his early works saw publication than of his later ones. He died of a heart attack in California in 1968, at the age of 72.

The majority of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s considerable body of work is for piano or voice and piano. Reckoned by opus number, the songs alone constitute approximately a quarter of his output. Nevertheless, he is remembered primarily as a teacher and as a pioneer in writing serious art music for the guitar. It is true that his guitar music is central to the repertoire for that instrument, and perhaps his most lasting legacy, but there is much of value in the rest of his work as well. This is especially true, in the opinion of this author, of his Italian songs for voice and piano, which are the focus of the rest of this paper.

---

Chapter II: Discussion of Themes in the Songs

“È si grande Firenze!”

Three major influences permeate not only the early Italian songs of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, but his entire composing career. The composer himself put it very succinctly when he stated his inspirations were three: “my home place (Florence and Tuscany), the Bible, and Shakespeare.”

His home city of Florence, and by extension the region of Tuscany and Italy in general is the first of these major influences. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's own autobiography spends considerable time describing both the physical appearance and the emotional significance of all the places around where he lived. Others have also noted the prevalence of Florence as an inspiration for much of his music, including his personal friend Roland von Weber:

“The music of Castelnuovo has been shaped, conditioned, given background by several unavoidable factors:
1. His Tuscan—more exactly, his Florentine—birth and culture. Those who know the hills of Tuscany, its trees, its skies, its seasons, its proverbial culture, find in this music its pure expression, and, in the songs and stage works, hear the texts of its greatest poets from Dante to Poliziano, from Machiavelli to Palazzeschi and Redi.

The importance of Florence to Castelnuovo-Tedesco's early songs is manifest primarily in his selection of texts. His love for his “home place” is apparent because a majority of the early songs he wrote are by Florentine poets, with many having a folk-influenced character. Coplas is a glaring exception, as it is a set of songs set to Spanish folk poetry. However, the Castelnuovo-Tedesco family was of Spanish Sephardic origin, and while his family had not lived in Spain for

400 years, he did maintain a sense of connection with his ancestral homeland. A trip to Spain in 1913 further inspired the young man; he wrote the song cycle two years later.

His cycle Stelle cadenti takes as its source Tuscan folk poems collected by d'Ancona in his book La poesia popolare Italiana.29 Also of local origin, the songs for Briciole are to texts by the young poet Aldo Palazzeschi, a native of Florence and friend of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's. At the time he had published his first few sets of poems and was well on his way to becoming a major figure in Italian literature. This leaves, of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s pre-Shakespearean phase, only the 3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco as not explicitly inspired by a sense of homeland. These pieces will be discussed at greater length in the second half of this chapter; however, it is worth noting that one of the things that drew Castelnuovo-Tedesco to these songs, as stated by the composer himself, was their simplicity and purity, characteristics which they share with many of the other texts alluded to thus far.30

The “Purest and Highest Poetry”

But in addition to provenance, a second characteristic of the poems was the importance of the quality of the poetry itself. Great poetry would go on to inspire the composer for the rest of his career. While he himself mentions Shakespeare as a major influence, an investigation of his oeuvre shows that the Bard was only one of many great poets whose poetry Castelnuovo-Tedesco frequently set to music. On this point the early songs are somewhat inconsistent with his later body of work. Many of his more successful songs from this period are settings of texts of dubious poetic value. The most successful in the popular sense of the earliest songs, Ninna nanna and Fuori i barbari!, are simple, strophic, and with limited piano parts; they are, after all,

---

29 Castelnuovo-Tedesco incorrectly lists the title as La poesia popolare Toscana in Vita, 113.
30 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Vita, 134.
not really art songs. The first is simply a salon song which was improvised on the spot and the other a patriotic ditty. But as the composer matured as a writer of songs he began to employ his already existing love for great poetry to select texts that were not only great on their own but would also bear the addition of music. Reflecting back later in life, Castelnuovo-Tedesco the teacher could clearly articulate the importance of a great source poem:

One of my ambitions has always been to wed my music with the purest and highest poetry in the form of the song for voice and piano. So great is my passion for this form of art that I once wrote, and I repeat it here, that if there is any composer I envy it is Franz Schubert for his Lieder.\(^{31}\)

In many ways, the first of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's songs to successfully combine great poetry and great music is l'Infinito. It is also the composer's most enduring song today outside of the Shakespeare Songs. Here he arrived at a mature musical language without the undue complications of some of his earlier works, such as the sometimes rambling 3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco or the interesting but fragmented Coplas and Stelle cadenti. But despite finding a simpler means of musical expression, in his mature songs he is still able to do justice to texts of deep poetic meaning, unlike his earlier successes, which were straightforward settings of simple verses. The key was finding simplicity in the musical language.

I myself began, in my first songs, with accompaniments rather complicated in harmony and rhythm. Afterwards I always tried to simplify, rather, I must say, through instinct than through reason. I tried to express my thoughts by the simplest and most natural means, even if, to some, these might seem less "interesting".\(^{32}\)

But simplicity was only part of the picture. The mature Castelnuovo-Tedesco moved beyond folk poetry as an easy road to simplicity and set texts by the pillars of the international literary canon. He turned to Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Heine, d'Annunzio, Dante, Petrarch,

Keats, Shelley, Milton, Proust, and many others, all in their original languages. He nevertheless succeeded in keeping his later songs focused and effective. In a brief article on the “Problems of a Songwriter,” Castelnuovo-Tedesco spoke on the subject of what makes a text suitable for setting to music. He states:

“I believe there are some necessary conditions common to all—first, one that goes to the essence: the poem must have an "expressive core"; it should express a "state of soul"... it should, in any case, be capable of awakening a "resonance" in the composer's soul; it should express the "core" in a perfect, simple and direct, clear, and harmonious form, rich, but without too many words. A certain "margin" should be left for the music: from this point of view, an intimate and restrained poem is preferable to a too sonorous and decorative one.”

The words that continually arise in this discussion, then, are “simplicity,” “purity,” “expressive core,” “simple and direct,” etc. The immature Castelnuovo-Tedesco tended to rely on the forced simplicity of lullabies, folk poems, patriotic songs, and the like. When he attempted something more complex, like the Fioretti, the songs did not, in fact, achieve the standard of quality he desired. He considered this set flawed, and expressed a desire to return to it and revise and orchestrate it later in life, though he never did. In his early career, until penning l’Infinito, Sera, and the Shakespeare Songs, he tended to stay away from great poetry as well. Undoubtedly this was partly due to Pizzetti’s influence, as Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s own autobiography describes how the older composer originally discouraged him from setting Leopardi to music. That he did so nonetheless further strengthens the conclusion that something within the young composer matured during this period, enabling him to reject his teacher’s warnings and write music to accompany great poetry. The mature Castelnuovo-Tedesco was certainly able to condense complex and profound works into the “expressive core” he sought. This allowed the music to

---

33 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, “Problems,” 105-6.
34 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Vita, 134.
achieve the simplicity and purity that he desired by expounding on the great literary work upon which it was based.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s musical language was evolving in tandem with his own maturation in the selection of poems as well. His early compositions show a dominant impressionist influence, specifically that of his idol Debussy. Formally, many of his early songs are through-composed, except when the poem is unavoidably strophic. The songs in his four early cycles, Coplas, Stelle cadenti, Briciole, and the Fioretti, for example, are almost all through-composed in form and impressionist in language. The few exceptions in form are a few of the Coplas, of which some are arguably ternary, though not strictly so, and the third song of Briciole, which has a modified rondo form, due, without a doubt, to its highly symmetrical poem. In contrast, the Shakespeare Songs are through-composed only a little more than a third of the time, the rest being mostly strophic or sectional, with one theme and variations.35

The harmonic language in his early songs is generally tonal but adventurous, sometimes bitonal or quartal, and often includes whole tone flourishes which give it an impressionistic color. Given the period these songs were written, less than a decade after Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring, the young composer seems to have begun his career at least in touch with the musical avant garde, especially with neoclassicism and polytonality in addition to the aforementioned impressionists. In fact, Alfredo Casella twice quotes Castelnuovo-Tedesco in his work The Evolution of Music, describing two cadences, one from Briciole, the other from Coplas, as examples of fundamentally standard dominant-tonic cadences which are nevertheless written in an acutely modernist way. This further underlines the relevance of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s early

work to current trends of the day.\textsuperscript{36} Casella’s work was written in 1919, so unfortunately the majority of the songs in this discussion had not yet been written. The \textit{Shakespeare Songs} and much of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s subsequent work, however, is more harmonically conservative, well before Castelnuovo-Tedesco had anything to do with the mainstreaming influence of Hollywood. Perhaps rather than conservative, it should be seen as “simplified,” to use the composer’s own term; the result is certainly more focused and generally more effective. For example, neither \textit{l’Infinito} nor any of the \textit{Shakespeare Songs} contain changes in key signature, while many of the earlier songs do.

That is not to say these changes happened overnight, of course; many of the \textit{Shakespeare Songs} contain quartal harmonies, and a majority of them contain chords such as ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth which stretch the boundaries of standard tonality well beyond basic triads and sevenths chords.\textsuperscript{37} But taken as a whole, the songs of 1921 onwards, especially \textit{l’Infinito, Sera}, and the \textit{Shakespeare Songs}, are more formally focused, less harmonically audacious, and more in line with the mature style of the rest of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s career. This change in style parallels the change in poetic quality of the source texts; it seems that the simpler, more focused music allows the superior poetry to do its part to create an ultimately greater whole.

\textbf{A Jewish Composer in a Catholic World}

The third major influence throughout Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s career is religion. For him, faith in God appears to have been constant and unwavering throughout his life. Succinctly, he wrote: “I have always believed in God, in the family, and in the country.”\textsuperscript{38} (The country he

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36} Alfredo Casella, \textit{L’evoluzione della musica: a traverso la storia della Cadenza Perfetta} (London: Chester, 1964), 65-66.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Prechtl, “Shakespeare Songs,” 452.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Castelnuovo-Tedesco, “Speaks,” 112.
\end{itemize}
refers to was his native Italy, which he had only recently fled when he wrote the statement.) In his memoirs he devotes an early chapter to faith, going into a little more detail:

> In conclusion, I have never been a practitioner of religion, but always a believer. I never had, like many young people, any crises of faith; and I was saved from them, doubtless, in part due to the presence of music in my life from when I was little; a herald almost, of another, more mysterious and august, presence.\(^{39}\)

But the question of religion would prove to be a difficult one: Castelnuovo-Tedesco was Jewish in a land of Catholics, and, tragically, in a country that became allied with the Nazis and systematically began persecuting Jews just as the composer's international career was in full swing. While he was writing the songs included in this study, the horrors of Fascism had not yet come to pass, however, and Castelnuovo-Tedesco's choice of religious subjects to set to music was heavily influenced by his Italian cultural heritage. In fact, before the composition of the piano suite *Le Danze del Re David*, his first major work on Jewish themes, written in 1925, he had already written two major works on Catholic subjects, the *Cantico di San Bernardino* for solo piano and the song cycle *3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco*. This Catholic influence was so great that he was sometimes accused of apostasy, though in fact he never considered abandoning his Jewish heritage.\(^{40}\)

It was in part in response to the political winds in Europe throughout the 1930s that Castelnuovo-Tedesco became a more self-consciously Jewish composer, though this was never the core of his musical identity. Having already drawn inspiration for his first violin concerto, the *Concerto Italiano* of 1924, from his homeland, in 1930-31 he wrote his second violin concerto, *I Profeti*, on Jewish themes. This was perhaps his first and only deliberately political piece of

---

\(^{39}\) Translated from *Vita*, 136. For a longer excerpt, see Appendix B.

\(^{40}\) Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Vita*, 136.
music. He named the movements after prophets, and wrote the work specifically for the Jewish violinist Heifetz, who helped ideate it.

In the early Italian songs, however, the religion we find is not Judaism, and religion as a major theme is limited to the Fioretti and one of the songs in Briciole, Il passo delle Nazarene. While the religious content of the latter song, which describes nuns walking to and fro across a bridge between convents, is less about spirituality and more a visual and semantic game, the spirituality of the Fioretti is central. It was, in fact, what inspired the composer to set them to music. Castelnuovo-Tedesco was moved by the mystical nature of the saint from Assisi and the universality of his message of love and peace which he felt transcended any particular religious tradition. He wrote:

Naturally the poetry of the Christian legends, its profound humanity, its high spirituality, was fascinating to me as well, and to me (born in a latin and Catholic country, growing up in a city of the Renaissance) the picturesque rites of the Church, its grandiose architecture, the splendor of its iconography were always undeniably attractive.  

And earlier he states “I believe they are still the most spiritual and moving pages I have written.” This is a strong statement from a Jewish composer of two major services in Hebrew, the Sacred Service for the Sabbath Eve and the Memorial Service for the Departed, and underlines the depth of connection he felt to these particular Catholic texts.

While Castelnuovo-Tedesco himself cited the Bible as one of his major inspirations, there actually appear to be two different categories of religious works that Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote. There are the primarily spiritual works and the primarily dramatic ones. Religious texts can serve either as inspirations for spiritual meditation or as a sort of libretto for a dramatic work.

Interestingly, Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote both Catholic and Jewish major works in both

---

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 134.
categories. Most of his early religious subjects, including the *Fioretti* specifically, seem to have primarily drawn Castelnuovo-Tedesco in through their spirituality. Other works in this category are his two religious services, both written later, during his American years. Especially notable in this regard is the Hebrew language *Memorial Service for the Departed*, written for the passing of his cousin Lina and reflecting a positivity in the face of death which may have been inspired at least in part by the Catholic environment of his youth. This piece, while including a cantor singing in a neo-traditional modal style, is mostly in C major, despite the predominantly minor modes favored in the music of the Jewish tradition it invokes. The final *Shiviti* movement, ethereal and serene, could easily be re-imagined as a closing *dona nobis pacem* in a *Requiem* Mass.

When it came to religious drama, on the other hand, Castelnuovo-Tedesco appears to have been more frequently, but not always, influenced specifically by Judaism. While the *Fioretti* are dramatic vignettes with a narrative and not purely spiritual meditations, it is not this element which drew the composer to them, but rather their charming naïveté. The cantatas *Naomi and Ruth*, *The Queen of Sheba*, and *The Lament of David* and the oratorios *The Book of Ruth* and *The Book of Jonah*, on the other hand, are primarily dramatic works in which the telling of the biblical stories is the main drive of the piece, rather than spiritual meditation. Similarly, *Evangelion*, a piano suite which tells the story of the life of Jesus, is primarily dramatic. The piece, in fact, is subtitled “narrated to the children in 28 little piano pieces,” clearly emphasizing the composer’s intent to tell a religious story. What is interesting is that the composer felt qualified to tell this religious story regardless whether it was Jewish or Catholic. Perhaps it is because his own spiritual views, while rooted in the Jewish tradition and molded by an
upbringing in a Catholic country, were in a sense neither Jewish nor Catholic. By his own
admission, it is music which served as his means of communion with the “august presence” and
not any particular religious rite.

Whether spiritual or dramatic, religious music was an important part of Mario
Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s output. His openness to writing music of both Catholic and Jewish
inspiration continued throughout his entire career, though his early years contain a higher
concentration of Catholic music. In fact before 1925 he had written more substantial Catholic
works than Jewish ones, penning both I Fioretti and Il Cantico di san Bernardino before Le
Danze del Re David. By the mid-1930s, as anti-Semitism was more prevalent and unavoidable,
Castelnuovo-Tedesco turned to some of his most explicitly religious Jewish works, writing both
his Sacred Service and an arrangement of Kol Nidre. Later in his career, after the war, the
majority of his religious-inspired (I specifically avoid the label sacred for the reasons mentioned
above) output remained Jewish, but he occasionally returned to some Catholic subjects,
including Evangélion and an unpublished, minor work, The Confessions of St. Augustine. In the
end, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was able to find the best in disparate religious traditions and write
deeplly spiritual as well as incisively dramatic music whether personally a part of that religion or
not.
Chapter III: Briciole

Background

Aldo Palazzeschi (born Aldo Giurlani) is the poet of the texts that Castelnuovo-Tedesco selected for the set *Briciole*. Born in 1885, he was both a contemporary and a compatriot of the composer, hailing from Florence and only ten years Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s senior. Though the extent of their association is not clear, it appears that they were at least acquaintances in early 20th century Florence, and Castelnuovo-Tedesco twice calls Palazzeschi a “friend” in his memoirs, without, however, going into any additional detail.43

Palazzeschi is a significant figure in the Italian movements of *futurismo* and *crepuscolarismo*, both counter-canonical literary movements of the early 20th century. Like the futurists, the *crepuscolari* rejected the ornate, decadent poetry of the turn of the century with a more nostalgic, desolate, or sometimes absurd style. The *crepusculari* differed from the more politically active, even militiant futurists mostly in their more passive, nihilistic attitude. Originally allying himself with the futurists, Palazzeschi distanced himself from the movement in 1914.44 He was then grouped with the contemporary movement of *crepuscolarismo*, itself related to futurism, although eminent Palazzeschi scholar Anthony Julian Tamburri instead places him in an *avant garde* category of its own.45 A period of intense productivity followed Palazzeschi’s official break with futurism in 1914, but soon after he stopped writing poetry almost completely. A successful fiction writer, Palazzeschi only turned to poetry again mid-century.

43 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Vita*, 62, 430.
In any case, from the very beginning of his career his aim was to reject the overly florid style exemplified in the fin de siècle Italian poets such as d’Annunzio and Carducci. He first outlines his philosophy in the seminal poem, a manifesto titled Chi sono? (Who am I?), in which he questions the literary status quo and his own role as an artist, laying the foundation upon which rests the remainder of his poetic oeuvre. In this work he describes himself as a clown or acrobat (the Italian word saltimbanco is ambiguous) who can do nothing but turn a lens onto his own heart and soul and expose them for others to see. His primary tools in this endeavor are “folly,” “melancholy,” and “nostalgia.”

In addition to the Florentine connection between the two, it is perhaps because of the elements of “melancholy” and “nostalgia” that Castelnuovo-Tedesco found himself drawn to Palazzeschi’s work, and certainly also because of the musicality of the poet’s language, which prioritized the simple, raw sounds and cadence of individual words over the more convoluted, florid sentences more common to late 1800s Italian poetry. This straightforward simplicity suited Castelnuovo-Tedesco well, especially in this early period when, by his own admission, his tendency was towards musical over-complication.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco originally set out to write two small sets of Palazzeschi songs, Briciole, which was published in 1916 as his opus 8, and Cera vergine which was never published. The first song of Cera vergine, Il passo delle Nazarene, was instead included as the last song of Briciole. The other two songs in the unpublished set are Le vedute del Paradiso (The views from Paradise) and Il convento delle Nazarene (The Convent of the Nazarenes.) These songs are listed by Castelnuovo-Tedesco in the complete list of works which accompanies the

---

46 For a complete text and translation of the poem see Tamburri, Saltimbanchi, 74, 182.
composer’s memoirs, in the section on works without opus numbers. They are now in the Library of Congress along with the rest of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s many manuscripts. The presence of these two additional songs would of course give the original set a distinctly more religious flavor. *Briciole* also includes *Rio Bo* and *Mezzogiorno*, both poems which heavily employ the elements of “melancholy” and especially “nostalgia” mentioned above. Castelnuovo-Tedesco set only one more Palazzeschi text later in his career, *Ore sole*, which was written in 1928 and published by Forlivesi in 1930.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s compositional style owes much to his boyhood idol Debussy, and these songs are good place to examine some of the similarities between the French composer’s music and Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s. *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* identifies several key elements in Debussy’s style:

…use of block chords, of harmony with a modal flavour and based on the whole-tone scale, the delicate colours of his orchestration, his technique of ‘layering’ sounds, the declamatory yet wholly lyrical style of his vocal writing… In general Debussy's effects are understated, his aim being for a ‘sonorous halo’ of sound. 47

All of these elements are also present in much of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s music. In *Briciole* specifically the vocal line is both declamatory and wholly lyrical, much like Debussy’s vocal writing. The songs are also frequently modal, as for instance in the beginning notes of the piano in *Il passo delle Nazarene*, which evoke the Dorian mode, and the first line of the voice with its raised fourth scale degree. The use of whole tone scales is less prevalent in these songs but clearly a favorite tool of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s in the *Fioretti*, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Block chords also make an appearance in the third song of *Briciole*, in m. 8, though perhaps the best example from this early piece is the parallel triads which open *l’Infinito*, which

will be discussed in Chapter V. Finally, the term “sonorous halo,” applied above to Debussy’s music, also aptly describes many passages in these early Castelnuovo-Tedesco songs, for instance the opening lines of both _Mezzogiorno_ and _Rio Bo_.

In addition to the stylistic elements common to Debussy and Castelnuovo-Tedesco mentioned above, Roy Howat identifies several other key elements of Debussy’s musical language, including the juxtaposition of similar material with different bass, the influence of poetry on musical language, and the “avoidance or softening of obvious cadences.” All of these characteristics are also present in Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s songs here investigated. The juxtaposition of similar material with different bass is one of the Italian composer’s favorite techniques, with one clear example occurring in mm. 17-18 of the third _Fioretto_. The softening of obvious cadences is often achieved by the addition of nonharmonic tones. This can be observed in the end of _Ninna nanna_, where a clear final cadence in the voice is supported by a dominant to tonic shift in the right hand of the piano but softened by a G pedal point and the addition of a minor seventh to the cadential tonic.

These songs in _Briciole_ are among the most impressionistic of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s works, and do not yet sound like his fully mature style. As in his mature works, the piano part is built around Schubertian “figures” designed to shed light on the poetry, but these figures are not as clearly and rigorously presented as in his later songs. Occasionally the piano part becomes unnecessarily complicated, as in the one-handed three against five rhythm of mm. 12-13 of _Mezzogiorno_. The vocal line can be challenging for singers used to singing Italian in an operatic style, as the generally delicate phrases are more reminiscent of Debussy than Puccini and

---

49 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, “Problems,” 110.
correspondingly restricted in range and volume. However, these songs are interesting and have musical merit in addition to shining light on the maturation of the composer’s style.

The Texts

Briciole
Aldo Palazzeschi

I. Rio Bo

1 Tre casette
2 dai tetti aguzzi,
3 un verde praticello,
4 un esiguo riuscello: Rio Bo,
5 un vigile cipresso.
6 Microscopico paese, è vero,
7 paese da nulla, ma però...
8 c’è sempre di sopra una stella,
9 una grande, magnifica stella,
10 che a un dipresso ocheggia
colla punta del cipresso
di Rio Bo.
11 Una stella innamorata!
12 di Rio Bo.
13 Una stella innamorata!
14 Chi sa
15 se nemmeno ce l’ha
16 una grande città.

II. Mezzogiorno

1 Chiesoline di campagna
2 lontane e vicine,
3 i vostri campanilini fumano
come tanti comignoli di cucine.
5 Mezzogiorno!
6 Bambini si va a mangiare.

III. Il passo delle Nazarene

1 Nazarene bianche, Nazarene nere.
2 Del fiume alle rive
3 si guardan da tanto i conventi,
4 si guardan con occhio di vecchia amicizia,
5 le piccole torri, una bianca e una nera,
6 le suore s’incontran la sera,
7 la sera al crepuscolo.
8 Due volte s’incontran, le bianche e le nere,

Crumbs

Rio Bo

Three little houses
with pointed roofs,
a small green lawn,
a slender creek: Rio Bo,
a watchful cypress.
A microscopic town, it's true,
a nothing town, but still...
there is always above it a star,
a great, magnificent star,
which flirts nearby
with the tip of the cypress
of Rio Bo.
A star in love!
Who knows
if not even has this
a great city.

Noon

Little churches in the country
far away and near,
your little bell towers smoke
like so many kitchen chimneys.
Noon!
Kids, it's time to eat.

The walk of the Nazarenes

White Nazarenes, black Nazarenes.
From the river's banks
the convents have long watched each other,
watched each other with eyes of old friendship,
the little towers, one white and one black,
the nuns meet each other in the evening,
in the evening at dusk.
Twice they meet, the white ones and the black ones,

50 An imaginary rustic village.
51 A de facto order of nuns founded in 1865. For more information see http://vincenziani.org/le-suore-nazarene-una-forma-atipica-di-vita-consacrata/.
sul ponte, sul ponte che unisce i conventi,
long unites them through an old friendship,
10 gli unisce da tanto per vecchia amicizia,
the little unites them through an old friendship,
11 le piccole torri si guardan ridenti,
la little towers watch each other, laughing,
12 una bianca e una nera,
one white and one black,
13 le suore s'incontran la sera,
the nuns meet in the evening,
14 la sera al crepuscolo.
in the evening at dusk.
15 Le piccole chiese al crepuscolo s'aprono,
The little churches open at dusk,
16 ne sortono leste le suore ed infilano il ponte,
quickly exiting the nuns file across the bridge,
17 nel mezzo s'incontran,
in the middle they meet,
18 s'inchinan le bianche e le nere,
they bow, the white ones and the black ones,
19 si recan l'un l'altre alla piccola chiesa al saluto;
they each go to the little church for a greeting;
20 vi fanno una breve preghiera
there they say a quick prayer
21 e leste rinfilano il ponte.
and quickly file back across the bridge.
22 Di nuovo nel mezzo s'incontran,
Again in the middle they meet,
23 s'inchinan le file una bianca e una nera,
they bow, the lines, one white and one black,
24 le suore s'incontran la sera,
the nuns meet in the evening,
25 la sera al crepuscolo.
in the evening at dusk.

Analysis of the Songs

Rio Bo

The first song of the set describes the idyllic, imaginary village of Rio Bo, using language that perhaps implies that the narrator is a child or at least has a child-like purity and simplicity of expression. The central idea, that even a small, humble place can inspire great affection, must have resonated strongly with Castelnuovo-Tedesco and his own love for his home. The music is impressionistic in character, beginning with a shimmering piano part marked trasparente (transparent) in F# minor. The tonality is not strongly set, however, and when the voice first states the name of the town of Rio Bo the music actually settles a half step up, in G minor. This key is also not firmly established, and in fact the final chords are built on a whole tone scale rather than being traditionally tonal, a favorite device of the impressionists. The color of the piano part owes much to Debussy, who was Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s greatest early musical influence. Pedal markings are carefully provided by the composer and, if followed, result in a shimmering, diaphanous sound. The vocal line for this song, for all three songs in the set actually, is speech-like, largely syllabic, and somewhat restricted in range. It should be delivered
with clear diction but a simple tone. The piano frequently hints at bell sounds, and is marked *cristallino* (crystalline) at the key change. The final page requires much rhythmic freedom and vocal expression on the line *Una stella inamorata!* (A star in love!) which is marked *con profonda espressione* (with deep expression) and is followed by one measure *Lentissimo* (very slow) where the singer can use a more Italianate, resonant vocal production to the top G. The return of the *Tempo primo* comes with the admonishment that the last line again be delivered simply, *semplicemente*. The final whole tone chords in the piano are marked *armonioso* (harmonious) and *lascia vibrare* (allow to vibrate) and this should be done by holding the pedal through the penultimate measure to the end. While not one of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s most formally tidy songs, this is nevertheless a pretty, short song which can be quite effective if delivered with earnest simplicity on the part of both performers. The affect of “nostalgia” should be the primary guide in interpreting this piece.

*Mezzogiorno*

Even shorter than *Rio Bo*, the second song of the set, *Mezzogiorno*, is similarly impressionistic and charming in its simplicity and purity. The piano part can be somewhat challenging, as the right hand must simultaneously play quintuplet sixteenth notes and eighth notes (later eighth note triples,) and is perhaps an example of what Castelnuovo-Tedesco felt were some of the unnecessary complications of his earlier music that he tried to simplify in his mature style. On the other hand, the subdivision of beats into an uneven number of notes does occur with some frequency later in the composer’s career as well, such as in the *Shakespeare Songs* (*Pardon, Goddess of the Night*) and in the *Sephardic Songs*. The vocal line is again speech-like and straightforward, outlining the tonality of B major in a much more
straightforward way than the piano. Interestingly, while the piano stays always in 2/4 time, the voice switches between 2/4 and 3/4 depending on the text, therefore causing the bar lines not to line up between the two parts. This is unnecessarily confusing, as the same effect could have been achieved with stress marks, but is evidence of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s preoccupation with accurate text setting in any case. That text setting was of fundamental importance to the composer is clear from his approach to composing songs, in which he first memorized the poem and spoke it out loud to hear the inherent music in the verse. In any case, the performers should explicitly phrase to their own downbeats, since the composer clearly devoted a good deal of thought to the placement of bar lines and presumably had to work hard with his editor to make the edition look as it does.

Again, similar to Rio Bo, there is a significant building of tension on the penultimate system of the song with abundant markings, in this case luminoso (luminous) and ampio e sonoro (broad and sonorous) in the piano part followed by a long fermata marked lascia vibrare lungo (let ring for a long time.) As in Rio Bo, the song settles a half step away from where it began, this time down into B flat major for the end, with the final chord marked lontano (far away.) The song draws a parallel between church bells and kitchen chimneys to evoke an image of childhood, ending with a simple call to come home for lunch. Castelnuovo-Tedesco explicitly makes a connection between the images in the poem and one of his childhood homes in Via de’ Martelli. In his memoirs he describes that bells were all around him in his youth, from the great Duomo di Firenze to the many small churches like those in Palazzeschi’s Mezzogiorno. The quiet and distant nature of the last two measures ensures that the song comes across as a memory.

53 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Vita, 55.
rather than something unfolding in the present. Therefore the performers also should use a more wistful tone throughout the short song and not end the piece in too declamatory a fashion, as might be tempting on a first reading. Again, the affect of “nostalgia” is the prevailing color in this piece.

*Il passo delle Nazarene*

The third and final song in this set is also the most substantial, and is based on a poem that has become well-known in its own right. The Nazarenes referred to in the poem are members the Italian religious group *Le Suore Nazarene*, a group of nuns known particularly for ministering to the sick and educating children. Interestingly, the order is a *de facto* a Society of Apostolic Life, not recognized as such by Catholic law, though for all practical purposes it is a religious order.\(^{54}\) It is possible Palazzeschi chose this particular order because of this status in a canonical limbo, as one of the characteristics of his style is that words begin to lose their meaning and become simply sounds and images, in a sort of limbo of their own.

The poem consists of a semantic game which plays on contrasts between white and black and relies on a symmetrical and repetitive structure. The setting is an imaginary pair of convents, each with a church and a tower, separated by a river and joined by a bridge. One side is white, the other black, and inside each is a group of nuns who only emerge in the evening at dusk (the Italian word for dusk is *crepuscolo*, from which the literary movement draws its name) to cross the bridge and say a brief prayer in the opposite church. Tamburri notes:

> Except for verses six and seven (repeated three times in the manner of a refrain), all other images seem to have a double in this poem: two nuns, two towers, two convents, two

\(^{54}\) http://vincenziani.org/le-suore-nazarene-una-forma-atipica-di-vita-consacrata/
churches, two encounters, and two bows. The only single element in the poem is the bridge, the obvious meeting point of both groups of nuns.\textsuperscript{55}

The vocal line in this song is again simple, syllabic, and this time is explicitly marked 

_Declamando con grande semplicità e naturalezza, quasi parlando_ (declaiming with great simplicity and naturalness, almost speaking,) a suggestion which can safely be applied to all three songs in the set but is especially important in this, the most modernist one. The time signature of 5/4 makes for a somewhat unsettling “walk” of the nuns. The use of the church mode D Dorian in the opening pages confers a religious color to the opening lines. The vocal line remains modal, implying tonal centers of G or E, and frequently is dissonant with the piano part, hinting at polytonality (or polymodality.) However, starting on mm. 8-9 the harmony becomes clearly quartal with a stronger suggestion of polytonality, again probably inspired by Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s love of Debussy.

The “refrain” of the poem mentioned by Tamburri is reflected in the music as well, with a shift from the original key of D Dorian down a half step to C#. The second time this refrain appears in the poem the music again makes the same shift. The final time, however, the resolution is down to a C natural, with the piano arriving on a low, richly voiced C major chord, the key that Castelnuovo-Tedesco most closely associated with splendor and spirituality. The final chords of the piano add a very different color by sounding quartal chords over the top of the final sonority. This final cadence is highlighted by Casella in his seminal work, _Evolution of Music_, stating:

Although diatonic, this cadence distinguishes itself by a very acute sense of modernism in the use of some sound-aggregations of sevenths and fourths characteristic of the new epoch.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{55} Tamburri, *Saltimbanchi*, 70-1.
\textsuperscript{56} Casella, *Evoluzione*, 65.
The dichotomy between the two sets of nuns appears (at least visually) in the piano part from the very beginning, where the left and right hands each play two notes which “walk” across the keys, mimicking the movement of the nuns, until both hands become relatively static when the nuns first meet on the bridge. From then on the piano part sometimes returns to the Dorian opening “walking” theme, but sometimes the left hand is static once again while the right hand continues moving. These moments are vaguely polytonal in nature, and are in fact described as an early example of polytonality by Castelnuovo-Tedesco himself. The 5/4 meter also begins to be broken after the first appearance of the refrain. Later in the song the voice and piano again follow different time signatures as the composer strives to align the most important words of the text with downbeats. There is a text setting typographical mistake in m.19, where the text underlay should be changed to let ed and the in of infilano each have a note, gliding the no of infilano together with the word il on the last note of the page. The correct syllabification is ed in-fi-la-noi pon-te.

Like Rio Bo and Mezzogiorno, Il passo delle Nazarene has nostalgic elements, though in the final piece nostalgia is less explicit in the text and seems to be implied more by Castelnuovo-Tedesco than by Palazzeschi. The final song, however, also plays on the theme of “folly” described by Palazzeschi in Chi sono? as the senseless, futile, even inhuman nature of the nuns is highlighted by repetitive linguistic patter. While care must be taken to avoid outright comedy, highlighting the absurdity of the scene is in line with Palazzeschi’s text. This is perhaps most organically achieved by meticulously singing and playing all the parallelisms in the text and music so they are identical every time, with particular care being given to evenness of triplets,

---

57 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Vita, 120.
and to performing an identical *trattenuto* each of the three times the line *le suore s’incontran la sera* (the nuns meet in the evening) occurs.

Like the other two songs in the set, *Il passo delle Nazarene* can be challenging because of its transparent, impressionistic style which is not generally associated with Italian singing. Castelnuovo-Tedesco occasionally makes room for some surges of emotion, allowing for a moment of *bravura* in songs that are generally more introspective, static, and straightforward. However, careful attention to the text and the composer’s markings make these songs charming and effective examples of Italian impressionism, and give a glimpse of what the mature Castelnuovo-Tedesco would eventually be able to accomplish.
Chapter IV: 3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco

Background

One of the most well-known saints in all of Catholicism, St. Francis of Assisi (originally Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone) began life as a wealthy young man of nobility, even bearing arms on behalf of the city state of Assisi as a soldier. However, after experiencing a vision in 1204, in his early to mid-twenties (his exact year of birth is not clear but has been approximately dated to 1181-1182,) he renounced his material possessions and turned to an itinerant monastic life of poverty and service. He gained a large following, founding three major orders: the Order of the Friars Minor, the Order of St. Clare, and the Third Order of St. Francis. He is still among the most beloved saints, as one of the two patron saints of Italy (along with St. Catherine of Siena) and of animals. He is said to have spoken to animals, always showing them love and kindness. One of his most important disciples was St. Clare of Assisi (Chiara Offreduccio,) who was made Abbess of San Damiano by Francis himself. Both Francis and Clare were canonized very soon after their deaths, and remain important figures to this day.

Many works have been written about St. Francis of Assisi. Of these, the *Fioretti*, or “Little Flowers,” are the most enduring and influential. The title “Little Flowers” refers to the grouping of anecdotes into a *florilegium* or “bundle of flowers,” a medieval practice of combining a set of short passages by authors other than the editor into a sort of bouquet. Modern scholars disagree on the exact source and original version of the work. However, the majority opinion seems to be that the first half, which focuses on the lives of the friars, relates traditions from the early days of the Franciscan order, while the second half, which relates anecdotes more specifically about St. Francis, was probably compiled by Fra Ugolino da Monte Giorgio
(Ugolino Brunforte,) a friar who lived approximately a century after the saint and collected the stories from secondhand accounts. While the stories in the Fioretti are not accurate or contemporary biographical accounts of the saint, they have long been an important text to his followers, and describe many anecdotes and miracles which are part of the mythology and legend surrounding the man. They range in character from the deeply pious to the almost comical, with many stories featuring St. Francis saving people from wild animals, curing disease, and facing off directly with Satan.

Edward Flynn aptly describes the naïve nature of many of the stories in the collection.

The beauty of simplicity defies explanation or elucidation and it is this rare beauty which informs the stories of St. Francis, Brother Juniper and the rest. We are in the world of spiritual childhood, seeing things with the innocent eye, never doubting that the good man can speak to the fishes and birds…

Doubtless because of their “beauty of simplicity” and aura of “spiritual childhood,” Castelnuovo-Tedesco found these stories fascinating in his youth, and spent some time deciding which to set to music. He was drawn to the deep spirituality of St. Francis as well as to the playfulness of the parable-like texts. As Robinson so aptly describes:

Nowhere can there be found a more childlike faith, a livelier sense of the supernatural, or a simpler literalness in the following Christ [sic] than in the pages of the "Fioretti", which more than any other work transport us to the scenes amid which St. Francis and his first followers live, and enable us to see them as they saw themselves.

---

Castelnuovo-Tedesco particularly admired the humanity of important figures in the Christian faith, St. Francis in particular. A pacifist and gentle soul, Castelnuovo-Tedesco must have felt a kinship with the noble-born Umbrian who was himself famed for his gentleness to all living things. In the end he chose three Fioretti which spoke to three different aspects of the myth of the saint from Assisi: the taming of wild animals, the banishment of the devil, and his position as a leader of a monastic order.

The music for the Fioretti was originally conceived for soprano and orchestra, though they were never published in this version because Castelnuovo-Tedesco was not happy with it. He did publish the work in a piano reduction, so for all intents they must unfortunately now be considered as simply songs for voice and piano. In his memoirs he mentions a desire to go back and re-orchestrate the work, but he never did.

There are more moments of French-sounding impressionism in these songs than in the composer’s subsequent output, and as such they may still be termed immature works—the cycle is grander in scope than anything he had previously attempted, but falls a little short in a few elements. Nonetheless, it is worth investigating and contains some beautiful rapturous moments, especially in the third song, as well as some wonderful pseudo-operatic dramatic writing, especially in the second. These songs are also the earliest example of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s systematic use of Wagnerian leitmotif, a practice which he would continue in his operas and his film music. The set of songs, having been conceived with an orchestra in mind, is also more

---

61 Scalin, “Operas,” 113-19. While Scalin does not use the word leitmotif directly, he refers to “thematic material” which is “used for purposes of identification and characterization” and “associated with several elements of the plot” in addition to serving “important dramatic and structural functions.” In other words, leitmotifs.

taxing in range, tessitura, and dramatic requirements than any of the other songs described in this study. A good model for the kind of singing required by this set might be Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

**The Texts**  

I. **COME SANTO FRANCESCO DIMESTICÒ LE TORTOLE SELVATICHE**

Un giovane avea preso un di molte tortole; e portandole a vendere, iscontrandosi in lui Santo Francesco, il quale sempre avea singolare pietà agli animali mansueti, riguardando quelle tortole con occhio pietoso, disse al giovane: “O buono giovane, io ti prieo che tu me le dia: che uccelli così mansueti, a' quali nella Santa Scrittura sono assomigliate le anime caste et umili e fedeli, non vengano alle mani dei crudeli, che gli uccidano!”

Di subito colui, ispirato da Dio, tutte le diede a Santo Francesco, ed egli, ricevendole in grembo, cominciò a parlare loro dolcemente: “O sirocchie mie, tortole semplici, innocenti e caste, perché vi lasciate voi pigliare? Ora io vi voglio scampar da morte e farvi i nidi, acciocché voi facciate frutto e multipliciate, secondo i comandamenti del nostro Creatore!”

I. **HOW ST. FRANCIS TAMED THE WILD DOVES**

A young man had, one day, caught many doves; and bringing them to market, encountered St. Francis, who always had a singular compassion for gentle animals, and, looking upon the doves with a pitying eye, said to the youth: “Oh good young man, I beg you to give them to me: so that birds as gentle as these, who in Holy Scripture are compared to chaste souls, humble and faithful, not come into the hands of the cruel, who will kill them!”

Immediately the youth, inspired by God, gave them all to St. Francis, and he, gathering them in his lap, began to speak with them sweetly: “Oh my little sisters, simple doves, innocent and chaste, why do you let yourselves be captured? Now I wish to save you from death and make nests for you, so that you can be fruitful and multiply, according to the commandment of our Creator!”

---

63 The following translations are written to mirror the Italian text as closely as possible in order to serve as a tool for musicians preparing to perform these songs. This sometimes results in awkward English sentence structure, but makes the process of comparing the original text with the translation easier for those who do not speak Italian. For a more idiomatic English translation please refer to the original translation into English by Dom Roger Hudleston, which, at the time of this writing, can be accessed online at: [http://www.ewtn.com/library/mary/flowers.htm](http://www.ewtn.com/library/mary/flowers.htm)
E va Santo Francesco e a tutte fece nido: ed elleno usandosi cominciarono a far uova dinanzi allì frati, e così dimesticamente si stavano come fussono state galline sempre nutricate da loro: e mai non si partirono, insino a che Santo Francesco, colla sua benedizione, diede loro licenza di partirsi.

And St. Francis went and made nests for all of them: and they, making use of them, began to lay eggs before the brothers, and thus stayed domesticated as though they had been hens always raised by the brothers: and they never left, until St. Francis, with his blessing, gave them license to depart.

II. COME SANTO FRANCESCO LIBERÒ UNO FRATE CHE ERA IN PECCATO COL DEMONIO

Stando una volta Santo Francesco in orazione nel luogo della Porziuncola, vide per divina rivelazione tutto il luogo attorniato, e assediato dallì Demoni, a modo di grande esercito; ma nessuno di loro potea entrare nel luogo; imperocchè questi frati erano di tanta santitade, che li Demoni non avevano a cui entrare dentro. Ma perseverando così un dì uno di que' frati si scandalizzò con un altro; per la qual cosa il Demonio, avendo l'entrata aperta, entra in quel luogo e ponsi in sul collo a quello frate.

One day as St. Francis was in prayer in the place of the Porziuncola, he saw by divine revelation the entire place surrounded and besieged by demons, like a great army; but none of them could enter into the place, because these friars were so holy, that the demons could find none to possess. But persisting in this way, one day one of the friars was offended by another, and because of this the demon, finding an open entry, entered into the place and attached itself to the neck of this friar.

Ciò veggendo lo pietoso e sollicito Pastore, lo quale sempre vegghiava sopra le sue gregge, che il lupo era entrato a divorar la pecorella sua, fece subitamente chiamare a sè quel frate; e comandògli, che di presente ei dovesse scoprire lo veleno dello odio conceputo contro al prossimo, per lo quale egli era nelle mani del Nimo. — Di che colui impaurito, che si vedea compreso dal Padre Santo, si scoperse ogni veleno e rancore, e ricognobbe la colpa sua; e assoluto che fu dal peccato, e ricevuto la penitenzia, subito dinanzi a Santo Francesco il Demonio si partì.

The compassionate and careful Pastor, who always watched over his flock, seeing that the wolf had entered to devour his little lamb, immediately sent for that friar; and commanded him, that he should presently discover the poison of the hate felt against his neighbor, because of which he was in the hands of the Enemy. Thereupon he, fearful, seeing himself understood by the Holy Father, acknowledged all his poison and rancor, and recognized his fault; and having been absolved of sin, and having received penance, immediately before St. Francis the Demon departed.

E lo frate così liberato dalle mani della crudele bestia, per la bontà dello buono Pastore, ringraziò Iddio.

And the friar, thus liberated from the hands of the cruel beast, through the goodness of the good Pastor, thanked God.
III. COME SANTO FRANCESCO E SANTA CHIARA FECIONO UNO DESINARE IN SANTA MARIA DEGLI ANGELI, E PAREVA CHE TUTTO IL LUOGO ARDESSE. 64

Santo Francesco, quando stava ad Ascesi, ispesse volte visitava santa Chiara, dandole santi ammaestramenti. Ed avendo ella grandissimo desiderio di mangiare una volta con lui, e di ciò pregandolo molte volte, egli non le volle mai dare questa consolazione; onde vedendo li suoi compagni il desiderio di santa Chiara, dissono a santo Francesco: “Padre, a noi pare che questa rigiditate non sia secondo la caritate divina: che suora Chiara vergine così santa, a Dio diletta, tu non esaudisca in così piccola cosa com’è mangiare teco; e speczialmente considerando che ella per la tua predicazione abbandonò le ricchezze e le pompe del mondo. E di vero, se ella li domandasse maggior grazia che questa non è, si la dovresti fare alla tua pianta spirituale.”

Rispuose allora santo Francesco: Pare a voi che la debba esaudire? Rispuosono li compagni: Padre si, degna cosa è che tu le faccia questa grazia e consolazione.” Disse allora santo Francesco: “Da poi che pare a voi, pare anche a me. Ma acciocch’ella sia più consolata, voglio che questo mangiare si faccia in Santa Maria degli Angeli; imperocch’ella è stata lungo tempo rinchiusa in San Damiano, sicché le gioverà di vedere il luogo di Santa Maria ov’ella fu tonduta e fatta isposa di Gesù Cristo; ed ivi mangeremo insieme al nome di Dio.”

III. HOW ST. FRANCIS AND ST. CLARE HAD A MEAL AT ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS AND IT SEEMED AS THOUGH THE WHOLE PLACE WERE ON FIRE. 64

St. Francis, when he was in Assisi, often visited St. Clare, giving her holy teachings. And she had a great desire to dine with him once, and had often begged him for this, but he never wanted to give her this consolation; whereupon his companions, seeing the desire of St. Clare, said to St. Francis: “Father, it seems to us that this rigidity is not in accordance with divine charity: that for sister Clare, such a holy virgin, beloved by God, you not grant such a small thing as to dine with you; and especially considering that she, following your preaching, abandoned her riches and the pomp of the world. And truly, if she asked for a greater grace than this, you should grant it to your spiritual disciple.”

Then St. Francis replied: “It seems to you that I should grant this?” His companions responded, “Father yes, it is a just thing that you grant her this grace and consolation.” Then St. Francis said: “Since it seems so to you, it seems so to me also. But so that she may be more consoled, I want that this meal be held in St. Mary of the Angels; for she has long been cloistered in St. Damian, and it will make her happy to see the place of St. Mary where she took the veil and was made bride of Jesus Christ; and there we shall eat together in the name of God.”

64 Castelnuovo-Tedesco excised several portions of the original text, including a substantial section at the end of the passage. That text is reproduced and translated here in italics. While the bulk of the text is taken from Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s score, the italicized text is drawn from Antonio Cesari, *I fioretti di San Francesco: testo di lingua secondo la lezione*, Milano: Giugoni, 1868.
Venendo adunque il di ordinato a ciò, santa Chiara uscì dal monistero con una compagna e venne a santa Maria degli Angeli, accompagniata dai compagni di santo Francesco e salutata divotamente la Vergine Maria dinanzi al suo altare, ov’ella era tonduta e velata, si la menarono vedendo il luogo, infino a tanto che fu ora di desinare. E in questo mezzo, santo Francesco fece apparecchiare la mensa sulla piana terra, siccome era usato di fare. E giunta l’ora di desinare, si pongono a sedere insieme santo Francesco e santa Chiara, e uno delli compagni di san Francesco colla compagna di santa Chiara, e poi tutti gli altri compagni s’acconciarono alla mensa umilmente.

E per la prima vivanda, santo Francesco cominciò a parlare di Dio si soavemente, si altamente, si maravigliosamente che, discendendo su di loro l’abbondanza della divina grazia, tutti furono in Dio rapiti. E stando così rapiti, con gli occhi e colle mani levate al cielo, gli uomini d’Ascesi e da Bettona, e quei della contrada d’intorno, vedeano che santa Maria degli Angeli e tutto il luogo e la selva, ch’era allora allato al luogo ardevano fortemente, e pareva che fosse un fuoco grande che occupava la chiesa e la selva ed il luogo insieme: per la qual cosa gli Ascesani con gran fretta corson laggiù per ispegnere il fuoco, credendo veramente che ogni cosa ardesse.

Ma giungendo luogo e non trovando ardere nulla, entrarono dentro e trovarono santo Francesco e santa Chiara, e tutta la loro compagnia rapiti in Dio per contemplazione, e sedere intorno a quella mensa umile. Di che essi certamente compresono, che quello era stato fuoco divino, e non materiale, lo quale Iddio avea fatto apparire miracolosamente, a dimostrare e significare il fuoco del divino amore del quale ardeano le anime di questi santi frati e sante monache; onde e’ si partirono con grande consolazione nel cuore loro e con

When the designated day arrived, St. Clare left the convent with a companion and came to St. Mary of the Angels, accompanied by the companions of St. Francis, and, having devoutly saluted the Virgin Mary at her altar, where she had had her hair shorn and had taken the veil, they took her to the place, and showed her about, until it was time to eat. Meanwhile, St. Francis had the dishes for the meal set on the ground, as was his custom. And when it was time to eat, St. Francis and St. Clare sat down together, and one of the companions of St. Francis with the companion of St. Clare, and then all the other companions arranged themselves humbly around the meal.

And for the first dish, St. Francis began to speak of God so sweetly, so sublimely, so wondrously that, descending upon them the bounty of divine grace, all were enraptured by God. And thus rapt, with eyes and with hands raised to the heavens, the men of Assisi and Bettona, and some of the surrounding countryside, saw that St. Mary of the Angels and all the place and the woods that were then near the place burned fiercely, and it seemed that a great fire consumed the church and the woods and the place together: therefore the Assisians with great haste ran to put out the fire, truly believing that everything burned.

But arriving at the place and not finding anything burning, they entered in and found St. Francis with St. Clare, and with all their company rapt by God in contemplation, and sitting around that humble meal. From this they firmly understood, that this had been a divine flame, and not a material one, which God had made miraculously appear, to demonstrate and signify the flame of divine love with which burned the souls of these saintly friars and saintly nuns; and therefore they left with great consolation in their hearts.
Santa edificazione.

Poi dopo grande spazio, tornando in sé san Francesco, e santa Chiara insieme con gli altri, e sentendosi bene confortati dal cibo spirituale, poco si curarono del cibo corporeale. E così, compiuto quel benedetto desinare, santa Chiara bene accompagnata ritornò a San Damiano, di che le suore, veggendola, ebbono grande allegrezza; perocché ’elle temeano che san Francesco non l’avesse mandata a reggere qualche altro monasterio, siccome egli avea già mandata suora Agnese santa sua sirocchia per badessa a reggere il monasterio di Monticelli di Firenze: e san Francesco alcuna volta avea detto a santa Chiara: Apparecchiate, se bisognasse ch’io ti mandassi in alcuno luogo; ed ella, come figliuola di santa obbedienza, avea risposto: Padre, io son sempre apparecchiata ad andare dovunque voi mi manderete. E però le suore si rallegrarono fortemente quando lo riebbono: e santa Chiara rimase d’allora innanzi molto consolata.

and with holy edification.

After much time, they came to, St. Francis and St. Clare together with the others, and feeling well comforted by spiritual food, cared little for corporeal food. And thus, concluded that blessed meal, St. Clare, in good company, returned to St. Damian, whereupon the nuns, seeing her, were very happy; for they feared that St. Francis had sent her to preside over some other convent, as he had already sent Sister Agnese, her holy sister, to Badessa to preside over the convento of Monticelli of Florence: and St. Francis had often told St. Clare, “Prepare yourself, if the need arises that I send you somewhere else,” and she, a child of holy obedience, had replied, “Father I am always prepared to go wherever you send me.” However the nuns were very happy when they had her back, and St. Clare remained from that day much consoled.

Analysis

*Come Santo Francesco dimesticò le tortole selvatiche*

The first of the three pieces in the set concerns itself with St. Francis’s love for animals, especially those most gentle and defenseless ones. It is the most tender and cheerful of the three songs, serving as a light introduction to the more dramatic and spiritual aspects of the rest of the set. The primary conflict in the song arises from the idea that the captive doves will be sold at market and, presumably, killed by those who purchase them for meat. However, the youth who caught the doves immediately agrees with St. Francis’s plea to turn over the birds, so the conflict is short-lived and the anecdote takes on a pastoral, light-hearted character. Particularly quaint is
the comparison of the doves living a domesticated life with the friars and laying eggs “like hens,” only claiming their freedom when St. Francis releases them with a blessing.

The opening lines of the first song immediately present the predominant tonality of C major, a key which had mystical connotations for Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and quickly establishes the harmonic language of the cycle: impressionistic devices such as the whole tone scale, polytonality, and extended triadic harmonies such as seventh and ninth chords. The first page begins *Tranquillo e sereno* (tranquil and serene) but quickly turns more grave in color with the introduction of Ab, Bb, and Eb, all borrowed from the parallel minor.

Three themes are presented on this first page, serving as *leitmotifs* for three important elements of the story. The first theme, which is heard immediately at the opening of the piece, is associated with the captured doves and their impending doom when they are taken to market to be sold for food. This “captivity” theme is the primary source of tension in the story. After its initial statement in the first measure, it sounds in three octaves simultaneously in the fourth, lending it a gravity that strengthens the interpretation that it represents the captivity of the birds. It also underscores the first lines of the vocal part, specifically under *portandoli a vendere* (bringing them to market.) It returns again in the piano in mm. 30-31, after St. Francis explains that whoever buys the doves will kill them, and again in the piano in mm. 38, 51-52, and 61-63, though at these points in the narrative the sale of the birds and the youth who caught them are no longer the focus. When the theme returns in m. 38, however, it has been transformed into a more ethereal version, and the influence of Debussy is clear. This section of the music is marked *dolcissimo ed estatico* (very sweet and ecstatic.) The final measures of the piece contain a

---

65 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Vita*, 135.
fragment reminiscent of this theme, but without concluding it; perhaps this broken theme represents the fact that the birds are no longer captive, and thus their captivity theme is heard no more. In fact, the instruction in m. 70 is *come un improvviso volo* (like a sudden flight.)

The second theme presented in the introduction seems to be most closely associated with St. Francis himself, and occurs for the first time in the piano in m. 5. It consists of a rising eighth note motive followed by a jagged group of four sixteenth notes. It first returns in the left hand of the piano in second half of m. 18, immediately before St. Francis begins to speak. After that it occurs frequently in various different versions, sometimes serving as a regular accompaniment figure, other times as the topmost line of the melody. It is also rhythmically altered and contrapuntally combined both with versions of itself and with the third theme.

The third theme represents the doves, specifically their freedom, and is frequently heard in combination with the St. Francis theme. Beginning with an upward sweep of triplets, its first appearance is in the piano in m. 6 of the introduction, when it rises out of the first occurrence of the second theme. It returns when the St. Francis theme returns, in m. 19, though in a whole tone version of itself. A visual representation of the flight of birds, this theme is the most colorfully literal of the three. It is the predominant theme for all of mm. 21-27, always in the piano, as St. Francis first speaks to the youth about turning over the doves. After this point it disappears for a few pages, returning when St. Francis explains he wants to save the doves from death in mm. 42-43, and marked *con anima* (with spirit) and *in rilievo* (in the foreground.) It finally returns, in the piano, for the final measures of the piece. There it appears in a particularly joyous sixteenth note triplet version, juxtaposed with St. Francis’s own theme after he finally gives the birds license to fly away. The interesting marking *quasi Celesta* (almost a celesta) refers indubitably to
the orchestration that Castelnuovo-Tedesco had in mind but never published, but also
coincidentally invokes heaven, as celeste literally means “heavenly.”

Harmonically the song is basically in C major throughout, though the composer borrows
heavily from the parallel minor and employs extensive chromaticism. D major is also a
significant tonal center, though the written key signature is never altered. The main techniques
Castelnuovo-Tedesco employs to extend the tonality of the piece are the whole tone scale,
parallel triads, polytonality, and extended triadic harmonies. The most common technique in this
song is the use of parallel triads such as those found in the third measure of the piece. Over a
pedal point G in the left hand, the right hand plays D major instead of the expected D minor, then
B major instead of the expected B diminished (or perhaps B minor.) The chromaticism
disappears as quickly as it appeared, with beat 3 immediately returning the ear to the key of C.
Measure 19 is a clear example of the whole tone scale which the young composer was still
somewhat clumsily copying from Debussy. Here it sounds out of place because the scale is
applied only sporadically in this piece. Measure 56 demonstrates some extended harmonies, with
a ninth chord built on A being treated as stable for most of two measures. Alternately, these
measures can be seen as briefly bitonal, with the right hand and voice being in D major, while
the left hand is in C or F.

The keys to the interpretation of this piece are clearly marked by Castelnuovo-Tedesco in
the score. The overall mood is tranquil and serene, and even when the music becomes more
dramatic the sense of dolce should never be lost. This is, in fact, specifically prescribed in the
piano in the second great climax of the piece in m. 49, which is marked fff and sonoro (sonorous)
but somewhat paradoxically tempered by the admonishment ma dolce (but sweet). The vocal line
should, as in all three of these songs, be somewhat free in its speech-like delivery of text; however, unlike some of the other songs from this period, it should be clearly and operatically projected at all times, keeping in mind that it was originally written for soprano with orchestra. The piano bears most of the burden of presenting the various *leitmotifs* which comment on the text, and should do so with clarity when they occur.

The motivic connections in this ambitious and compelling song are strong and the various motives are interesting and varied enough to carry the piece. The vocal line shows sensitivity to the text as well as a pleasing lyricism, with hints of the masterful text setting and word painting that would define the vocal style of the mature Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Despite being mostly syllabic the vocal line also allows for moments of *legato* and Italianate singing. Without a doubt the weak point of the song is the fact that the piano part sounds like an orchestral reduction. It is clear the composer intended a more colorful interplay of instruments than a piano alone can provide, and the frequent changes of registers, tremolos and trills, and occasional markings such as *quasi oboe* (almost an oboe) in m. 59 and *quasi corni* (almost horns) in m. 71 can unfortunately only serve to describe the orchestral sound that was in the composer’s mind, not recreate it.

*Come Santo Francesco liberò un frate che era in peccato col Demonio*

The second anecdote selected by Castelnuovo-Tedesco is one of several in the collection which concerns St. Francis facing off with the devil. The character of the devil, who is a particularly literal antagonist in the *florilegium*, tries in every possible way to worm his way into the hearts and minds of the friars under St. Francis’s protection. But the saint, through his acute reading of human psychology, as well as his own complete purity of soul, always emerges
triumphant in the end. In this particular tale, the devil seeks to enter the monastery, which he has hitherto been unable to penetrate due to the holiness of its inhabitants, by causing one friar to become angry with another. St. Francis recognizes the hate in the friar’s heart and calls upon him to let go of the poison, thereby banishing the devil. Thus the story takes what must have been a standard event in the life of the monastery, namely a personal conflict between two friars mediated by a wise St. Francis, and transforms it into an epic battle between the forces of good, with their armor of holiness, and the devil, who attempts to use hate and rancor to break through the friars’ defenses. Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s setting of the song is appropriately dramatic and colorful.

The provided key signature for this song is D minor throughout, and it certainly spends a good deal of time in this key. However, it clearly ends in C (with the additional pitches of D and A in the final chord enriching the harmony in a proto-Hollywood fashion), and visits several other keys in between. The movement begins with a jagged line in the piano which the listener quickly learns is a leitmotif for the demons haunting the Porziuncola. This small church was and is extremely significant to St. Francis and his followers, as it was the place where St. Francis first received the vision which led him to forswear his inheritance and become a man of God. After his death the site became a pilgrimage site for followers of Francis, and the church now sits inside the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli which was erected around it, directly beneath the basilica’s cupola. The second main theme, which is first stated in diminution in the piano in mm. 4-6, appears as a recognizable leitmotif when the singer begins to narrate the story. This stately motive represents St. Francis’s protection of the church, and sets the stage for the dramatic action to follow. The following pages describe in musical terms the spiritual battle that ensues, with
fragments of the demonic theme attempting to break through the protection of St. Francis, and finally succeeding in mm. 47-48, after the line *entra in quel luogo e ponsi in sul collo a quello frate* (entered into the place and attached himself to the neck of this friar.) What follows is an extended description of how St. Francis made things right by speaking to the errant friar and causing him to recognize his sin. Musically, the vocal line is, like much of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s music, set in a *quasi recitativo* style which is neither particularly melodic nor completely speech-like in its delivery, with an almost Wagnerian sense of endless melody, or perhaps a Pizzettian *declamato*. The accompaniment is limited to *ostinato* motivic fragments over shifting pedal points, giving the music a relatively static effect which lasts for several pages of dramatic exposition. Finally, in mm. 106-7, the demon is driven out, with a line in the voice which is quite effective, especially when declaimed somewhat breathlessly, *quasi parlato* (my suggestion, not Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s marking.) The departure of the demon is illustrated by a deconstruction of the initial motive, with the sixteenth notes eliminated. The piece ends with a victorious flourish which dissolves into a heavenly set of chords in C major, Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s most resplendent and spiritual key, as mentioned above. One interesting detail to note is that the final appearance of the demon theme is in the vocal part, augmented to be twice as slow in tempo, on the word *Iddio* (God.) This may be a coincidence—perhaps the composer merely wanted to musically tie the piece together—or it may be a conscious choice to underline the theological point that Satan is in some way a reflection or aspect of God, a fallen angel originally part of the heavenly host.

As in the other two songs in the set, there are moments of bitonality. One particularly effective one occurs in m. 30. A low A pedal point has sounded for some time, and, while this
note originally began as a dominant of D minor, the piece has shifted to A major by this point. The introduction of D# at the top of the page temporarily destabilizes the key. Castelnuovo-Tedesco is able to prolong this instability by avoiding either D natural or D# for several measures; when the note finally arrives in the vocal part, the accompaniment plays an enharmonic Eb seventh chord, which implies the key of Ab, over the pedal point of A. This tension is maintained for several measures, and in the end neither of these harmonic implications is realized, with a chromatic movement to Gb in the bass avoiding a resolution into either key. This harmonically tense segment of music underscores the narration of the demons persevering in their attempts to break into the church, and the constant harmonic clashes and instability helps to illustrate the demons’ varied avenues of attack.

The most dramatic of the three Fioretti set by Castelnuovo-Tedesco, this piece is most effective when thought of as a short scene, with protagonist and antagonist, a central struggle, and a dramatic arc. It is the shortest of the three, and perhaps musically less ambitious, but in the hands of the right performers can be quite exciting. The key to its successful performance lies in the clear definition of the violent demon theme whenever it occurs, and in maintaining the textural contrast between it and the calm, holy, and resplendent St. Francis theme against which the demon theme eventually breaks. The voice must be more declamatory in this song, and is most effective when taking on the role of an impassioned, almost forceful narrator. While Castelnuovo-Tedesco was not a verismo composer, that movement’s influence on Italians of this period should not be underestimated.
**Come Santo Francesco e Santa Chiara feciono uno desinare in Santa Maria degli Angeli, e parea che tutto lo luogo ardesse**

The third and final piece in the set is also the most ambitious in scope and most vocally demanding. The original text is even longer than the one Castelnuovo-Tedesco ended up setting; several lines not important to the narrative were excised, including a substantial portion of the conclusion. The *Fioretto* describes a meeting between St. Francis and St. Clare. During St. Francis’s life, as at present, contact between members of a monastic order and the opposite sex was strictly controlled and generally prohibited. St. Clare, after having founded the Order of the Poor Ladies (later renamed the Order of St. Clare or the Poor Clares) with St. Francis and having been appointed its head by him, seldom saw her own spiritual leader any more. She expresses a desire to dine with him, which St. Francis rebuffs as improper. His disciples, however, speak to Francis on Clare’s behalf, and he accedes. The actual meeting is a spiritual one more than a physical one, and in place of dinner the entire place is emblazoned with a heavenly fire. In the playfully imaginative, supernatural spirit of the *Fioretti*, nearby townspeople actually rush to put out the fire, and instead find the holy company lost in spiritual rapture. The concluding section of the story, which Castelnuovo-Tedesco omits, cutting off the text mid-sentence, is neutral narrative and less spiritual in nature, and the composer’s decision to excise it from the song seems justified. The other excisions remove similarly inconsequential portions of the text.

Like the other songs in the set, which are constructed on *leitmotifs*, this song has one main theme, introduced in the first three and a half measures of the piano, and elaborated for the entirety of the piece. It appears to represent St. Francis himself. This theme appears in three sections, a rising gesture with a fourth leap, a chromatic descending one, and a rhythmically distinct final descent.
There is a second theme representing St. Clare which is introduced in the voice when she is first mentioned by Francis’s disciples in mm. 38-39. St. Clare’s theme is in two parts, both related to St. Francis’s own theme. The initial rising four note gesture is the most obviously similar portion of the theme, sharing the same rhythm and first three pitches, and the leap into the fourth pitch, while different in size, allows for an easy transition between the two themes. The second half has a chromatically descending shape similar to St. Francis’s, though with different pitches and its own distinct rhythmic shape. Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s use of themes reflects the narrative of the two holy people meeting through a juxtaposition, even a melding, of their respective themes. The first time this occurs is in mm. 55-56, when Francis asks his disciples whether they think he should grant her wish to dine with him. The two themes are clearly separated at this point by the fact that Francis’s is in triple meter while Clare’s is in duple. This distinction persists for the entirety of the piece, and the frequent switching between and combing of these meters grants the composition much of its rhythmic interest.

Additionally, the song is full of harmonic interest, with a variety of beautiful and unexpected chords preventing stagnation which might otherwise result from the relatively small amount of motivic material that is elaborated over a considerable length of time. Pedal points, always a favorite of the young composer, are especially prevalent in this third song of the set, and frequently are on notes which are not in the chords which sound above them. While calling this polytonality is perhaps not the most precise description, at least not compared to the contemporary and more rigorous bitonality of Milhaud, the effect certainly is modernist, with what feels like a bass line which doesn’t always match the harmonies that sound above it. Castelnuovo-Tedesco moves freely between tonal centers, not always with traditional
modulations. In this song a favorite tactic is the Phrygian move by half step down into a new key, as in the initial approach to E in m. 13 and again in mm. 97 and 230, to name only a few. Note these are not traditional Phrygian cadences which go from a minor VI or IV6 chord to V, but rather a half step move down to the local tonic.

At first glance this song, like the first two in the set, is also in C, though the early introduction of Eb and Ab implies C minor more than major. This tonality is quickly brought into question, however, with a microtonicization of G in the first full measure and the introduction of a passing Gb in the second. A more accurate assessment at this point may be that the piece begins in Eb major; a hypothetical cadence on Eb on the downbeat of m. 4 would be perfectly reasonable. This interpretation is strengthened by the clearly Eb final chords of the song. The transition from C to Eb is made through the parallel minor. The introduction of E natural in the third measure combined with the continued presence of Bb briefly implies F, but then the initial theme enters again in what appears to be E major. The first page continues alternately implying Eb major and E major, and could again be described as bitonal at this point, with the contrapuntal use of the initial theme maintaining unity despite the disparate tonal centers. The earlier implied key of F also makes an appearance as a tonal center on this first page, with a four measure pedal point on that note, while the upper voices reinforce first F major (with the continued presence of Eb initially suggesting a dominant of Bb) and then F minor. The eventual lowering of C to Cb in the F minor triad in the last measure of the first page prepares an enharmonic shift with only the bass needing to drop by half step to finally arrive in E major on the downbeat of the second page. This is the first strong tonal center in the piece, and is reinforced by the entry of the voice in the same key of E major.
The above passage demonstrates how freely and frequently the composer shifts keys throughout the song. Castelnuovo-Tedesco employs a language which is clearly tonal, but is not tied to any particular key for very long, nor do the keys presented form part of a cohesive formal structure. The effect, in this song even more than the other two in the set, is impressionistic and improvisatory.

The piece is divided by the composer into eight sections, each separated by a double bar within the score. The section breaks occur at rhetorical or narrative breaks in the text, as might be expected, and are quite irregular in length. The first of these prepares a cadence in C when St. Francis states “Since it seems so to you, it seems so to me also.” This section marks the resolution of the initial conflict presented by St. Francis’s disciples, and should be phrased by the performers as a major point of arrival.

The next break occurs at m. 100, following a brief passage by St. Francis explaining why the meeting should be held at Santa Maria degli Angeli. In the short piano interlude preceding this double bar some time passes in the story, and while the G pedal continues from the previous page, the implied key changes from G to F (however briefly) on the way to B major. A different color should be sought by the performers, and, despite it not being marked in the score, a slight increase of tempo is suggested to propel the drama forward.

The next section break is marked at m. 148, when the first course is served. While there is no harmonic change here, the time signature moves from duple to triple and the initial theme is repeated in its entirety over a more lush accompaniment. One cannot help but wonder what the orchestration would have been at this moment, had Castelnuovo-Tedesco completed and published the orchestral score he originally planned. A sweeping gesture followed by a sustained
tremolo in the strings seems likely. Accordingly, the singer is encouraged sing in a particularly legato and expressive manner at this juncture. Also of note is the striking example of bitonality in these measures, with the E major harmony clearly established in m. 148 being sustained through two measures which appear to be centered around F (albeit a strangely modal F with added Eb and B natural.)

The next section, beginning in m. 173, after a euphoric instrumental interlude representing the rapture of those present at the meal, focuses on the nearby witnesses to the conflagration. Both the singer and the pianist grow increasingly agitated and breathless. Many of the motivic cells heard before are brought back in diminution, pressing forward into a huge glissando in m. 202 followed by a triumphant statement of the first few notes of the St. Francis theme.

Based on the third part of the St. Francis theme, the next section, from mm. 206-229, describes the scene the villagers encountered upon arriving at Santa Maria degli Angeli. The delivery should be much calmer and more parlante, never losing, of course, the color and projection of a piece underscored by orchestra rather than a more intimate song for voice and piano.

The penultimate section of the piece, beginning in m. 230, establishes the final tonality of Eb major, approaching it, again, by the Phrygian move from Fb. The villagers come to understand that the fire they witnessed was a holy one. This realization is depicted musically by a gradually rising vocal line which finally climaxes on a high fortissimo Bb, the final and highest

---

66 It is reasonable to assume that a manuscript copy of the orchestration is waiting to be found by future researchers somewhere in a box in the composer’s collection at the Library of Congress.
note of the cycle for the singer, and a sweeping accompaniment which owes much to Debussy and Ravel.

The final section as delimited by Castelnuovo-Tedesco begins with the final cadence on Eb in 244, and serves as a coda for the piece. Fragments of both the St. Francis and St. Clare themes are combined to give the impression of the mingling of their spirits, and eventually the competing duple and triple meters dissolve into simple rising quarter notes which could represent either saint’s leitmotif, and in fact represent a fusion of the two souls.

The absence of a key signature in this piece appears to be an expedient to avoid the constant recourse to accidental naturals, since Catelnuovo-Tedesco moves freely between sharps and flats in this song, with frequent enharmonic shifts, and ends the piece in Eb. Perhaps he really did conceive of this piece in C, the key of the previous two songs. In practice, however, the piece shifts tonal centers on almost every page, landing most frequently in Eb, E, and F. Probably as a result of this tonal complexity the score has several typographical errors, where sharps or flats which may have been covered by the key signature have instead been mistakenly omitted. The first of these typos occurs in m. 17, where the accidental middle C# from the right hand of the piano should again be marked in the left hand at the end of the measure. On the next page, in m. 19, the right hand of the piano should presumably play an F# to match the previous measure and its own bass. Measure 110 omits an Eb in the left hand of the piano. In m. 195 a marked flat is clearly missing from the top A, which is flatted in a different octave in the same measure and in the same octave both in the measure before and the one after it. Finally, the D above middle C in the middle of the triplet in m. 209 should be a D#. This is a potentially confusing cross-relation, since the downbeat D tied from the previous measure is natural and the
top D in the same measure also has a courtesy natural, but the passing D on beat three clearly should match the similar figures on the rest of the page, as confirmed also by the additional courtesy natural on the D which immediately follows the note in question.

This piece is by far the most ambitious of the three Fioretti set by Castelnuovo-Tedesco. It is not only the longest and technically the most difficult, but its fundamentally spiritual rather than dramatic nature can be a difficult one to portray on stage. Moments of rapt lyricism must alternate with matter-of-fact narration in the voice. The underlying leitmotifs are critical to the communication of the dramatic arc of the piece as well as its spiritual message. The leitmotifs in this movement are more than labels identifying which protagonist is currently being featured; they reach beneath the surface to communicate a subtext and become transformed in the manner of Wagner.
Chapter V: Individual Songs

Ninna nanna

Background

This song was composed in 1914, when Mario was still a teenager. The text is by his older brother, Ugo Castelnuovo-Tedesco, who also provided the verses for *Fuori i barbari!* and the unpublished song without opus number, *La Canzone della Tombola*. An amateur poet with, in his younger brother's words, “literary ambitions,” Ugo eventually did publish a book about law in 1960. At this time Mario's ambitions exceeded his means; the few pieces he did get published during this period included piano pieces, this charming song, and the equally simple militant march *Fuori i barbari!* This song was written during a summer vacation in Castiglioncello, a beach resort near Livorno. For entertainment he and his brothers would host musical soirées where Mario improvised songs to Ugo's verses and everyone sang along. Over the course of the summer every guest requested their own song, including a six-year-old girl named Giuliana. Her song came out so well that Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote it down and published it, dedicating it to Giuliana. No one was more surprised than the composer himself when “it then became... the most sung of all [his] songs!”

Text

Ninna nanna
Ugo Castelnuovo-Tedesco

Lullaby

1 Don! Don! Don!
Ding! Ding! Dong!
2 Ogni bimba ha una campana
Every girl has a bell
3 dolce, strana,
sweet, strange
4 tutta per sé.
all for herself.
5 Suona a notte il cielo è bruno
It rings at night the sky is dark

---

67 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Vita*, 73.
68 Ibid., 106.
6 e nessuno
7 sa dov'è.
and no one
knows where it is.

8 Don! Don! Don!
9 Par che pianga par che rida,
10 sa e non sgrida,
11 perdona e sa
12 dice solo quando suona
13 “Sii più buona”
14 e tace e va.
Ding! Ding! Dong!
It seems that it cries, it seems that it laughs,
it knows and doesn't scold
it forgives and knows
it says only when it rings
“Be more good”
and is silent and leaves.

15 Don! Don! Don!
16 Vi volete confidare
17 voci care
18 In voi chi c'è?
19 Mamma, mamma, la campana
20 dolce, strana,
21 mi par te!
Ding! Ding! Dong!
Do you want to confide
dear voices
Who is inside you?
Mother, Mother, the bell
sweet, strange
seems to be you!

Analysis
This simple strophic song should be sung with the tenderness of a lullaby. The subtitle specifies “per l'album di una bimba” (for the notebook of a little girl) and the song was first popularized by Salomea Krusceniski (1872-1952), a Ukrainian soprano of great renown in Italy, where she spent much of her career and became a naturalized citizen. It is better suited to a female voice but can be sung by anyone with facility in singing softly. The only markings at the beginning of the score are molto calmo (very calm) and dolce e sonoro (sweet and sonorous) under the right hand octave bell-like motif. There are several musical allusions to the bell from the text, but care should be taken not to overdo them, maintaining instead the sweetness of the song. Harmonically simple, the song is built on a G pedal point, lending it an air of calm serenity. Adding harmonic interest to this pedal point is the addition of F natural and A over the G. The vocal line hints at the Mixolydian mode when first rising to F. Written with tenuto marks, this unexpected note may be approached with a slight agogic accent or otherwise be textually or

69 Also spelled Kruszelnicka, Krushel'nytska, or Krushelnytska.
dynamically underlined, though always without violence. The influence of Debussy is evident in the impressionistic harmonies and the augmented chord just before the end of each verse. Much of the effect of the song is due to the tender yet playful text. The D# in the vocal line at the end of each verse is perhaps the most important note; it lines up well in the second verse with line 13, *Sii più buona* (be more good,) and *buona* should be stressed slightly in accordance with the dynamic markings in the score.

**Fuori i barbari!**

*Background*

The battle cry “Fuori i barbari!” (Out with the barbarians!) is originally attributed to the early 16th-century “Warrior Pope” Julius II, the founder of the Swiss Guard and employer of Michelangelo and Raphael.\(^71\) It has recurred throughout Italian history as a cry for unification. This song was written in 1915, as Italy was choosing sides and readying itself for the First World War. The usually politically disinterested Castelnuovo-Tedesco found himself swept up in the passion of other Italian youths at this time and participated in a student demonstration. Following the demonstration, on the eve of war, Mario asked his brother Ugo to write patriotic lyrics for him to set to music, which he did, beginning with the famous battle cry and then writing original text to follow it. The song quickly became a success and was sung by Italian soldiers during the war.\(^72\) Later, when facing persecution under the Fascist regime Castelnuovo-Tedesco would point out the irony that he, author of the famous nationalist song of the Great War, was being called

---


un-Italian and having performances of his music cancelled by the authorities.\textsuperscript{73} It was published the following year, in part because of the many unauthorized editions that were appearing, and the year after in versions for voice and orchestra and voice and military band. After the war, the poet-politician Gabriele d'Annunzio reappropriated it by writing new words and renaming it \textit{La Canzone di Fiume Liberata}, though when the opportunity later came to republish it in this version Castelnuovo-Tedesco refused to grant permission because he found the rhythm of the new poetry did not match that of the music.\textsuperscript{74}

\textit{Text}

Fuori i barbari!
Ugo Castelnuovo-Tedesco

1 Fratelli, fratelli,
2 venite a consacrarci
3 Fratelli, fratelli,
4 la patria chiama all'armi
5 Torna ai suoi confini,
6 torna ai suoi destini
7 Portabandiera prendimi con te!
8 Per la pace dei morti e degli eroi
9 Fuori i barbari!
10 Fuori i barbari!
11 Italia! Italia!
12 Si schiaccia l'Austria o non si torna più!

13 Avanti, avanti,
14 il popolo ha giurato;
15 Avanti, avanti,
16 Il popolo è soldato;
17 Offro la mia vita
18 Per l'Italia unita:
19 Trento e Trieste pregano per me!
20 Per la pace ecc.

21 Vittoria, vittoria,
22 Tra i fiori e le canzoni
23 Vittoria, vittoria,
24 Nel rombo dei cannoni;

---

\textsuperscript{73} Castelnuovo-Tedesco, \textit{Vita}, 292-4n409.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 107-8.
\textsuperscript{75} The literal translation of \textit{soldato} is “soldier.”
Analysis

The meaning of the word “barbarian” here is probably closer to its Greek root meaning “foreigner” and refers to the Austro-Hungarians, specifically in the regions of northeast Italy which include Trento and Trieste, the first to be threatened. It is probably best suited for a baritone singer, though it was obviously intended to be sung by anyone. The line may be a little high for a tune intended for the masses, but the top F is still in the range of most young men singing with high energy. The melody is somewhat strange for a battle song, especially because of its minor mode, and is marked Solenne (solemn.) Ostensibly in A minor, the piece implies C major in the opening bars before settling on A. The entry of the voice immediately destroys this sense of A, implying D minor instead. Continuing down the flat side of the circle of fifths and thereby achieving a sense of increasing solemnity and weight, the piece modulates to G minor in mm. 8-11, beginning with the unexpected C minor on Torna ai suoi confini (return to its borders.) The key of D minor is quickly re-established with the F natural on eroi (heroes.) The use of the diminished seventh chord on the line Fuori i barbari! is reminiscent of Italian opera of this period. It creates a harmonic as well as vocal point of climax marked con impeto (with impetus) which should be sung with all the fire of Italian verismo operatic music. The strophic nature of the song might make it tempting to leave out a verse in performance, but the third verse should be included because of its victorious nature.
Girotondo dei golosi

Background

Golosi, translated “Gluttons” here, is a term with more negative connotations in English than in Italian and could also be translated as “gourmands” or even just used to describe “people with a sweet tooth.” This piece was written for the “Giornalino della Domenica”, a local weekly publication by adults, some of considerable reputation, for children. Castelnuovo-Tedesco had faithfully read this magazine in his youth. In fact he had published some of his juvenile piano pieces in its companion “Il Passerotto,” which included only content by the kids themselves. But ten years later he contributed as a more accomplished composer, and this song was simultaneously published by Forlivesi. The text is by the Florentine Renato Simi, who is remembered primarily as a painter, but who was also an amateur poet. The dedication “alla lega dei golosi del Giornalino della Domenica” (to the League of Gourmands of the Sunday Magazine) presumably refers to a local gastronomic club which must have taken its name from Escoffier's *Ligue des Gourmands* of this same era.

Text

Girotondo dei Golosi
Renzo Simi

1 Giro, giro, girotondo,
2 il più lieto il più giocondo
3 girotondo che sia al mondo,
4 certo è quel di noi golosi,
5 e noi siam molto orgogliosi
6 alla barba dei noiosi,
7 alla barba dei noiosi
8 d'alto senno e di gran pondo
9 viva il nostro girotondo.
10 Ma già ci sarà qualcun che dirà

Circle Dance\(^\text{76}\) of the Gluttons

Ring around the rosy
the most glad and most joyful
circle dance that there is on earth,
certainly is that of us gluttons
and we are very proud
in the face of the tedious
in the face of the tedious,
the high minded and of great import
hurray for our circle dance.
But already there will be someone who says

\(^{76}\) A “girotondo” is an Italian childrens’ dance similar to the English “Ring Around the Rosy.” It can refer to any dance where people hold hands and turn in a circle and more generally anything that comes around again and again.

\(^{77}\) Literally “to the beard of”, “alla barba di” implies spite and defiance.
11 che bene non sta (perché poi chi sa!)  
12 La gente severa col lallerallera  
13 che rider ci fa col lallerallà.  

that this is not good (why then? who knows.)  
The serious people with tralalala  
who make us laugh with tralalala.

14 Se golosi son gli uccelli  
15 che dei fichi beccan quelli  
16 che la veste hanno a brandelli  
17 e se l'ape virtuosa  
18 dalla menta e dalla rosa  
19 sugge il miel perche è golosa  
20 noi facciam' come i fringueli  
21 e dell'ape siam fratelli,  
22 e dell'ape siam fratelli.  
23 Ma già ci sarà ecc.  

If the birds are gluttonous  
that grab those figs  
whose robes are torn to shreds  
and if the virtuous bee  
from the mint and from the rose  
sucks the honey because it is gluttonous  
we will be like the finches  
and we are brothers of the bee,  
and we are brothers of the bee.  
But then there will be, etc.

Analysis

Marked lietamente (joyfully), this is another example of a simple, singable song. Both the melody and the piano line rise and fall in a manner reminiscent of a childrens’ dance, moving mostly in stepwise motion, with the piano, marked festoso (festive), supporting the vocal line. This gives the song the character of a singalong or a children's song. The melody flirts with the Lydian mode when the voice enters, though F major is clearly established by the piano first. Most of the accidentals in this piece are raised, creating an air of increasing gaiety and lightness. The exception occurs on line 8 on d'alto senno, when the introduction of Eb paints the exaggeratedly serious “high-minded” people. This same gesture occurs again on gente severa (serious people) for similar reasons. The score is full of dynamic markings for both piano and voice, and not always in the same direction. These should be observed carefully, as they add depth and variety to this otherwise straightforward piece. Some vocal word painting would be appropriate to depict the contrast between the serious people and the gluttons, and to invoke the sounds of the birds and bees. The sexual innuendo in the song is strong, especially when the text turns to birds and bees, figs and honey, and requires the performance be delivered with a
knowing wink; the *lalleralera* sections are perhaps the most appropriate places to suggest this subtext besides the aforementioned words.

**l'Infinito**

*Background*

Castelnuovo-Tedesco composed the music for *l'Infinito*, which uses the text of one of Italy's most famous poems, despite his teacher Pizzetti's admonishments to the contrary. Pizzetti perhaps did not expect the young composer to have the means to do justice to this great poem. But with the rebelliousness of youth Castelnuovo-Tedesco set it to music anyway, and presented it to the master almost defiantly, inviting him to tell him to either let him publish it or make him tear it up. Upon playing through the completed song, Pizzetti let the young student publish the piece and dedicate it to him. 78

Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837) is one of the giants of Italian literature, considered second only to Dante, and *l'Infinito* is his most famous masterpiece, still memorized by high school students in Italy today. Leopardi was erudite and brilliant, using words with subtlety and imbuing his poems with not just beauty but philosophy. He was an outspoken atheist, and is a symbol for the possibility of non-religious art in Italy, a country whose greatest artistic masterpieces are inextricably linked with Catholicism. Leopardi rejected the heavy Roman Catholic religion of his father, who was a count in the Papal States. But while ceaselessly reiterating the idea of universal solitude and eventual oblivion, Leopardi nevertheless always maintains beauty, love, and goodness as important, if perhaps illusory, ideals. Thus he may be classified as a humanist poet more than a nihilist philosopher, though he certainly has elements

---

78 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Vita*, 133. For a complete translation of this charming anecdote from Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s autobiography, see Appendix B.
of both. *L'Infinito* is taken from his set *Idylls*, shorter poems which are metrical and make frequent use of assonance and consonance despite being unrhymed. *L'Infinito* summarizes Leopardi's world view: he describes himself atop a solitary hill, contemplating the infinite horizon beyond, with his thoughts lost in an immense sea, almost afraid, but sweetly drowning in the majesty of the moment.

**Text**

L'infinito
Giacomo Leopardi

The infinite

1 Sempre caro mi fu quest'ermo colle,  
And this hedge, which blocks most of
2 E questa siepe, che da tanta parte  
Spaces beyond it, and superhuman
3 Dell'ultimo orizzonte il guardo esclude.  
Silences, and deepest calm
4 Ma sedendo e mirando, interminati  
I lose myself in thought; where the heart is
5 Spazi di là da quella, e sovrumani  
Almost afraid. And as the wind
6 Silenzi, e profondissima quiete  
I hear rustling through these plants, that
7 Io nel pensier mi fingo; ove per poco  
Infinite silence I compare to this voice.
8 Il cor non si spaura.  
And contemplate the eternal,
9 Odo stormir tra queste piante, io quello  
And the dead seasons, and the present
10 Infinito silenzio a questa voce  
And alive, and its sound. Thus in this
11 V o comparando: e mi sovvien l'eterno,  
Immensity my thoughts are drowned,
12 E le morte stagioni, e la presente  
And foundering is sweet in this sea.
13 E viva, e il suon di lei. Così tra questa  
14 Immensità s'annega il pensier mio,  
15 E il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare.

**Analysis**

For Castelnuovo-Tedesco *l'Infinito* shows a substantial growth in style from his previous songs. Responding to the depth and complexity of the poem, the music fits like a glove. The piece is in C, a key which, as has been mentioned before, the composer considered spiritual, limpid, and resplendent. It begins with a majestic, slow chordal introduction. The voice enters calmly, thoughtfully, with an almost speech-like quality. This tone is maintained for several lines

---

79 As before, the intent of the following translation is to follow the structure of the Italian as closely as possible in English, even though this approach may result in a somewhat unidiomatic result. For a more poetic translation of the text into English, see Ottavio M. Casale, *A Leopardi Reader* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 44. At the time of this writing, an interesting online source with several different translations and discussion of the translator’s thought process can be found at http://www.textetc.com/workshop/wt-leopardi-1.html.
as the poet paints the scene. In the middle of line 8, with the entrance of “the wind” on the words *e come il vento odo stormir tra queste piante* (and as the wind I hear rustling through these plants), the pace suddenly accelerates, with trills in the piano depicting the sound of the rustling wind. In this poem the wind signifies the passage of time, which drives the music forward and calls for the quicker tempo. But quickly the *sovrumani silenzi* (superhuman silences) take over and the piece calms down again. *Profondissima quiete* (deepest calm) should be back at the initial tempo if not even a little slower. The end builds to a climax on *e la presente e viva* (and the present and alive [season]), the crux of Leopardi’s philosophy—this must be delivered with all the conviction of a humanist who does not believe in an afterlife but refuses to give in to despair. The beauty of the moment is everything there is, and it must be enough.

The final note is written as a choice between a *pianissimo* high G or a low C. Either one can pose some technical challenges for the singer, and they did for the composer as well. In *Italian Art Song* Lakeway and Wright recommend that the singer uncomfortable with either extreme note sing a third option, the C in the middle of the staff.⁸⁰ This is not in line with the composer’s wishes and should be avoided if at all possible. The originally written note was the upper G; the low C was added, according to Castelnuovo-Tedesco himself, “only because of the difficulty some singers had in singing [the G] in tune.” Specific musical comments such as this one are rare in the composer’s memoirs, and the mention of this note specifically implies that the issue in this particular song must have been on his mind even forty years after the song’s composition. In any case, Castelnuovo-Tedesco makes clear he wishes for the final note to be at one register extreme or the other, not comfortably in the middle. He writes: “the word *mare,*

---

⁸⁰ Lakeway, *Italian Art Song*, 270.
which requires in any case a change of register, though I'm still unsure which is better.”

Thus it is reasonable to conclude that if the high G cannot be made to sound good, the composer would have wished for the low C without transposition.

A central characteristic of all of Leopardi’s Idylls is the careful use of assonance and consonance in the absence of rhyme. To bring out these characteristics of the poem, the singer must give special care to diction, and especially to the consistency of vowels. Line 4 is a particularly salient example of consonance, with the frequent use of /n/, /m/, and /d/, all of which should be carefully voiced on pitch along with the vowels to give a humming, meditative feel to the song. Lines 5 and 6 contain many sibilant /s/ sounds, which evoke the silence which is punctuated only by the wind. The final two lines again contain a preponderance of /m/, /n/, and /d/. Giving these voiced consonants their proper weight and support will help maintain the aura of majestic calm in the song, avoiding harshness or angularity.

Compagno still sees l’Infinito as an immature and imperfect work. He describes it as worthy neither of infamy nor praise, and places it in a student period of songs which sound like Pizzetti’s. He describes Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s mature style as having more in common with his earliest songs, especially Coplas and Stelle cadenti. In his view, Castelnuovo-Tedesco did not rediscover the subtle and light touch of those early cycles until after stepping out of the shadow of Pizzetti with the Shakespeare Songs and in particular by becoming “emancipated” from a Pizzettian declamatory vocal style. In my opinion, l’Infinito does represent a step towards independence from Pizzetti, but it is a psychological independence which shows the young composer’s budding self-confidence. What sets this song apart is its profound connection to a

---

81 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Vita, 133-4.
82 Compagno, Anni fiorentini, 104-6.
great text and its move towards a formal and thematic conciseness. While Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s later songs do perhaps become more melodic in the vocal line, his text setting is consistently syllabic and declamatory throughout his entire compositional output. Time has shown that in many ways l’Infinito may be considered among the best of all of his songs for voice and piano, and it is one of the few that is still recorded and performed today.

Sera

Background

Perhaps emboldened by his success in setting Leopardi, Castelnuovo-Tedesco embarked on a life-long journey of setting to music some of the greatest poets, regardless of nationality and era. Before beginning to work on his own masterpiece of songs for voice and piano, the Shakespeare Songs, Castelnuovo-Tedesco set this short piece by Dante Alighieri, a poet at the pinnacle of Italian literature and himself a Florentine. The text for Sera is drawn from Purgatorio, the second part of the Divina Commedia, in Canto VIII. In this case the composer was not drawn to some of the most famous passages from the massive work. For this song he chose instead a relatively short, descriptive excerpt, almost as a prelude to a greater work. Castelnuovo-Tedesco would go on to set a little more Dante in 1927, though he turned to sonnets from La Vita Nova instead of the Divina Commedia in this later work.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of Dante Alighieri in the canon of Italian literature. Born in the late 13th century, Dante is now known simply as Il Poeta (The Poet) in much the same way that Shakespeare is referred to simply as “The Bard” in English-speaking countries. Dante is credited in large part to “creating” the Italian language by choosing to write in the vernacular of Tuscany rather than in Latin, the universal language of scholarship. His Divina
Commedia continues to be studied by all Italian students as well as non-Italians around the world. Dante took an active part in Florentine political life, which at the time was dominated first by the conflict between two families, the Guelfs (with whom Dante was allied) and the Ghibellines. After the Guelfs gained control of the city the family split into two factions, the Black Guelfs and the White Guelfs, which included Dante. The two factions were split along family lines but also represented differing political views; most importantly the Black Guelfs supported greater Papal authority and involvement in Florentine life. While the Whites were originally in the ascendancy, the Black Guelfs eventually took over the city with the help of Rome and many White Guelfs were exiled, including Dante, who was a Florentine envoy in Rome at the time. Dante remained in exile from his beloved Florence for more than half of his life, and died in Ravenna in his mid-fifties without ever returning to his native city.

The Commedia was written and published in exile, but is full of references to famous residents of Florence as well as other Italians. The basic structure of the work is in three sections, Inferno (Hell), Purgatorio (Purgatory), and Paradiso (Paradise), each section divided into 33 Canti, or songs. With an additional introductory Canto of Inferno included, this makes for a total of 100 chapters. The poetry follows a rigorous rhyme scheme (aba bcb cdc ded) called terza rima. The massive work has been quoted for centuries, though musical settings are less common than might be supposed, perhaps due to the heavily political nature or the monumental scope of the work. The work draws much inspiration from classical poetry, and Dante’s guide through the afterlife is, in fact, the poet Virgil. Of the three sections, Inferno is the most political, as many of the public figures of the day which Dante wanted to take to task have honored places in his invented circles of Hell. Purgatorio is a more lyrical, philosophical work. Many of the residents
of purgatory are poets and philosophers, and the primary atmosphere is one of hope in eventual salvation. In this way *Purgatorio* is perhaps the most human in nature, since souls in purgatory, while suffering or lost in their current state, still entertain hope of eventual salvation. *Paradiso* is the most spiritual section, but also dogmatic and doctrinal at times; some of the theological discussions that occur in this part of the work show the important influence of St. Thomas Aquinas on Dante.

**Text**

*Dante Alighieri*  

Era già l'ora che volge il disio  
ai naviganti e intenerisce il core  
lo di ch'an detto ai dolci amici addio;  
e che lo novo peregrin d'amore  
punge, s'ode squilla di lontano  
che paia il giorno pianger che si more  

---

Evening  

It was the hour that turns longings back  
In seafarers, and makes the heart grow tender.  
The day they have said farewell to sweet friends,  
And which pierces the new traveler with love.  
One hears the distant bells  
which seem to mourn the dying day.

**Analysis**

In many ways this piece shares the contemplative aspect of *l'Infinito*, though without the depth and inner turmoil of the former piece. Taken from *Canto XIII* of *Purgatorio*, the song has the character of a prelude, and in fact these are the opening lines of the *canto*, just before the narrator is approached by a wandering soul and the dialogue begins. The central theme of the poem is best described as exile. Dante refers both to seafarers and pilgrims, two varieties of traveler, who are far from home and loved ones. The parallel is not only to the wandering souls of purgatory, who are exiled from paradise but hope to eventually arrive there, but also to Dante himself, who was exiled from his beloved Florence but maintained some hope of being accepted back into its arms until the end of his life. In *Convivio*, Dante states that “the supreme desire of

---

83 The text here provided follows the spellings used by Castelnuovo-Tedesco in the score.
each thing, and the one that is first given to it by nature, is to return to its first cause." The supreme desire of souls in purgatory is to return to their creator, and the supreme desire of Dante in exile was to return to the city of his youth.

Of course, like some of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s other early Italian songs, this could be considered a religious piece—it is after all taken from a greater work framed in a religious setting—but the six short lines that Castelnuovo-Tedesco selected contain no explicit mention of any sort of divine presence and the only Catholic-inflected accent is the sound of bells described in the scene. The bells may in fact be why Castelnuovo-Tedesco selected these lines, as his home was near the Duomo in Florence and he was literally surrounded by the sound of bells throughout his youth. The bells in the poem refer to the evening bells of Compline, the last of the canonical hours. Thus the setting is just after dusk, as night is vanquishing the dying day. Again, as in the the song Ninna nanna, the sound of bells is rendered through the use of a syncopated pedal point which persists for most of the song. This time it is middle C, which repeats on weak off-beats. Ideally, this note should be played with unchanging insistence, independent of the dynamic rise and fall of the other parts and of the voice, much the same as one might perform a French mélodie. This syncopated and static effect again probably owes much to the influence of Debussy on the young composer. The harmonic interest in this song is created mostly by the interplay of F major and F minor, achieving a twilight effect which is neither light nor dark and perfectly captures the crepuscular tone of the poem.

85 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Vita, 55.
Some dramatic insistence on the lines *e che lo novo peregrin d'amore punge* (and which pierces the new pilgrim with love) is warranted, though the calm insistence of the bells must quickly return with the *a tempo*. This song can successfully be interpreted literally, without drawing on the greater context of the *Divina Commedia*, describing simply the moment of dusk and featuring terrestrial travelers. However, in the context of the Dante original, the traveler represents the souls in purgatory as well as Dante himself, both separated from their true homes. Through the use of death imagery in *il giorno che si more*, translated above as “the dying day,” Dante conveys the sense that the soul in purgatory, acutely nostalgic, is hearing the bells as though mourning the day of its own death. This reading adds some depth to the song, allowing it to be delivered with more urgency and loneliness rather than being passively descriptive. As in *l'Infinito*, however, the final message should be fundamentally optimistic, as purgatory is a temporary albeit painful condition before paradise. While no specific voice part or gender is implied by the words or specified by the composer, this song seems to fit best for a tenor or a high baritone, though it is suitable for any voice part with the ability to maintain dynamic control on a high F.
Chapter VI: Conclusions

Upon completing this study of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s early Italian songs, I am reminded of Paolo Gualdi’s conclusion that the composer’s piano music is unfortunately neglected. That this same statement also holds true for Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s music for voice and piano is equally surprising, because this genre was not only one of the composer’s favorites, but also comprises a large percentage of his total compositional output. There are many neglected gems among Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s songs. Even restricting oneself only to those songs discussed here, *l’Infinito* and the third of the *Fioretti* can hold their own against the best in the standard repertoire, and, depending on occasion, some of the simpler songs like *Sera* and *Ninna nanna* would also be beautiful additions to a recital. The sets *Stelle cadenti* and *Briciole* are also worth performing, especially given the relatively high demand for songs in Italian among college students and the relative paucity of variety in the repertoire generally presented at the average university recital. At the professional level there is great opportunity for recording many of these early works, most of which have been largely ignored.

As Castelnuovo-Tedesco himself stated, the composer’s style did not vary much over the course of his life. In the songs here discussed, some of them among his earliest essays into composition, the composer’s mature style is already largely discernible. But while the main elements of that style were already in place, the early songs show a youthful exuberance which sometimes becomes rambling or scattered, and less clarity of form than the mature composer’s works. While Castelnuovo-Tedesco, despite his distaste for “isms,” can generally be described as neoclassical, some of his early works, especially the *3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco*, contain many

87 Gualdi, “Piedigrotta,” 88.
impressionistic flourishes. They are perhaps not expertly controlled, but these youthful moments are charming and the pieces that arose out of that creative energy are worth investigating. The influence of Debussy’s style pervades much of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s music, especially in the use of parallel block chords and modal and whole tone sonorities.

In summary, the early Italian songs of Castelnuovo-Tedesco show the following common stylistic elements: a declamatory vocal line which occasionally becomes more exuberantly melodic, an essentially tonal harmonic language with whole tone, quartal, and other chromatic flourishes, a predominance of the key of C, and a constant effort to arrive at musical simplicity and fidelity to the source text. At their worst, the early songs tend to sound fragmented and inconsistent, but at their best they contain a youthful ebullience married to a charming simplicity. Technically sound, the songs are well-written for the piano (except in the orchestral reduction of the *Fioretti*) and also lie well in the singing voice. Unlike some 20th century composers, Castelnuovo-Tedesco avoided staying in the extreme ranges of the voice for too long, and approached high notes on favorable vowels. Phrases, while lyrical and sometimes expansive, are always of reasonable length, with natural pauses which allow the singer to breathe. The fact that Castelnuovo-Tedesco committed his chosen texts to memory and found the natural internal musical shape of the text is clear in all of his songs.89

The main change that is evident upon study of these songs in contrast with Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s later work is the complete change in the composer’s attitude towards great poetry as a source text for a song. Once he began to write songs on texts by Dante, Leopardi, Palazzeschi, and Shakespeare in the early 1920s, he never looked back. Very few of his later compositions were based on folk poems, translations, or otherwise second rate texts. It is because of

Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s deep connection to great poetry and his expert ability to bring the “core” of a poem out in music, that his songs deserve further study and more frequent performance.

It is perhaps due to his relative lack of avant garde compositional techniques in his mature style that Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco fell out of favor during the latter part of his career and after his death. He went from having been championed by the likes of Casella, Pizzetti, Toscanini, Heifetz, Piatigorsky, and Segovia to relative obscurity as modern art music moved into the hyper-experimental 1950s and 60s. The current musical environment, however, is somewhat more tolerant or even encouraging of fundamentally tonal, romantic-sounding music. There is good reason to believe that the time for a revival of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s music is at hand.
Appendix A: Complete List of Songs

The following table contains a complete list of songs, including arrangements and transcriptions, by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. The content for this list is taken directly from the complete list of works, including movie scores and transcriptions, edited by James Westby in the *Catalogo delle opera*, the companion volume to *Una vita di musica*. The songs below are sorted by composition date, regardless of publication status or presence of an opus number. All of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s personal collection, including a copy of every published work, is available at the Library of Congress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Songs</th>
<th>Lang.</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Instr.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opus</th>
<th>Publication status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Chansons Grises: parole di Paul Verlaine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Paul Verlaine</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le chant des ténèbres (Poesia medioevale francese)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Anonymous French Medieval</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cera vergine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Aldo Palazzeschi</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Roi Loys; ballata cavalleresca</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>medieval French</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninna nanna per l'album di una bimba</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Ugo Castelnuovo-Tedesco</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuori i barbari! Canto patriottico</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Ugo Castelnuovo-Tedesco</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ricordi, 1916; Forlivesi 1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coplas - 11 liriche brevi su poesie popolari spagnole</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sp.</td>
<td>collected by Jean Richepin in <em>Les Contes Espagnols</em></td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stelle cadenti - 12 liriche brevi (poesie popolari toscane)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>collected by Alessandro d'Ancona</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1915-1918</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briciole. Tre liriche brevi di Aldo Palazzeschi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Aldo Palazzeschi</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Battaglia è finita</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Translated by M. Chissi</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Composer/Author</th>
<th>Accompaniment</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Edition</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Il Libro di Dolcina</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Laura Milani Comparetti</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Liriche dal &quot;Giardiniere&quot; di Tagore</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Tagore</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>anonymous Tuscan</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tre canti all'aria aperta</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Collected by Alessandro d'Ancona</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girotondo dei golosi (per la lega dei golosi del &quot;Giornalino della Domenica&quot;)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Renzo Simi</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Canzone della Tombola</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Ugo Castelnuevo-Tedesco</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'infinito</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Giacomo Leopardi</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 19121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sera</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Dante Alighieri</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Curci, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Étoile filante</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>G. Jean Aubry</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Senart, 1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Passionate Pilgrim. 33 Shakespeare Songs</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1921-1925</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Chester, 1921-1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piccino picciò (Ninna-Nanna)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Corrado Pavolini</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballata (Messer Angelo Ambrogini, detto di Poliziano)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Angelo Poliziano</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Curci, 1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Barba bianca - Un dialogo di Vamba (Luigi Bertelli)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Luigi Bertelli</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Preghiere per I bimbi d'Italia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Luigi Bertelli</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La sera fiesolana; laude per canto e pianoforte</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Gabriele D'Annunzio</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La canzone di Usigliano</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Fernando Liuzzi</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Scherzi per musica di Messer Francesco Redi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Francesco Redi</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>35/1</td>
<td>Ricordi, 1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Scherzi per musica di Messer Francesco Redi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Francesco Redi</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>35/2</td>
<td>Ricordi, 1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Translator</td>
<td>Performer</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Edition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;1830&quot;: 3 Chansons par Alfred de Musset, mises en musique sur des fragments de Bach</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Alfred de Musset</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>36 Ricordi, 1925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Serenade</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Percy Bysshe Shelley</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>38 Forlivesi, 1925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drei Heine-Lieder</td>
<td>Ger.</td>
<td>Heinrich Heine</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>40 Universal, 1929</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quattro Sonetti da &quot;La Vita Nova&quot;</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Dante Alighieri</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>41 Forlivesi, 1927</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Sonnets from the Portuguese</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Elizabeth Barrett Browning</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>42 Chester, 1928</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadix: Chanson par Alfred de Musset</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Alfred de Musset</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>45 Ricordi, 1927</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villa Sola</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Alberto Carocci</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>none Antologia musicale: Rivista mensile, Milan, II/10, Oct 1931</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ore sole</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Aldo Palazzeschi</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>52 Forlivesi, 1930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chant Hébraïque: Vocalise</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>53 Leduc, 1930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocalizzi, nello stile moderno</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>55 Ricordi, 1929</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drei Heine Lieder, seconda serie</td>
<td>Ger.</td>
<td>Heinrich Heine</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>60/1 Forlivesi, 1933</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drei Heine Lieder (Sternlieder), terza serie</td>
<td>Ger.</td>
<td>Heinrich Heine</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>60/2 #3 under title Die Drei Könige (I Re Magi), Forlivesi, 1933</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sei Odi di Orazio</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Orazio</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>62 Ricordi, 1930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballade des biens immeubles (extrait des &quot;Nourritures terrestres&quot;)</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>André Gide</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>68 Ricordi, 1933</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Sonetti del Petrarca</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Petrarca</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>74/1 Ricordi, 1934</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrarca-Chopin: 3 Madrigali</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Petrarca</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>74/2 Ricordi, 1934</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Author/Source</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dos Romances Viejos</td>
<td>Sp.</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>75/1</td>
<td>Ricordi, 1934</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rondes pour chant et piano</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>André Gide</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1933-1934</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Ermita de San Simon</td>
<td>Sp.</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>75/2</td>
<td>Ricordi, 1935</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trois poèmes de la Pléiade</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Joachim du Bellay, Olivier de Magny</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Ricordi, 1937</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballade des amantes célèbres</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>André Gide</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romances Viejos, seconda serie</td>
<td>Sp.</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>75/3</td>
<td>Ricordi, 1936</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laudi di Nostra Donna from &quot;Savonarola&quot;</td>
<td>It./Eng.</td>
<td>Girolamo Benivieni</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>81/a</td>
<td>Galaxy, 1947</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trois Fragments de Marcel Proust (extraits de &quot;Les plaisirs et les jours&quot;)</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Marcel Proust</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Ricordi, 1937</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I saw in Louisiana</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Walt Whitman</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>89/1</td>
<td>Galaxy, 1940</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Walt Whitman</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>89/3</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Féeries: 3 poèmes de Paul Valéry</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Paul Valéry</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>91/1</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charmes: 3 poèmes de Paul Valéry</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Paul Valéry</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>91/2</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanson à boire</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>François Rabelais</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Scottish Songs (Poems by Sir Walter Scott)</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Walter Scott</td>
<td>S, T, harp, strings</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonetto di Dante / A Dante Sonnet</td>
<td>It./Eng.</td>
<td>Dante Alighieri</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>Galaxy, 1944</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Translator</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>Publisher, Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pansier, 2 poems by D. H. Lawrence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>D. H. Lawrence</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recuerdo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Edna St. Vincent Millay</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Fischer, 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Legend of Jonas Bronck</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Arthur Guiterman</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>106/1</td>
<td>Galaxy, 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Arthur Guiterman</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>106/2</td>
<td>Delkas, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon His Blindness [published as &quot;When I consider How My Life is Spent&quot;]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>John Milton</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>Galaxy, 1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tavern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Edna St. Vincent Millay</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Spring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Thomas Nashe</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>rights owned by MGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Byron Songs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>George Gordon Byron</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>rights owned by MGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Love's Like a Red Rose</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Robert Burns</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>rights owned by MGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Stevenson Songs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Robert Louis Stevenson</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>rights owned by MGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Kipling Songs (from &quot;The Jungle Book&quot;)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Rudyard Kipling</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>rights owned by MGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Rossignol</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>François Leclerc du Tremblay</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>Galaxy, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozymandias</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Percy Bysshe Shelley</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>124/1</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daffodils</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>William Wordsworth</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>124/2</td>
<td>Galaxy, 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Shadow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Ben Jonson</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>124/3</td>
<td>Fischer, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinque Poesie Romanesche</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Mario Dell'Arco</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Transl.</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Composer/Author</td>
<td>Performers</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Amico ad Amicam (Lines from a love letter, c. 1300)</td>
<td>Fr./En</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Sephardic Songs, transcribed and harmonized by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco</td>
<td>Eng./Fr./Ladino</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Israeli Music, 1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs and Processionals for a Jewish Wedding (3 and 4)</td>
<td>Heb.</td>
<td>Biblical</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Mills, 1951</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs of the Shulamite (from &quot;The Song of Songs&quot;)</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Biblical</td>
<td>S, flute, harp, string quartet</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballata dall'Esilio</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Guido Cavalcanti</td>
<td>voice and guitar</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unp</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Little Songs</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Ulric Devaré</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unp</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Voyage</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Joachim Du Bellay</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unp</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il Bestiario. Dodici poesie di Arturo Loria per canto e pianoforte</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Arturo Loria</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>unp</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poesia Svedese. Un'antologia di liriche per canto e pianoforte</td>
<td>It.</td>
<td>Translated into Italian by Giacomo Oreglia</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>189/1</td>
<td>unp</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vos Toig Mir (A Yiddish Melody), harmonized by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco</td>
<td>Yiddis h</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>In Eight Songs from Jewish Folklore, The Cantors Assembly, 1967</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Translations of excerpts from *Una Vita di Musica*\(^9\)

In C Major

[...a song composed in 1921, *L'infinito*, to the famous poem by Leopardi: it took much courage to set it to music and Pizzetti, with whom I had repeatedly spoken about it, persistently dissuaded me. At a certain point I felt that I must write it, and threw it down in just a few hours; but then I was afraid to show it to the Maestro! I headed off to his house, hesitantly, but the Maestro was not home; instead I found Bruno and Maria Teresa (still little) who, curious as kids are, read the title of the poem on the manuscript in my hands. “Please!” I warned them, “Don't say anything to your dad! I will come back this evening.” And so I returned in the evening, but no braver than before, and I avoided the subject. Over the course of the evening Bruno and Maria Teresa would come to me and whisper in my ear “Mario! Play l'infinito!” Pizzetti eventually figured out something was up, and asked 'What is this conspiracy?" “Maestro,” I replied, “I have never been so afraid to come to you, not even when I did a bad job with my counterpoint exercises! I set l'Infinito to music, but I remember all your objections! Now I leave it to you. If the music seems of no value, I will throw it away, as I have done with many other things; if instead you feel it is worthy of the poem, I ask your permission to publish it and dedicate it to you!”

I played the music, and then Pizzetti said to me, with a low voice full of emotion, “Publish it, and dedicate it to me.” This was the first piece which I dared to dedicate to him. (I only always remained uncertain of the conclusion which, in the first version, ended on the words, “e il naufragar m’è dolce in questo mare,” on a high note in the voice, and, in truth, only because of the difficulty that some singers had with singing it in tune, I tried a very low note; and in the edition there are both! They are, in the end, both plausible, according to a different interpretation of the word “mare,” which requires in any case a change of register; but I’m still unsure which is the best.)

In those years I had set mostly short poems (and I will not enumerate them all here); but, in 1919, I made a more grand attempt (almost of a fresco, or rather a triptych,) setting to music three of the *Fioretti di San Francesco*. These re-envisionings (so pure and heartfelt, so simple and picturesque) of the life and of the legend of the saint of Assisi always fascinated me (also for the naïve language in which they are narrated: sparkling like a silver filigree, fresh as a pool of spring water). There were only too many to choose from! In the end I selected three, which I deemed the most significant, and I arranged them according to dramatic criteria: 1. How St. Francis domesticated the wild doves, 2. How St. Francis freed a friar who was in sin with the Devil, 3. How St. Francis and St. Clare had a meal at St. Mary of the Angels and it seemed as though the whole place were on fire.

I composed them, given the magnitude of the subject, for a soprano voice and orchestra, but, unfortunately, I was not secure at the time in my orchestral technique, and I was never happy with the score: therefore I have never let them be performed in this form, and I published them, later, in a version for voice and piano. I still hope, some day (if I have the time) to rewrite the orchestra score, because I think it would be worth the effort: I believe they are still the most

---

spiritual and moving pages I have written. (They are also the first pages that I dedicated to Chiara, who was then my “St. Clare.”)

The other characteristic that all these compositions have in common (both those of “sculptural” origin and those of purely poetic origin) is the predominance of C major: a characteristic which was not premeditated, but certainly significant and almost inevitable. Why? The fact that every key has its own color, and best corresponds to a particular mood, has been observed and commented on many times before me (I myself subsequently had various predilections: as a child the tonalities “on black keys,” garrulous, brilliant, flirtatious “like Chopin!”; then this “period of C major”; immediately after a “period of G”—major or minor—a more masculine and resolute key.) And certainly the C major chord (as Schönberg said) “is to be treated with a certain circumspection”; but it has, on the other hand, no substitute (and Schönberg himself demonstrated this in the Ode to Napoleon, one of his last works, when, after so many atonal complications, he concludes the piece with a perfect—I would say flagrant—chord in C major!) For me certainly this “tendency to C major” corresponded to an intimate necessity, to a need, I would say, of clarification: ever since that moment (and, more or less, for the rest of my artistic career) my primary aspiration has been to simplify, to clarify my thoughts and my language, to render them as immediate and direct as possible, to liberate them from every waste and every vanity (I, who was so proud of every precious etching!) And then this key of C major, limpid and resplendent (like the noonday sun on the beach, or a chalice raised at the altar) corresponded to my vaguely mystic and transcendental aspirations which I had at this time, it was, in a sense, the necessary and inevitable expression of my faith.

On Faith

I have stated, for the first (and perhaps last) time, the word “faith,” and I wish to explain it, as regards myself, once and for all. When I wrote the Cantico di san Bernardino, and even more the Fioretti di san Francesco, many were astounded that I, a Jew, drew inspiration from the Christian mystics; and some disliked this fact (I believe, though he never said it to me, so did my father.) And I imagine that these objections will be repeated with the publication of my series of piano pieces which I have recently written on the life of Christ, Evangélion (even more so after having composed two biblical oratorios and having been considered for years a “champion” of Jewish music!). Some thought at the time, I might even have converted! I would like to declare that, not then, and not after, did I ever consider it! Naturally the poetry of the Christian legends, its profound humanity, its high spirituality, was fascinating to me as well, and to me (born in a Latin and Catholic country, growing up in a city of the Renaissance) the picturesque rites of the Church, its grandiose architecture, the splendor of its iconography were always undeniably attractive. But the faith of my fathers (simple and absolute, almost naked in its monotheism) was always enough! And as for that, it is not the rites and the laws that spoke to me particularly (it was, if anything, a traditional and patriarchal foundation, an austere moral value, and perhaps

---

92 Clara Forti, who was to become his wife in 1924.
93 Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Vita, 133-5.
94 In a footnote to this page of Una vita di musica, Westby explains: “At the time of the writing of this chapter Castelnuovo-Tedesco had composed two biblical oratorios: The Book of Ruth, op. 140 (1949) and The Book of Jonah, op. 151 (1951). In 1962 he completed his third oratorio, the Book of Esther, op. 200.” Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Vita, 136n173.
more than anything, the memory of my ancestors); in any case, in any religion, the external forms of the cult have never interested me (they have, if anything, bothered me, because they are all, in one way or another, lacking and inadequate): what has instead always attracted and convinced is the foundation (common to all religions), the symbol, the recognition of this unknown supreme power, which is outside ourselves, and above us, on which we depend and in front of which we are responsible; the concept, in other words, of God. In conclusion, I have never been a practicer of religion, but always a believer. I never had, like many young people, any crises of faith; and I was saved from them, doubtless, in part due to the presence of music in my life from when I was little; a herald almost, of another, more mysterious and august, presence. The mystery of inspiration I was never able to explain, not even as an adult (no matter how much I reflected on it.) How are ideas born? (and, in my case specifically, musical ideas?) How could I explain, I, a small being, weak and unaware, these sudden illuminations (come from I know not where and when I least expected them) that surprised me and clarified my insides? It was a gift, yes: a mysterious gift (much superior to my abilities and my intelligence,) of which I had to be grateful and of which I had to show myself worthy; and I always accepted it, not with pride, but with a profound dignity ("Domine, non sum dignus...") as a strange privilege that was granted me. Thus music was my faith, or rather the instrument of my faith. And, to communicate with the august presence, I had no need for words or a priest, as intermediary, I had no need for exorcistic or propitiatory formulas, in Hebrew or in Latin: my “communion” was music, and, to pray, it was enough for me to “sing.” And, better than in the penumbra of a church or of a synagogue, I was always able to pray in the light of the sun or under a starry sky; on a rock on the shore of the sea, or on top of a hill, between two rows of cypress trees, as in the nave of a church...

---

93 “Lord, I am not worthy” from the Latin Mass.
96 Ellipsis in original.
Appendix C: Summary of Songs Discussed

A note on transposition:

One issue that often arises in the art song repertoire is that of transposition. None of the songs here discussed exist in other, transposed editions. On the other hand, of these songs, only the *Fioretti* were specifically written with a particular voice part in mind, in this case a soprano of sufficient range and power to sing with orchestral accompaniment.

As specifically related to Castelnuovo-Tedesco, there are arguments both for and against the idea of transposing some of this music. The composer was essentially a pragmatic musician, and his career abounds with examples of changes he willingly made to his music in order to support the interpreters of that music. On the other hand, he also specifically associated certain keys with certain emotions and moods, an association which would be destroyed in transposition.

It is this author’s opinion that, if the performers are willing to put in the effort to prepare this music in a different key, that is preferable to the songs not being performed at all. The only exception to this is the *Fioretti*, which should clearly be left in the range they were written.

What follows is a chart of the songs here discussed with some basic information including vocal range.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rio Bo</td>
<td>Briciole</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>C#4-G5</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzogiorno</td>
<td>Briciole</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>very short</td>
<td>F4-F#5</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il passo delle Nazarene</td>
<td>Briciole</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>C4-E5</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come Santo Francesco dimesticò le tortole selvatiche</td>
<td>3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>C#4-A5</td>
<td>advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come Santo Francesco liberò un frate che era in peccato col Demonio</td>
<td>3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>C4-G#5</td>
<td>advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come Santo Francesco e Santa Chiara feciono uno desinare in Santa Maria degli Angeli, e parea che tutto lo luogo ardesse</td>
<td>3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>very long</td>
<td>C#4-Bb5</td>
<td>advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninna nanna</td>
<td></td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>beginner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuori i barbari!</td>
<td></td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>D4-F5</td>
<td>beginner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girotondo dei golosi</td>
<td></td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>C4-G5</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'infinito</td>
<td></td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>C4-F5 (G5)</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sera</td>
<td></td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>C4-F5</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

97 Range is given for treble voice, with C4-B4 being the interval from middle C to the B in the middle of the treble clef. However, with the exception of 3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco, which the composer specifically wrote for soprano, all of this repertoire would also be appropriate performed an octave lower by a male singer.

98 The optional G5 on the final note is strongly recommended but may be substituted for a C4 instead by the composer’s own suggestion.
Appendix D: Copies of Songs Discussed

The following pages are reproductions of those songs here discussed which are in the public domain. This includes, in order, Ninna nanna, Fuori i barbari!, Giortondo dei golosi, Briciole, and l’Infinito. Measure numbers have been added by the author for reference. Errata which are corrected in the text above are not marked in the following pages.
"ninna nanna" (per l'album di una bimba)

Parole di U. C. T.

MÁRIO CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO
(Castiglioncello - 15 Ottobre 1914.)

Molto calmo.

Don! Don! Don!

Ogni bim-bahua-na cam-pa-na dol-ce, stra-na,

Prop. A. FORLIVESI & G. Firenze.
Suona a notte il cielo è
bruno e nessuno sa dove

Don! Don! Don! Par che piaanga par che ridda,
Da re voca re? In voi chi ci è?

Mamma, mamma, la campana dolce

strana mi parte!
a Franco e Lucetta Lauzzi

„girotondo dei golosi”

(Per la lega dei golosi del Giornalino della Domenica)

Sinfonia di Renzo Simi

MARIO CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO

(c Gennaio 1920)

Canto

Lietamente

Pianoforte

6

1. Giro, giro, girotondo, il più
2. Se golosi son gliuccei, li che dei

11

Lieto il più giosco de girotendo che sia al moob, sti chi brecss quel li che la venishanno a brandel li.

For A. Forlivesi & C. Firenze. 10854
Copyright MCMXX by A. Forlivesi & C. Firenze
certo è quel di noi golosi, e ne siamo molto orgoglierosi al barba dei noiosi, al la rossa sugge il miel perché è golosa nei favi barba dei noiosi d'alto senno e di gran pondo viva il ciam co me i fringuelli e del la pe siam fratelli, e del p legato
lal - le - ra che ri - der ci fa

cel
Fuori i barbari!
Canto patriottico

Musica di
MARIO CASTELNUOVO TESIHO

Canto
Solenne

Piano

4

tel·li, frat·li ve·ni·te a con·sa·cer·mi Frat·li, frat·li la

7

pa·tria chia·ma all’ar·mi Torna·i sui con·si·ni torna ai suoi des·ti·ni

Prep A' t'orlivi e C' Firenze

10459
Avanti, avanti,
Il popolo cagionato;
Avanti, avanti,
Il popolo è soldato;
Ofrì la mia vita
Per l'Italia unita:
Trento e Trieste pregano per me!
Per la pace dei morti e degli eroi,
Fuori i barbari!
Fuori i barbari!
Italia! Italia!
Si schiaccia l'Austria, o non si torna più!

Vittoria, vittoria,
Tra i fiori e le canzoni
Vittoria, vittoria,
Nel rombo dei cannoni;
Bersaglieri al fronte,
Marina sul ponte,
Re divittoria, Re di prodi, è il Re!
Per la pace dei morti e degli eroi,
Fuori i barbari!
Fuori i barbari!
Italia! Italia!
Si schiaccia l'Austria, o non si torna più!

Firmato 23 Maggio 1918
E. C. T.
a Renato Bellenghi

"bricole,"

Aldo Palazzeschi.

MARIO CASTELNUOVO - TESESCO.

Tranquillo

I. "Rio Bo"

(14 Novembre 1913)

P dolce

pp trasparente

2 No.

Tre cas-ti-ne
dai tet-tia-guz-zì,

espress.

un ver-da pra-ti-cel-lo,

ppp lontano

Prep. A. FOLLIVESI & C. Firenze. 1907
un esiguo ruscello:

Rio Bo, un vigile cipresso.

Microscopico passe, è vero, passo con antefazione.

(poco tratt.)
e se da nulla, ma però c'è

sempre di soprana stella, una

grande, magnifica stella, che a un di
II. "Mezzogiorno,"
(22 Dicembre 1915)

Oscillando tranquillamente

Chieso

Pp argentino

avevano lontane vicine,

P più chiaro a poco

voi campanili fumano così tanti co-

a poco
mi-gno-li di cu-ci-ne

mf crescendo... ancora...

Mez-zo-gior-nol Mez-zo-gior-nol!

P semplicemente

Bam-bi-ni si va a man-gia-re.

P dolce

PP lontano
III. "Il passo delle Nazarene"

(12 Marzo 1916)

Calmo ed uguale

sempre PP - trasparente
(senza sfumature)

Nazarene bianche, Nazarene nere

Del fiume al Rio si guardan da tanto con

(© Declamando con grande semplicità e naturalezza, quasi parlando.....)
venti, si guardan con occhio di vecchiaam-

cizia le piccole torri, una bianca e una nera: le

{un poco tratt.}

suo-re s'incontran la sera, la seral crepuscolo. Due

{un poco tratt.}
volte s'incontran, le bianche le nere, sul

pon-te, sul pon-te cheu-ni-sce i con-

-ven-ti, gilu-ni-sce da tan-to per vec-chia a-mi-

ci-zia, le pic-co-le tor-ri si guar-dan ri-den-ti, u-na
112

15 (a tempo)

un poco tratti.

bianca una neve; le suore sincontran la sera, la sera al crepusto.

(a tempo)

17 (a tempo)

un poco tratti. col canto.

Le piccole chiese al crepuscolo.

(a tempo)

18 (a tempo)

PP cristallino

s'apro, no, ne sorto no le ste le suore ed infilano il
pon-te, nel mezzo s'in-con-tran, s'in-chi-nan le bianche ele
ne-re, si recan l'un l'al-tre ai-la pic-co-la chie-sa al sa-
li-to; vi san-noua bre-ve pre-ghe-rea e le-ste rin-fi-la-no il

(un poco più lento... a tempo)
24 (3) Tempo I°
ponte Di nuovo, nel mezzo, s'incontra, s'in-

26 (un poco tratto)
chi-nan le fi-le, u-na bian-ca e u-na ne-ra:

28 (un poco tratto, col canto)
su-re s'incontra se-ra, la se-ra lu-cipo-so-lo
a Ildebrando Pizzetti

"L' infinito ..

Giacomo Leopardi

MARIO CASTELNUOVO - TEDESCO

(31 Marzo 1931)

Calmo e contemplativo (lentissimo)

(4)

pp dolce e legato

(4)

(4)

ppp appena sensibile

ppp appena sensibile

ppp appena sensibile

3

p espress.

Sempre caro mi fu quest'anno

colle, e questa sipe, che da tanta

Prop. A. FORLIVESI & C. Firenze.

Copyright MCMXXI by A. FORLIVESI & C. Firenze.
parte del l'ul-ti-mo riz-zon-te il guar-do e-

Tempo I? (lentissimo) sempre P e molto calmo

Ma se-den-do mi-

ran-do, in-ter-mi-na-ti spa-zì di là da
quella, e sovrumanisilenzi,

(molto lento)
e profondissimaquieto nei pensier mi

Tempo I? (lentissimo)
finogo, ove per poccoilcornonsispau-ra.

P dolce tratt................................. pp lontano
Un poco più mosso

E co-mei ven-to o-do stormi tra que-ste pian-te, io quel-loin-fi-

appena sensibile il trillo

Molto largamente

Molto largamente, e le mor-te sta-gio-ni, e la pre-sen-te
vi - va, e il suon di lei. Co-

24 calmo e dolcissimo
-si tra que - sta-men-si -tà s'an-ne-
gail pensier

26 mi - o, e il nau-fra-

PP dolcissimo

PPPP
Bibliography of Books and Articles


Bibliography of Musical Editions

Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Mario. *3 Fioretti di Santo Francesco (per una voce e orchestra): versione per canto e pianoforte*. Florence: Forlivesi, 1924.


———. *Ninna nanna (per l’album di una bimba) per canto e pianoforte*. Florence: Forlivesi, 1919.

———. *Sera: per canto e pianoforte*. Naples: Curci, 1927.
Recommended Discography


