

FASCIST DISENCHANTMENT AND THE MUSIC OF
GOFFREDO PETRASSI

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ABSTRACT

Goffredo Petrassi (1904-2003) was one of many Italian composers who navigated the period of Italian Fascism from the height of its following to its demise. He celebrated the early years of the regime through music, and benefitted from prestigious official appointments. From this, he was able to shape and implement cultural policy, and enforced some of the regime's coercive laws upon the musical world. After the alliance between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany in 1939, particularly when Italy entered the Second World War, he used music to express his disillusionment. Petrassi is regarded as one of the most significant composers of his generation, yet few writings in English address the Fascist era itself in terms of music, much less the development of Petrassi's compositional style within its socio-political framework.

This dissertation contends that political events influenced Petrassi's aesthetic journey, and that his initial support of and eventual opposition to the regime found expression in his works. Petrassi believed that art was always a spiritual autobiography ("autobiografia spirituale"). Hence, the methodology uses primary sources, musical analysis, and comparisons with composers such as Luigi Dallapiccola (1904-1975) to authenticate that Petrassi's unique sound was a product of musical influences adapted to the shifting politics of Fascism. With a focus on choral music, particularly on Petrassi's choice of texts, musical selections are contextualized in relation to socio-political circumstances of the years 1930 to 1950. After Fascism, Petrassi's work captured his search for spiritual revival and artistic reinvention. His response to modernity is examined, as is his effort to compose alongside the avant-garde, which began an artistic struggle within him.

Drawing on autobiography, personal writings, interview transcripts, as well as my own interviews, I present a fuller picture of Petrassi than is currently available, as he negotiated

phases of the political regime in order to survive and maintain some personal integrity.

Accordingly, this dissertation validates Petrassi's music as an expression of his inner and outer worlds, and contributes to the understanding of Petrassi's creative evolution as he responded to new currents in composition during one of the least studied periods of Italian musical history.

DEDICATION

With great love, I dedicate my work to my grandparents, Elide and Vincenzo Paolone, and to my parents, Dr. Sam and Phyllis Macaluso. My soul is forever bound to yours, and I aspire to live each day in your honour.

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To Norma Beecroft, Ennio Morricone, Elide and Vincenzo Paolone: your conversations breathed life into all I had read about Goffredo Petrassi and of life lived under the regime. I was moved by your experiences, your candour, and the generosity of your time. Because of you, my work is elevated and bears an authenticity of which I am so proud and deeply appreciative.

Gratitude is also extended to colleagues, especially to Tere Tilban-Rios for her counsel and instruction, and to Dr. Mark Chambers for his gracious leadership as our department's Graduate Program Director. To friendships, new and perennial, I am thankful for the kindness, patience, and enthusiasm shown to me. The Ph.D is a matchless journey, and distractions of mirth or philosophical discourse were always welcomed.

Lastly, but mostly, to my family: Dr. Sam, Phyllis, Sean, Melissa and Katelyn. You are the pillars in my life and my greatest source of love. I can achieve my heart's most ambitious dreams because I have you. "yours is the light by which my spirit's born: - you are my sun, my moon, and all my stars." (E. E. Cummings)

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Chapter One: Introduction

The Musical Life of Fascist Italy

The musical life of Fascist Italy is a relatively neglected area when compared with the amount of musicological research dedicated to Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.¹ The careers of composers such as Carl Orff (1895-1982), Richard Strauss (1864-1949), Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978) and Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) have popularized the discussion of music and politics, but mention of Italian composers is limited. Italy's interwar years remain one of the least studied periods of Italian musical history, and are worthy of more attention.² With the rise to power of Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) in 1922 via the March on Rome, Italy and its people witnessed a political reconstruction to which composers responded varyingly. The discomfort of political change prompted composers to question if and to what extent they would consider artistic compromise, while also absorbing the transformation of their musical world which was being shaped by contemporary movements, such as Neoclassicism and Modernism. During the interwar years, many musicians celebrated Italian Fascism through music. Alfredo Casella (1883-1947), for example, applauded Mussolini's Abyssinian Campaign with his opera, *Il deserto tentato* (The Attempted Desert (1937), and further underlined this work's affiliation by dedicating its premiere to Mussolini. Likewise, after the military alliance between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany in 1939, music also became a medium to express one's indignation either as a work of protest or a declaration of sorrow. Luigi Dallapiccola (1904-1975) is regarded as the leading Italian composer of such musical expressions.

¹ Michael Kater, Erik Levi, and Pamela Potter are leading scholars of music in Nazi Germany. Likewise, David Fanning, Peter Schmelz and Boris Schwarz have contributed prominently to the field of music in Soviet Russia.

² Lee Barrow, "Guilt by Association: The Effect of Attitudes toward Fascism on the Critical Assessment of the Music of Ottorino Respighi," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 42, no. 1 (June 2011): 95.

Because the field of musical life in Fascist Italy remains only mildly explored, it is the same list of names that repeatedly surface throughout academic literature. Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936), for example, became a popular name due to Mussolini's appropriating of the famed composer's music for nationalistic purposes. Despite his apolitical stance, Respighi's involuntary affiliation with the regime soiled his posthumous reputation, and the resulting controversy was startling. Contradictions that arise are, I believe, the result of too few scholars attempting to explore such a complex period of historical musicology, as well as errors that may occur from translation. With an insufficient number of researchers working in the field, and limited resources for non-Italian speakers, the musical life of Fascist Italy remains a relatively underexplored specialty that requires further research.

Goffredo Petrassi (1904-2003)

While it is customary to begin one's life story with a place and date of birth, Goffredo Petrassi begins his autobiography with the image of a ten year old boy singing Verdi's *Rigoletto* in a quince tree surrounded by sunshine and birds:

Se dovessi dire come tutto è cominciato, racconterei di un ragazzino di dieci anni arrampicato su un albero di mele cotogne a cantare il *Rigoletto*...cantavo a squarciagola il *Rigoletto*, in mezzo agli uccelli, nell'aria e nel sole della campagna laziale vicino a Zagarolo. Non mi accontentavo di cantare a orecchio, cantavo con lo spartito: uno di quegli spartiti che si vendevano a prezzi popolari, costava una lira, Edizioni Bideri... leggevo i nomi, le scene, i costumi, i fatti straordinari che venivano rappresentati, tutte quelle suggestioni melodrammatiche di cui non capivo niente.³

If I had to say how it all started, I would tell you of how a ten year old boy climbed up a quince tree to sing *Rigoletto*...I used to sing *Rigoletto* out loud, in the midst of the birds, the air and the sunshine in the countryside of Lazio near Zagarolo. I was not content to sing by ear, I used to sing with the score: one of those scores that was sold at a low price, one lira, Bidieri Editions...I used to read the names, the scenes, the costumes, the extraordinary facts that were enacted, all those melodramatic suggestions of which I

³ Goffredo Petrassi, *Autoritratto. Intervista elaborata da Carla Vasio*, (Rome: Laterza, 1991), 5.

understood nothing.

It is an idyllic, yet ironic scenario that the simplicity of childhood be contrasted with the tragic plot of *Rigoletto*. The juxtaposition can be likened to Petrassi's adult life when he, like other Italians, lived naively within a politically toxic environment. The youngest of seven children, Petrassi was born on 16 July 1904 in Zagarolo, a small Italian town bordering Palestrina, the birthplace of the Renaissance master, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594), whose music later inspired Petrassi's own. As the Petrassis welcomed more children into the family, life became increasingly difficult. It was employment prospects that necessitated his family's move to Rome. His father sold the family's two small shops in Zagarolo, as well as a modest piece of land, and pursued work in the city. Soon after, at seven years of age, Petrassi was placed atop a wagon of wine and made the thirty-two mile journey towards his new life in Rome. This, Petrassi exclaimed, began "l'avventura della mia vita."⁴ ("the adventure of my life.")

Folk songs and his mother's singing nurtured an early passion for music, while opera awakened an enthusiasm for theatrics, particularly Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*; Giordano's *Fedora*; Verdi's *Il trovatore*, *La traviata*, and *Rigoletto*; and Wagner's *Parsifal*. Petrassi's exposure to contemporary music was largely a result of time spent at the theatre. The Teatro Costanzi, for example, today known as the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, was responsible for the Italian premiere of many significant works. It was in the standing room of this theatre where Petrassi experienced Wagner's *Parsifal*, "una delle mie prime passioni"⁵ ("one of my first loves") four times. Although his mother was not a formally trained musician, her sung melodies were reminiscent of Gregorian chant, and tapped an affinity within Petrassi for this style of music:

⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁵ Ibid., 11

mia madre aveva una particolare dote musicale che mi ha affascinato durante l'infanzia... Ricordo come cantava mia madre: erano melodie semplici, lineari, i cui punti cadenzali riflettevano i modi del canto gregoriano. Non che fosse canto gregoriano vero e proprio...⁶

my mother had a special gift of music that fascinated me during my childhood...I remember how my mother used to sing: they were simple melodies, linear, whose cadence points reflected the ways of Gregorian chant. Not that it was real Gregorian chant...

His musical training began serendipitously when his parents decided that he begin primary school. Public education was compulsory for all children, as per the Legge Casati (Casati Law), although many children remained unregistered. As the Petrassi family was very poor, he was enrolled in a school for needy children in the Piazza San Salvatore; however, he was destined to be elsewhere when the Schola Cantorum di San Salvatore, located within the same piazza, selected Petrassi to study as a chorister at their school.⁷ Admission was dependent on a pleasant-sounding singing voice. Attending the prestigious Schola Cantorum was a momentous opportunity. Students were provided with musical instruction, as well as regular occasions to perform, such as the daily service at St. Peter's Basilica in the Giulia chapel.⁸ Centuries of Roman polyphonic tradition were maintained, exposing Petrassi to the music of Palestrina, Josquin des Prez (1450/55-1521), Giovanni Francesco Anerio (1567-1630), and Giovanni Animuccia (1520-1571).⁹ It was the educational fulfillment of the musical style introduced to him from his mother's singing.

⁶ Ibid., 9-10.

⁷ Salvatore G. Biamonte, "L'intellettuale? Spesso è un manichino in vetrina. Conversazione con Salvatore G. Biamonte" in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 269. Previously published as "L'intellettuale? Spesso è un manichino in vetrina," *Euro 2*, New Series, no. 7 (July 1979): 46-49.

⁸ Enzo Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," in *Petrassi*, ed. Enzo Restagno (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1986), 4-5.

⁹ Ibid., 6.

His instruction at the school ceased when he was fifteen; his voice, no longer the sweet soprano of a young boy, had changed in adolescence, and he was forced to seek employment.¹⁰ This disruption to his education, however, did not affect what he had learned; the influence of Gregorian chant later emerged in his own compositions, revealing the impact from his youth. Petrassi found employment at a music shop along Via della Stelletta, and played the shop's piano as an amateur when business was quiet. His musicality interested Alessandro Bustini (1876-1970), a distinguished piano and composition teacher at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia, who offered Petrassi piano lessons while Petrassi also studied harmony with Vincenzo di Donato (1887-1967).¹¹ In 1928, having passed his entrance exams at Santa Cecilia, he continued as Bustini's student, this time in composition, and began organ studies with Fernando Germani (1906-1998). The conservatory provided a curriculum unlike that of the Schola Cantorum; Petrassi embraced new and contemporary techniques, thus producing a multiplicity to his musical education.¹²

As he progressed, Petrassi did not subscribe to one technique, but utilized and blended the appropriate aspects of that which inspired him, be it sixteenth-century polyphony, serialism, or jazz. Accordingly, his compositional output is a reflection of his musical influences. Petrassi was averse to expressing himself candidly, particularly about adversity and human sorrow, but felt compelled to reveal these afflictions musically "as an abstract drama: a unison, an interval, a pause, a pulsating rhythm...he had not belief in the certainty of any definitive approach but only in the certainty of the struggle and torment of life."¹³ Art was also a passion; he collected

¹⁰ Biamonte, "L'intellettuale? Spesso è un manichino in vetrina," 269.

¹¹ John S. Weissmann, *Goffredo Petrassi* (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1957), 6.

¹² Enzo Restagno, "Petrassi, Goffredo," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, accessed 11 April 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/21457>.

¹³ *Ibid.*

paintings and befriended artists, but he rejected the idea of a direct relationship between music and art. Instead, he believed that painters and musicians simply created their art within a shared aesthetic culture, in cases such as Debussy and Impressionism and Symbolism, or Stravinsky and Cubism:

Ma questi sono però dei rapporti che non sono diretti; semplicemente indicano che gli autori, i musicisti, operavano in una temperie culturale ed estetica che era simile a quella della coeva pittura, o anche della coeva architettura.¹⁴

But these are, however, relationships that are not direct relationships; they simply indicate that the authors [and] the musicians were operating in a cultural and aesthetic environment that was similar to that of contemporary painting or even of contemporary architecture.

The diversity of Petrassi's education and of his musical influences enabled the production of a unique sound, but the development of his aesthetic style also reveals an autobiographical mapping of his experiences against the rise and fall of Italian Fascism.

Purpose

The inclusion of one's relationship and receptivity to his or her surrounding world presents a richer understanding of an individual, as well as of his or her cultural framework. Primary sources, such as one's personal writings, afford musicologists the opportunity to extract an underlying meaning from a composer's repertoire, revealing a personal testimony within the music that may have otherwise been neglected. Petrassi believed that art is always a spiritual autobiography; "L'arte è sempre autobiografia spirituale."¹⁵ Spirituality, in this context, exceeds religious connotations, and is an encompassing term for morality and the human psyche. He was

¹⁴ Luca Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi* (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1980), 80.

¹⁵ Enrico Cavallotti, "Musica, arte e morale in Goffredo Petrassi. Conversazione con Enrico Cavallotti," in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 286. Previously published as "Musica, arte e morale in Goffredo Petrassi," *Il Tempo* (2 January 1980).

also emphatic that an artist be a moral being, and that morality, the supreme dignity of humankind, be the guide of every human action; “Dico che l’artista deve essere anche un uomo morale...Io sono convinto che la morale debba essere la guida di ogni azione dell’uomo...La morale è la suprema dignità dell’uomo.”¹⁶ (“I say that the artist must also be a moral man...I am convinced that morality should be the guide of every human action...Morality is the supreme dignity of man.”) Consequently, Petrassi asserts that when one uses his own technique to express feelings and morals, he produces an authentic work of art; “Una volta espressomi con tutta la mia tecnica, il mio sentimento, la mia morale, sono sicuro d’aver creato un’opera ‘autentica’”¹⁷. (“Once I have expressed it with all that I know technically, with my feelings, my morals, I am sure to have created an ‘authentic’ work”.) Petrassi identified himself as a common man, “un uomo comune”¹⁸. He believed he was representative of the average civilian who was naively persuaded by the allure of Fascism, and that his experience reflected the experience of others. This claim weakens, however, when one considers the landmark posts he filled when the regime was in power; Petrassi became part of a very small and powerful urban elite because of his employment. This privileged positioning, while shaping Petrassi’s own experience of Fascism, distanced his experience of Fascism from the experience of other Italians who were without the same cultural influence.

Although Italy was not of homogenous political opinion, large segments of the Italian people placed their faith in Mussolini, who promised a stronger Italy than before the Great War. Disenchantment was a gradual process, and realization of the regime’s sinister ways occurred too late. This dissertation will contextualize Petrassi’s music as it relates to socio-political

¹⁶ Ibid., 285.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 130.

circumstances, and use primary sources to propose an understanding of his works as reflections and responses of a life lived under Italian Fascism. I will examine primary sources, secondary sources, and Petrassi's musical output to trace his aesthetic development in the face of his disillusionment with the political events in Italy. Additionally, Petrassi's music, his writing and his interviews about music will be studied to elucidate his career under Fascist rule. Composing music exorcized Petrassi's torments with life's uncertainties, particularly as Italy entered the Second World War, and an expansive musical vocabulary was required to express that which he could not verbally and candidly say. Elliott Carter (1908-2012), a close friend, identifies the "impress of a personal character"¹⁹ that resonates in Petrassi's music, thus encouraging such an approach. This method will attempt to determine whether external factors had an effect on Petrassi's creative development. Furthermore, my work will contribute original research and serve as a meaningful contribution to the field of Italian music under Fascist rule, to the study of Italian twentieth-century composers, and to the meagre collection of writings in English on Petrassi.

Hypothesis

To what degree may the political events of Fascist Italy have influenced Petrassi's aesthetic journey between the years 1930 and 1950? Did Petrassi's support for, and subsequent opposition to, the Fascist regime find expressions in his work? What other influences had a bearing on his aesthetic development, such as Stravinsky and the Second Viennese School? While surveying the influence of artistic movements and musicians, I will argue that specific political events forced a change in Petrassi's compositional style between the years 1930 and 1950. Petrassi's

¹⁹ Elliott Carter, "Remembering Goffredo Petrassi and his Music," *Tempo* 57, no. 225 (July 2003): 7.

music will follow a chronological sequence and be divided into creative periods that are represented by chapters. Through these creative periods I will outline his aesthetic journey towards serialism, while documenting his initial support for and eventual disillusionment with Fascism. Accordingly, I will show how his compositional output between the interwar and postwar years becomes both an artistic and political diary.

For example, Petrassi showed outright support for the regime with his symphonic-choral work, *Salmo IX* (1934-6); when he lost faith with the regime during the Second World War, his music entered a dark and sombre transformation, notably with *Coro di morti* (1940-1). Having classified this work a “dramatic madrigal”, *Coro di morti* exemplifies the increasing effect of Modernism on Petrassi’s style. The declaration of “madrigal” was to recall a celebrated genre of the Italian Renaissance, and he used the madrigal as a vehicle for innovation. His loyalty to madrigalists was demonstrated in a contemporary interpretation; the chorus, traditionally unaccompanied, now partnered with an orchestra that suggested dodecaphonic influence. Petrassi did not compromise his artistic identity to appease the regime, as did many of his colleagues; rather, his compositional style became a mélange of techniques to effectively communicate his innermost thoughts, be it a political stance or his concern for humanity. My analyses of selected works will examine Petrassi’s stylistic development to ascertain the influence of his contemporaries, such as Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) and Paul Hindemith (1895-1963).

The compromise of compositional principles was not a necessity for survival in Fascist Italy, as it was in Nazi Germany, where styles of music, such as jazz and swing, were considered “degenerate” and prohibited by Nazi decree. However, in Fascist Italy, a compromise of artistic integrity did win favour with the regime, consequently propelling those musicians who complied to fame. In the case of Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880-1968), the regime bestowed upon him public

recognition, awards, prestigious titles and memberships in exchange for music that promoted Fascist ideology. For Petrassi, primary sources reveal a differing mindset regarding his outlook on the arts scene, the regime and how he sought and applied various techniques for self-expression through music. This dissertation will prove the nature and extent of the psychological and artistic impact of the regime on Italian musical life, through an examination of Petrassi and his selected works.

Methodology

The intent to contextualize Petrassi's career and to analyse selected works has been established, as has the value of primary sources. With the benefit of hindsight, Petrassi's words from writings and interview transcripts will guide my commentary, which will propose an understanding of his works as reflections and responses of himself as the self-identified common man. While providing deeper insight to a life lived under Mussolini's dictatorship, this methodology will also demonstrate that Petrassi's aesthetic style, that is the artistic principles and ethos of a work, was influenced by his cultural surroundings. This approach prioritizes Petrassi's cultural context over a detailed musical analysis; this is not to negate the value of a theoretical analysis, but to inspect and to magnify the circumstances that stimulated his musical direction. Thus, this methodology permits an in-depth analysis of the evolution of Petrassi's compositional style, the musical life of Fascist Italy, and the influential effects of Fascism upon one's psyche and artistry.

A socio-political background will be provided as it pertains to Italian musical life and to Petrassi by reference to significant secondary sources on the period and its artists, such as Ben Earle's *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy*, Fiamma Nicolodi's *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, Harvey Sachs's *Music in Fascist Italy*, and John C.G.

Waterhouse's "The Emergence of Modern Italian Music (Up to 1940)"²⁰. Bruce F. Pauley's *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini: Totalitarianism in the Twentieth Century*, and Edward R. Tannenbaum's *The Fascist Experience: Italian Society and Culture 1922-1945* will also be used. Interviews with my grandparents, Elide and Vincenzo Paolone, who lived in Fascist Italy will contribute an oral history, thus bringing a unique authenticity to my work.

Primary sources are vital to this dissertation. Luca Lombardi's *Conversazione con Petrassi*, a series of conversations between Lombardi and Petrassi, has been applauded for capturing a rare frankness of Petrassi, and is a valuable resource. I will also refer to other transcripts, such as the published Italian interviews conducted by Alberto Bevilacqua, Salvatore G. Biamonte, Maurizio Billi, Sandro Cappelletto, Enrico Cavallotti, Luciana Galliano, Raffaele Pozzi, Fausto Razzi, Enzo Restagno, Mario Rinaldi, and Michelangelo Zurletti. Raffaele Pozzi's *Scritti e interviste*, a relatively recent publication, has been a great asset to my work, as Pozzi has collected 53 of Petrassi's writings and 31 interviews into one anthology. Additionally, I will reference Petrassi's autobiography, *Autoritratto*. The testimonies of Petrassi's close friends and colleagues add depth to an understanding of Petrassi's character, and help to better elucidate his personal evolution of compositional style against a politically tumultuous background. These testimonies exist as writings within anthologies, such as *Elliott Carter: Collected Essays and Lectures, 1937-1995*; as correspondence, such as "Alfredo Casella a Goffredo Petrassi" in *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 4, 1972; and as other published articles. Attempts were made to locate Petrassi's unpublished correspondence in Europe, but proved challenging within the timeframe of this project.²¹ Norma Beecroft (b. 1934), who studied composition with Petrassi in Italy,

²⁰ John C. G. Waterhouse, "The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940)," (D.Phil diss., University of Oxford, 1968).

²¹ From the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome, correspondence between composers and the regime have been published in *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*. In Florence, the Archivio

kindly shared letters that Petrassi had written to her between 1958 and 1964 (Appendix A), including photographs of herself with Petrassi and colleagues (Appendix B). These documents are published here for the first time. The majority of my sources do not exist as translated works, and accordingly, I depend on my own translations. Unless otherwise noted, all translations that follow the original Italian are my own.

Beecroft, Canadian composer, former CBC producer, broadcaster, arts administrator, and founder of the series, New Music Concerts, is an esteemed informant. She studied with Petrassi at Santa Cecilia in Rome beginning in January 1960, and graduated with her diploma in composition on 30 September 1961 (Appendix C). She generously gave of her time to participate in an interview, providing insight to Petrassi's character and musical influences, and a sensitive discussion of Petrassi's concern with his position in a musical world post-serialism. Excerpts are included in later chapters, and a modified transcript of our conversation can be found as Appendix D. My good fortune continued with another revered composer, Ennio Morricone (b. 1928). Morricone is regarded by many as one of history's most innovative and multifaceted film composers, and he has been recognized internationally for his film music with an extensive list of awards including, but not limited to, Academy, B.A.F.T.A. (British Academy of Film and Television Arts), Golden Globe, Grammy, and David di Donatello awards. Like Beecroft, he studied with Petrassi at the conservatory in Rome, albeit in 1940 and at the young age of 12. Although only a boy, Morricone was greatly moved by Petrassi's mentorship, and Petrassi's effect continued throughout Morricone's career, resulting in dedicated musical works. My meeting with Morricone was unexpected, and happened perchance when I decided to contact his agency. With the assistance of General Entertainment Associates, specifically Tatum Amado, it

Contemporaneo "A. Bonsanti" yielded no results. The Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel keeps only musical scores in the Petrassi collection.

was made possible that I meet with Maestro Morricone in London, England before his performance of *The 60 Years of Music Tour* at The O2. The generosity of his time to answer my questions about his mentor, Petrassi, is also meaningful to this dissertation. Photos of this occasion can be found in Appendix E, and excerpts from our interview are included in Chapter Four.

Beecroft and Morricone's interviews shape the narrative of Petrassi as teacher, while also sketching a more intimate profile of Petrassi. One may question the access a student might have to a teacher, or whether a student's assessment can ever be entirely accurate and disconnected from a student's own desire to attribute prestige to his or her own educational lineage. I believe these inquires will always be present when measuring a student's response. The nature of the student-teacher relationship is a professional and a formal one, but student insight can still assist the estimation of his or her teacher. In the case of Petrassi, for instance, Beecroft and Morricone both emphasized Petrassi's sensitivity towards his students, and how he allowed each to discover his or her own voice. In Beecroft's words, "He talked and he tried to help you to get your own thoughts in order...Petrassi with me was nothing but encouraging."²² Hence, a student's perception can contribute to the understanding of a teacher's character, especially when placed within the context of a larger work as this dissertation.

Theoretical Framework, Paradigms and Influences

Issues of Nationalism, identity construction, tradition and revival, religion, and the philosophical questioning of life's uncertainties will emerge as most critical to my research. It was expected by the regime that Italian civilians become party members to secure employment, and numerous

²² Norma Beecroft, interview by Alessia Macaluso, Oshawa, 18 November 2012, digital recording.

civilians attained membership regardless of political stance. Mussolini had charmed many Europeans, despite public demonstrations of resistance, and Fascism, especially for certain social classes, was increasing in its acceptance and praise. Independent farmers and the lower middle class were particularly in favour of the regime, which satisfied Mussolini's desire to secure this group of people as his mass supporters.²³ Gradually, Mussolini encroached upon different aspects of Italian life, manipulating people and situations in his quest for power. Many artists flocked to Mussolini with dedications and requests, hoping for the granting of public favour or personal request, while others abhorred the idea of artistic compromise. Political and cultural changes were pressing upon the creative process of artists.

Artistically, Modernism and Neoclassicism were prominent at this time, influencing the compositional style of tradition and revival, as seen in Petrassi, who used a blending of techniques. There existed a tendency to venerate Italy's musical heritage by recalling forms and techniques of the past, such as Italian Renaissance music, and then presenting these influences in a contemporary way. Mussolini, who desired a Modernist front, encouraged artists to produce works of this type, and used occasions such as the publishing of the *Manifesto di musicisti italiani per la tradizione dell'arte romantica dell'Ottocento* (*Manifesto of Italian Musicians for the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century Romantic Art*) (1932) to parade his modernist predilection, as is further explicated in Chapter Three. Italy was also affected greatly by Futurism, to which the punctuality of Italy's train system, a popular tale from early Fascist rule, becomes a representation of Mussolini's own efficiency and embracing of technology and industry. While Futurism stimulated the Italian arts scene, Mussolini employed Futuristic ideology to support and to justify aspects of Fascist law. Specifically, he distorted Futurist concepts of Nationalism, race

²³ Edward R. Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience: Italian Society and Culture 1922-1945* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1972), 4.

and violence to validate his passing anti-Semitic racial laws. However, Fascist art and Futurism were incompatible. As expressed by the Futurist, Enzo Benedetto (1905-1993), “[Futurists were] as welcome in the Fascist temples of art as dogs in a church.”²⁴

With regards to the Church, Mussolini’s manipulation also influenced his relationship with Pope Pius XI (1857-1939). In exchange for the independence of Vatican City and greater influence in Italian public life and education, the church gave its blessing to the regime.²⁵ This is not to say that the church silently approved all Fascist conduct; the alliance was particularly strained upon Mussolini’s strengthening coalition with Adolf Hitler (1889-1945). The pope expressed his fury over the persecution of Catholics in Nazi Germany and Hitler’s approaching visit to Italy, as did many educated Catholics about Mussolini’s attempt to instill Nazi-like racial policies in 1938.²⁶ Against the rise and fall of Fascism, Petrassi, a Catholic from birth, began to question God and the inexplicable uncertainties of life.

Outline of Chapters

This dissertation will trace Petrassi’s music during the years 1930 to 1950 by aligning his life experiences alongside selected works. Vocal music will remain central to this discussion, but his general sound world altogether will be illustrated with the mention of other works and genres. Petrassi had a fondness for the human voice. This is evident not only in the number of works produced, but in the emotional sensitivity of his vocal compositions. At the height of Italian Fascism, vocal music dominated Petrassi’s compositional output. For the purpose of this study and for the purpose of transparency, it is most appropriate to allow his vocal music to direct the

²⁴ F. T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, ed. Günter Berghaus and trans. Doug Thompson (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), xxviii.

²⁵ Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 64.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

conversation. Lyrics are an overt expression; a lament, for example, cannot be misinterpreted when the words being sung are so bereft and forlorn. Beecroft, one of Petrassi's composition students, believed vocal music was his ultimate strength as a composer; "He was very much a person involved with the voice. He loved the human voice and opera. I think he would have spent his life probably writing in that field rather than the orchestra...because I think that is where his forte was."²⁷ As will be shown, Petrassi was meticulous with his libretti, and synergistically combined both text and music to produce a greater effect. Ironically, with all that has been said of his vocal music, it was an orchestral work, *Partita per orchestra* (1932), that established Petrassi's skill as a composer. This work was made to comply with the requirements of a competition for which it had been composed, and will therefore receive more attention than other orchestral works in this dissertation. It was not only a significant breakthrough in Petrassi's career, but also meaningful with regards to the regime and to Fascist music. In turn, these works will validate the ideological impression that the Fascist regime made upon Petrassi as an individual and as a composer, while acknowledging the influence of contemporary movements in Italy.

Chapter Two will be an in-depth assessment of literature that highlights key musicologists and their contributions, and reviews past methodologies and approaches. Empirical evidence will support my reasoning for my selected methodology, as well as underscore my decision to examine Petrassi against a background of Italian Fascism. Readers will become acquainted with significant works pertaining to the musical life of Fascist Italy, Petrassi, and cultural theories of Italian Fascism and aesthetics. Chapter Three will provide the necessary socio-political details of Italian musical life under Fascism. This will encapsulate Italian culture after the Great War and

²⁷ Beecroft, interview.

the rise of Fascism, address the influences of Futurism and Modernism on Italian political and artistic scenes, and then explore the relationship between the regime and musical life. I will pursue three different avenues via three composers to demonstrate the diverse response of Italian composers to these political developments, and to present a balanced overview. Respighi will serve as a model of how the regime appropriated music for political gain; the case of Pizzetti shows how obsequious behaviour was rewarded by the regime with fame and prestige; Dallapiccola will model the courageous and emotional act of protest music. These discussions will go beyond historical accounts, and include my own critiques, alongside contemporary reviews, regarding issues of reception, identity, translation, and conflicting outcomes that I have discovered. This chapter will contextualize Italian musical life of the interwar years, and demonstrate music's clout as propaganda, servility and personal expression. Thus, the reader will be situated and prepared for the detailed investigation of Petrassi to follow.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six will proceed chronologically and employ a variety of Petrassi's works for discussion, alongside Petrassi's own writings and interview transcripts for support and validation. Chapter Four will also speak to Petrassi's positions of employment, and the dynamics of having worked for the government at various cultural institutions. Whereas other monographs have had a tendency to isolate one style, my dissertation will be inclusive of multiple styles to prove that his aesthetic development was occurring throughout his entire repertoire. At this time, it must be noted that my objective is to provide a more general discussion of Petrassi's music and sound world altogether, rather than a critical analysis at an advanced theoretical level. Such detailed analyses have already been done, and for interested readers, I direct their attention to the works of such writers as Ben Earle and Calum MacDonald. Chronological order gives way to grouping each chapter thematically, thus representing the different stages of Petrassi's

compositional style together with his experience with Fascism, specifically his support for the regime and eventual distrust of it. This discussion will prove that politically ambivalent or not, all individuals are susceptible to the effects of a political regime, and that these external factors are influential upon one's artistry. It is with historical knowledge, musical analyses, application of primary and secondary resources, and the pinpointing of Petrassi's aesthetic development that this dissertation will arrive at its conclusions to better understand the complexities of life during a desolate period, or in this case, the human triad of faith, betrayal and acceptance.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Italian Fascism and Music Culture

John C. G. Waterhouse presented the first comprehensive examination of Italian musical life under Fascism with his dissertation, “The Emergence of Modern Italian Music (Up to 1940)” (1969). His dissertation was a response to the absence of scholarly literature within this field; contemporary writings did exist, but they were either brief articles or of a superficial nature, and almost always in Italian. Before Waterhouse’s dissertation, the only extended study was Domenico de’ Paoli’s *La crisi musicale italiana (1900-1930)* (1939), a broad text that depended on the author’s memory rather than use of evidence or example, thus weakening its credibility.²⁸ To be fair, de’ Paoli did indicate in his preface that the timing of *La crisi musicale italiana* was too close to a sensitive period for him to produce a critical work, and consequently, his book was a simplified outline for non-specialists:

Questo libro non è una critica, nè una Storia della Musica Italiana degli ultimi trent’anni. Troppo è vicino a noi questo tormentoso e tormentato periodo...questo libro non è destinato a coloro che fanno professione di musica...Il libro è destinato a chi...ama la musica senza preconcetti di teorie o di scuole.²⁹

This book is neither a criticism nor a History of Italian Music of the past thirty years. It is too close to us this tormented and tormenting period...This book is not intended for those who make a profession of music...This book is intended for those...who love music without preconceived theories or schools.

Despite its suitability as a popular music text, I have included de’ Paoli’s book in this literature review, as it typifies the early gestures to investigate the field of interwar Italy and music. De’ Paoli was the first to focus serious attention on the field, despite a general tone, and awareness of *La crisi musicale italiana* underlines the significance of Waterhouse’s work to follow.

²⁸ Waterhouse, “The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940),” i.

²⁹ Domenico de’ Paoli, *La Crisi Musicale Italiana (1900-1930)*, (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1939): i-ii.

Waterhouse's dissertation is a milestone, as he propelled the conversation on musical life in Fascist Italy that de' Paoli had only begun. "The Emergence of Modern Italian Music (Up to 1940)" surveys Italian society and musicology from the *Risorgimento*, a nineteenth-century movement for Italian unification, to 1910, before establishing a political, social and cultural background for Italian arts between the years 1910 and 1940. His work is unique because it was the first attempt since de' Paoli's book to focus on the field in its entirety. Waterhouse, however, conducted his work in greater detail than de' Paoli, and with personal accounts of leading composers to compensate for the existing and unsatisfactory writings. By providing a substantial history, specifically five dissertation chapters that serve as a prelude to the years 1910 to 1940, he presents a framework so that readers "can understand clearly not only *what* happened in Italian music during 1910-1940, but also *why* it happened as it did."³⁰ While Waterhouse includes lesser-known composers in his dissertation, two chapters are dedicated to Casella, Dallapiccola, Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973), Petrassi, and Pizzetti. Petrassi receives attention between pages 781 to 800, and within these pages, his early musical influences and selected works are discussed. However, it must be noted that Waterhouse's analysis of Petrassi's works only skims socio-political references, and so the orchestration of *Salmo IX* "well suits the Old-Testament text"³¹ instead of being an homage to Mussolini. Likewise, while Waterhouse does mention *Coro di morti* as a "conscious [response] to tyranny and war"³², the analysis maintains its focus on the music without reflection from Petrassi or further details about Italy's entry into the Second World War.

³⁰ Waterhouse, "The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940)," iv.

³¹ Ibid., 792.

³² Ibid., 797.

Fiamma Nicolodi is easily recognized as a paladin within the field, and as Casella's granddaughter it is fitting that she be a torch bearer for others. Nicolodi's *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista* (1984) is a significant contribution to the field of early twentieth-century Italian music studies because it was the first to elucidate the regime's influence on Italian musical life by depending primarily on materials from the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome. In her preface, Nicolodi underlines that the primary intent of her study is not to debate the interference of Fascism with cultural life, but to bring to light new materials that will enhance the discussion of Fascism and music, which until this time has been an oversimplified terrain:

Intento primario di questo studio, che non ambisce affatto a inserirsi nel dibattito ben altrimenti argomentato e vivo di coloro che sostengono o negano le interferenze tra cultura e fascismo...è stato più semplicemente quello di dissodare un terreno semi-vergine, portando alla luce materiali inediti che permettano di arricchire la discussione e disegnare un quadro più frastagliato e complesso della realtà musicale durante il ventennio.³³

The primary intent of this study, which not at all aspires to enter the debate otherwise well-argued and alive by those who support or deny the interference between culture and fascism...was more simply to till semi-virgin ground, bringing to light unpublished materials that make it possible to enrich the discussion and draw a framework that is more jagged and complex of the reality of music during the two decades.

Musica e musicisti is divided into two parts; the first section presents the Ministry of Popular Culture (commonly abbreviated as MinCulPop) and its role within music culture, outlines prominent musicians and their involvement in musical activity under the regime, and discusses the influences of tradition, Modernism, and Futurism in music. Nicolodi's omission of musicians born after 1900 has been criticized within scholarly reviews of her work, but Petrassi, alongside Dallapiccola, does receive mention in a few pages. In the second part of her book, Nicolodi provides over 300 documents from the archives, demonstrating that correspondence between musicians and the regime was common practice and that almost all leading musicians

³³ Fiamma Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista* (Fiesole: Discanto Edizioni, 1984), 13-14.

participated in private correspondence with the regime. This presentation of unpublished documents also introduced political affiliations that were previously unknown or dismissed. The book's inclusion of these documents fills 166 pages and are devoid of any in-depth analysis, which is reasonable given the amount of data. Interestingly, although Petrassi is mentioned in *Musica e musicisti*, there is no correspondence to be found between Petrassi and the regime. With this being said, one cannot assume the rationale or political positioning of a musician simply because letters were exchanged. Presentation of these documents is only the first step; the circumstances in which these letters were written, as well as an understanding of the individual composers, will contextualize and thus, improve one's reading of these documents.

While *Musica e musicisti* is a notable contribution to the study of musical life and Italian Fascism, it is but one of many publications belonging to Nicolodi's extensive output. Futurism, Modernism, Nationalism, and the Second Viennese School are pertinent to her writings and are examined in relation to their effects on Italian musical life, politics, and the musical expression of composers.³⁴ Her scholarship is weighted heavily on specific composers upon which she develops these aforementioned themes. Dallapiccola, in particular, is a recurrent figure of study. A recent publication on Petrassi, "Ricezione del primo Petrassi"³⁵, was included by Nicolodi as one of five articles in a special feature on the composer in the *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*. Alongside Renato Badali, Alessandra Carlotta Pellegrini, Stefan König, and Roman Vlad, these authors illustrate the beginnings of Petrassi's career, his reception, his writings, his recordings, and *Coro di morti*. Outside of Italian Fascism, Nicolodi's writings occasionally embrace other musical interests, such as the lives and works of Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848), Giuseppe

³⁴ See bibliography for select writings on these topics.

³⁵ Fiamma Nicolodi, "Ricezione del primo Petrassi," *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 34: 2006, 195-216.

Martucci (1856-1909), Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864), Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868), and Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901); these works are predominantly published as articles.

Harvey Sachs continues the investigation led by Waterhouse and Nicolodi by probing unexplored topics within the field. Sachs questioned the extent to which the regime concerned itself with musical institutions, societies and ministries, festivals, and musical policy, and discovered that nobody had yet attempted an overview of these aspects of musical life under Fascist rule. Familiar with Nicolodi's *Musica e musicisti*, he set his own objectives "to examine and interpret evidence, not to accuse or sit in judgment. But all authors have...points of view on the subjects they write about"³⁶. In order to eliminate bias and to provide a more balanced assessment of the regime's influence, Sachs interviewed three Italian figures connected to musical life: a writer (Massimo Mila), a composer (Goffredo Petrassi), and a conductor (Gianandrea Gavazzeni). His result was *Music in Fascist Italy* (1988), a study of musical institutions, the behaviour of musicians, and how these interviewed musicians now perceived the events of their shared past. While being the first to explore these topics, Sachs's book was also the first extensive publication in English. However, errors within his book were later corrected in an Italian edition, *Musica e Regime* (1995).

Only recently, twenty-five years later, has a second book on Italian musical life been published in English, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy* (2013). Ben Earle describes his book as "five chapters...designed as a single narrative that tells two interlocking stories."³⁷ The first story unearths the origins of musical Modernism before World War I and concludes with the years of the early Cold War. While doing so, he examines the

³⁶ Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), 2.

³⁷ Ben Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), vi.

relationship between Modernism in music and Mussolini's regime, which establishes a context for his second story. Earle's second story spotlights the beginning years of Dallapiccola's career from 1930 to 1950. Dallapiccola has been an attractive subject to musicologists; not only is he accredited as the pioneer of the twelve-tone system in Italy, but he draws attention from his extreme political behaviour. Earle historically and stylistically contextualizes three significant compositions of Dallapiccola, and outlines their journey towards protest music: *Volo di notte* (*Night Flight*), *Il prigioniero* (*The Prisoner*), and *Canti di prigionia* (*Songs of Imprisonment*). Consequently, Earle presents an enriched understanding of three of Dallapiccola's works, of Italian cultural politics, and of musical Modernism in Italy. References and comparisons with Petrassi emerge occasionally throughout the book, which satisfies a natural expectation considering the prominence of both composers in the mid twentieth-century.

Goffredo Petrassi

Despite his significance within Italian musical history, Petrassi appears relatively infrequently in the literature, especially when compared with the scholarly output written about his contemporary, Dallapiccola. The majority of resources are available in Italian and without English translation, thus limiting accessibility to interested scholars who are restricted by this language barrier. Of the ten sources next to be discussed, only three have been printed in English, and of these three, two are doctoral dissertations and only one is a book. Without widespread awareness, Petrassi and his music are known only to a limited number of musicologists who are mostly Italian. These barriers affect not only the scholarly assessment and promotion of Petrassi's works, which are still largely underperformed, but also of an understanding of a dark period of music that is still chiefly unknown.

To date, *Goffredo Petrassi* by musicologist and critic, John S. Weissmann is the only monograph in English to be published on the composer and his music. It was first published in 1957 and later updated in 1980. However, this second edition omitted a revision of previously written material and simply extended information to include Petrassi's more recent compositions, thereby repeating erroneous and out-dated information. Both editions are now out of print, but used copies can be found online or in university libraries. While Weissmann does present some new ideas to the understanding of Petrassi's music, his overview of Petrassi's compositional output is marred by outdated and inaccurate statements. Furthermore, his work is without citation, which raises questions to the validity of his work outside his own analyses.

Weissmann's *Goffredo Petrassi* is a mediocre tribute that exhibits poor writing and a disorderly approach, and it is unfortunate that English-speaking scholars will be directed to this text. While an impression of Petrassi and his repertoire can be grasped, the general awkwardness of Weissmann's work is discouraging and can read, at times, as a poor translation; "The place where Goffredo Petrassi was born seems to have been singularly portentous in view of his musical development"³⁸. Despite these flaws, some scholarly merit can still be found, but readers should realize that *Goffredo Petrassi* stands alone because it is without competition. *Goffredo Petrassi* has been criticized as "arguably the weakest"³⁹ of all the publications on Petrassi, yet it has been depended upon "in the absence of anything better in English."⁴⁰ This fragility is especially damaging to any hopes that more musicologists may participate in the advancement of this composer and his works.

³⁸ Weissmann, *Goffredo Petrassi*, 5.

³⁹ John C. G. Waterhouse, review of *Bibliografia e catalogo delle opere di Goffredo Petrassi*, by Claudio Annibaldi and Marialisa Monna; *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, by Luca Lombardi, *Music and Letters* 66, no. 4 (October 1985): 383.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Sixty years have now passed since the publication of Weissmann's book, and it still remains the only English publication. However, even in Italian the number and quality of monographs is lacking. Fedele d'Amico wrote the first Petrassi monograph fifteen years prior to Weissmann's *Goffredo Petrassi*. D'Amico's *Goffredo Petrassi* (1942), although respected for its critical discussion, became outdated, and was later renounced by the author who declared his conclusions were proven faulty by Petrassi's developing style.⁴¹ This discussion was resumed and updated in D'Amico's book chapter, "Le opere sinfonico-corali"⁴², which isolated five of Petrassi's significant symphonic-choral works over a forty year period. Mario Bortolotto attempted a contemporary monograph by isolating Petrassi's works between the years 1957 and 1960 in *Le opere di Goffredo Petrassi, 1957-1960* (1960), yet it is too limited a period to understand the scope of Petrassi's technique and the relevance of this stylistic period for him as a composer. A subsequent attempt produced an extensive survey of Petrassi's musical output, and Bortolotto's essay, "Il cammino di Goffredo Petrassi", was published in *L'opera di Goffredo Petrassi* (1964), a special edition of *Quaderni della Rassegna musicale*, and was edited by Guido M. Gatti (1892-1973), founder of *Rassegna musicale*. He organized the edition to include one letter from Petrassi to Gatti, six essays, a listing of Petrassi's works and writings, a listing of literature relating to Petrassi, a discography, and a chronology of Petrassi's major life events. "Il cammino di Goffredo Petrassi" is the edition's most substantial contribution. Its 68 pages incomparably outweigh the other five essays which range from a two page reflection to a 13-page discussion on Petrassi and contemporary teaching. Although *L'opera di Goffredo Petrassi*

⁴¹ Waterhouse, "The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940)," ii.

⁴² Fedele D'Amico, "Le opere sinfonico-corali," in *Petrassi*, ed. Enzo Restagno (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1986), 74-93.

has been criticized as a “rather uneven symposium”⁴³, the credibility of Bortolotto’s essay has determined the overall reputation of *L’opera di Goffredo Petrassi* as a satisfactory work. Nearly fifteen years passed before another book was published on the subject. Giuliano Zosi studied composition with Petrassi at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia from 1969 to 1970, which likely inspired him to write, *Ricerca e sintesi nell’opera di Goffredo Petrassi* (1978). Disappointingly, *Ricerca e sintesi* was a weak contribution to the literature. In fact, his book was negatively compared alongside Weissmann’s *Goffredo Petrassi* as having “copious music examples [that] are more revealing than [*sic*] the pretentious, muddle-headed text.”⁴⁴ It is an injustice to Petrassi, who is deserving of scholarly assessment, that contributions to the literature have been generally infrequent and of inconsistent quality.

Claudio Annibaldi resurrected hope for musicologists working in this area in 1970. Annibaldi edited an annotated bibliography and catalogue of works, updated with Marialisa Monna in 1980, providing clear direction and details of Petrassi’s discography, an organized catalogue of compositions to date, almost 200 written sources ranging from personal writings to published interviews, and 37 pages of photos. *Bibliografia e catalogo delle opere di Goffredo Petrassi* (1980) is a thorough guide, and while some errors and omissions do exist, such as the absence of Anthony Eugene Bonelli’s dissertation, “Serial Techniques in the Music of Goffredo Petrassi: A Study of His Compositions from 1950 to 1959” (1971), it is a valuable and useful resource. It was also Annibaldi who edited and published twenty-three unpublished letters from Casella to Petrassi in the October / December 1972 issue of *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*. Casella’s letters span the years 1933 to 1942, and two letters are included as scanned images,

⁴³ Waterhouse, review of *Bibliografia e catalogo delle opere di Goffredo Petrassi*, by Claudio Annibaldi and Marialisa Monna; *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, by Luca Lombardi, 383.

⁴⁴ Waterhouse, “The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940),” ii.

thereby confirming the authenticity of these documents. These documents approach the end of Casella's life, who died five years later in 1947, and the tone of Casella's writing affirms the closeness of his friendship with Petrassi. A disappointing absence in this publication is Petrassi's replies. Hence, while this publication is a meaningful collection that allows a glimpse into the relationship between Petrassi and his mentor, it is missing a necessary component for this dissertation: Petrassi's correspondence.

In the same year that Annibaldi's bibliography was updated, Luca Lombardi's *Conversazioni con Petrassi* (1980) was published. Lombardi, 41 years Petrassi's junior, was an aspiring composer who sat down with Petrassi for a brief interview on behalf of a German newspaper. As the conversation became more extensive than anticipated, it was agreed that they would continue their discussion at subsequent meetings. *Conversazioni con Petrassi* is a printed collection of these informal interviews that occurred between November 1977 and the summer of 1978. Lombardi's objective was to present a more comprehensive portrayal of Petrassi who, before this series and unlike other musicians, had rarely talked about his own music or that of his contemporaries:

Un protagonista che, a differenza di altri musicisti di cui esistono numerosi articoli, saggi e interviste, solo raramente si è espresso sulla sua musica o su quella di altri autori – e qui sta, mi sembra, un motivo oggettivo di interesse di queste Conversazioni.⁴⁵

A protagonist who, unlike other musicians about whom there are many articles, essays and interviews, rarely expressed himself on his music or that of other authors - and this is, I think, an objective reason of interest of these conversations.

Conversations are grouped thematically, and cover an array of subjects extending from music and art to politics, namely Fascism, and worldly events. In a review of *Conversazione con Petrassi*, Waterhouse, who personally knew Petrassi, confirmed “that [Petrassi's] characteristic

⁴⁵ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, vii.

tone of voice is captured throughout with unfailing authenticity.”⁴⁶ With only one book on Petrassi available in English, a translation must be considered for *Conversazione con Petrassi*; such a unique and prized resource should be widespread and accessible.

Enzo Restagno’s monograph, *Petrassi* (1986), was a suitable follow-up from Lombardi’s publication, presenting a more comprehensive examination of Petrassi’s works to date.

Beginning with an extensive interview between Restagno and Petrassi, “Una biografia raccontata dall’autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno” is reminiscent of Lombardi’s conversations less than one decade earlier, evoking thoughts and memories that had not yet been published.

Contributions from seventeen contemporary authors follow Restagno’s interview, and all are Italian apart from Elliott Carter. A substantial number of Petrassi’s individual works are represented, as well as analyses of various genres. Giordano Montecchi⁴⁷ and Piero Santi⁴⁸, for example, discuss chamber music, while Claudio Tempo⁴⁹ and Orazio Mula⁵⁰ concentrate on the theatre and the ballet. D’Amico, as mentioned earlier, examines milestone works within Petrassi’s symphonic-choral output, while musicologist and music critic, Massimo Mila⁵¹, presents a thorough discussion on Petrassi’s orchestral concerto series. Additionally, there are others who examine Petrassi’s career and works from differing perspectives. Nicolodi⁵² foregoes a traditional musical analysis in exchange for a contextual discussion of Petrassi’s earlier works,

⁴⁶ Waterhouse, review of *Bibliografia e catalogo delle opere di Goffredo Petrassi*, by Claudio Annibaldi and Marialisa Monna; *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, by Luca Lombardi, 384.

⁴⁷ Giordano Montecchi, “Musica da camera I,” in *Petrassi*, ed. Enzo Restagno (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1986), 187-208.

⁴⁸ Piero Santi, “Musica da camera II,” in *Petrassi II*, ed. Enzo Restagno (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1986), 209-223.

⁴⁹ Claudio Tempo, “Il teatro,” in *Petrassi*, ed. Enzo Restagno (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1986), 224-242.

⁵⁰ Orazio Mula, “I balletti,” in *Petrassi*, ed. Enzo Restagno (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1986), 253-261.

⁵¹ Massimo Mila, “I Concerti per orchestra,” in *Petrassi*, ed. Enzo Restagno (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1986), 94-181.

⁵² Fiamma Nicolodi, “Inizi prestigiosi,” ed. Enzo Restagno (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1986), 64-73.

and Leonardo Pinzauti⁵³ concentrates on the theme of morality in Petrassi's music. Overall, Restagno sought to organize a collection that covered the scope of Petrassi's compositional output. Some unevenness has ensued or has been criticized, "the total absence of any unity."⁵⁴ However, despite some flaws with writing styles and a general lack of music examples, the majority of material is exceptional, and temporarily satisfies the need for such a study on Petrassi's music.

The publication of interview transcripts like Lombardi's and Restagno's have been vital to furthering our understanding of Petrassi, a composer who demonstrated "self-effacing avoidance of the written, or at least the printed, word."⁵⁵ Similarly, Carla Vasio, writer and poet, used this methodology to assist Petrassi with a self-portrait, *Autoritratto. Intervista elaborata da Carla Vasio* (1991). In the preface, Vasio stressed that the book was not to be a reconstruction of Petrassi's biography, but rather to follow the emotional direction of Petrassi's discourse until a plot began to reveal itself that told of his beginnings and then led to his international success. Vasio explained:

Si trattava di ricomporre un racconto non costruito cronologicamente, ma piuttosto inseguito sul trasporto dell'emozione...ho visto delinearsi a poco a poco un percorso esistenziale che mostrava caratteri romanzeschi, dall'infanzia poverissima in un piccolo paese del Lazio al lavoro tenace e al successo internazionale.⁵⁶

It was a reassembled story not constructed chronologically, but rather pursued on the transport of emotion...I saw emerge gradually an existential journey that showed fictional characters, an impoverished childhood in a small town of Lazio to hard work and international success.

⁵³ Leonardo Pinzauti, "Moralità di Petrassi: 'Propos d'Alain' e 'Beatitudines'," in *Petrassi*, ed. Enzo Restagno (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1986), 293-300.

⁵⁴ _____, review of *Petrassi*, by Enzo Restagno, *Music and Letters* 70, no. 2 (May 1989): 278.

⁵⁵ _____, review of *Bibliografia e catalogo delle opere di Goffredo Petrassi*, by Claudio Annibaldi and Marialisa Monna; *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, by Luca Lombardi, 384.

⁵⁶ Goffredo Petrassi, *Autoritratto. Intervista elaborata da Carla Vasio*, Rome: Laterza, 1991), vi.

Vasio admitted it was a challenging methodology to write a portrait of Petrassi while maintaining the composer's voice throughout the book. Before publication, Vasio and Petrassi worked together to correct inaccuracies and to assure the work's authenticity. While some overlap does exist from previous scholarship, *Autoritratto* provides detailed facets of his life that have yet to be printed.

Stepping further into the mindset of Petrassi, Maurizio Billi used his own analyses to develop a better understanding of Petrassi's creative process by selecting Petrassi's symphonic-choral works for his study. In *Goffredo Petrassi: La produzione sinfonico-corale* (2002), Billi draws attention to five works spanning the years 1934 to 1975 to reveal the complexities of Petrassi's artistry: *Salmo IX*, *Magnificat*, *Coro di morti*, *Noche oscura*, and *Orationes Christi*. Petrassi, having lived through the twentieth-century, witnessed the evolution of aesthetic culture, as it was led by such composers who influenced him as Béla Bartók (1881-1945), Hindemith, and Stravinsky. Billi's analyses draw attention to the intricacies of each piece, while commenting on the external influences of other musicians, to determine where Petrassi's creativity began and where it was shaped by others. The freedom of an artist, says Billi, is of ethical importance to his work, and requires an intimate and consistent awareness at all stages of the creative process that is guided by his own morality as a composer; "La profonda e dichiarata fede di Petrassi nella libertà dell'artista rappresenta l'imperativo etico più importante e una sorta di richiamo alle coordinate morali della figura del compositore, le quali esigono un'intima e costante consapevolezza in tutte le fasi del processo creativo."⁵⁷ ("The deep and declared faith of Petrassi in the freedom of the artist represents the most important ethical imperative and a kind of reminder of the moral coordinates of the figure of a composer that requires an intimate and

⁵⁷ Maurizio Billi, *Goffredo Petrassi: La produzione sinfonico-corale* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2003), 24.

constant awareness throughout all stages of the creative process.”) *Goffredo Petrassi: La produzione sinfonico-corale* is completed with an interview between Billi and Petrassi, discussing topics such as Neoclassicism and instrumentation in relation to Petrassi’s symphonic-choral works. Overall, it is a compact, focused, and unique contribution to the literature on Petrassi.

Scritti e interviste (2008), edited by Raffaele Pozzi, is a momentous compilation of Petrassi’s writings and interviews. These primary resources are difficult to locate, and some are no longer in print. Pozzi’s anthology includes 53 of Petrassi’s published writings and 31 published interviews, complete with original publication details for each entry. *Scritti e interviste* saves one time from having to locate each resource independently, as well as the disappointment of discovering a resource is no longer accessible. Writings and interviews encompass the years 1935 to 2003, allowing the reader a panoramic view of Petrassi’s life and career. Should *Scritti e interviste* be updated in a future publication, it would be useful to include Petrassi’s letters, as their existence and whereabouts have been difficult to determine.

Lastly, it must be mentioned that within the chronology of these publications, three dissertations were completed: “The Style of Goffredo Petrassi as Seen in his Writing for Keyboard” (1967) by Olga Stone at Boston University, “Serial Techniques in the Music of Goffredo Petrassi: A Study of His Compositions from 1950 to 1959” (1971) by Anthony Eugene Bonelli at the University of Rochester, and “L’opera di Goffredo Petrassi” (1973) by Lorenzo Maggini at the University of Florence. Since the updated edition of *Bibliografia e catalogo delle opere di Goffredo Petrassi* (1980), which included a category for dissertations, these dissertations have emerged in scholarly reviews, Bonelli’s receiving recognition as the strongest

one to date.⁵⁸ While these studies have claimed facets of Petrassi's style and repertoire, evidently there is substantial room for more research. With almost forty-five years passing since Maggini's dissertation, the timing is more than appropriate to proceed with another one.

Historiography and Theories of Fascism

Petrassi's socio-political environment was a pivotal force that affected him at intrapersonal and creative proportions. Because of this, key aspects of ongoing debates within historical writings on Fascism must be examined. Competing interpretations present varying ways to analyze Fascism as a complex system of cultural politics versus a cult of personality that centres itself on one individual. While it is typical to dissect the works of leading scholars, there are figures within history itself who have affected our understanding of Fascism through the introspective analyses of their own experiences with the regime. Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), a prominent Italian Marxist, was a founding member and former leader of the Communist Party of Italy. On the evening of 8 November 1926, he was arrested and imprisoned by Mussolini's police on the basis of new laws. He was made to endure great suffering in prison, and his health deteriorated horrifically without proper medical attention; a cerebral hemorrhage ended his life on 27 April 1937. As a prisoner, he secretly recorded his intellectual reflections in notebooks hidden in his cell. These notebooks were smuggled from prison in the 1930s, and later published in the 1950s. They are fittingly known as *Quaderni del carcere* (*Prison Notebooks*), and are valued as an innovative and esteemed contribution to political theory. Gramsci's notebooks disclose a range of themes, including Italian history and Fascism. His concept of cultural hegemony, one of his best known theories, stemmed indirectly from his analysis of Fascism, and identified two

⁵⁸ Waterhouse, review of *Bibliografia e catalogo delle opere di Goffredo Petrassi*, by Claudio Annibaldi and Marialisa Monna; *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, by Luca Lombardi, 383.

requirements: “a level of proletarian class-conscious adequate to ensure the consensual basis for its self-rule, and...a class alliance [of consent amongst the peasants].”⁵⁹ By forging a pattern of consent, as opposed to coercion, a regime could achieve hegemony within its cultural institutions. In this manner, one’s participation within a cultural institution bore political weight and significance regardless of the individual’s personal views.

Mabel Berezin, a sociologist who specializes in the study of culture and politics, deliberates that Mussolini’s regime utilized a public sphere for political support, namely the notion of ritual, and therefore at the crux of Fascism is structure. She hypothesizes the following in her book, *Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (1997):

Community, public / private self, identity, and citizenship are commonly invoked to discuss democratic practice but rarely to discuss fascism. I argue that the terminology of liberalism can be fruitfully employed...and provides conceptual tools for making sense of what otherwise appears an inchoate mass of contradictory ideas and actions. Identity and cultural meanings are intimately connected.⁶⁰

Tied to identity is ritual, and so it became that through this public sphere, rituals were performed as strategic gestures to merge one’s public and private identities. Be it parades or ceremonies, Berezin claims that the regime depended on the public sphere to denote a sense of community. Not only can an individual belong to this matrix of identity, but the state can convince the public that existing outside of one’s private self, that is enmeshing oneself within Fascist culture, is worth even the sacrifice of one’s own life. In this way, she proposes an original interpretation on the mechanics of Fascism, whereby ritual and identity are the grounds for political dominance.

The scholarship of historian, Marla Stone, focuses on the history of Fascism and Nazism, and stresses the relationship between culture, politics and state, particularly with regard to issues

⁵⁹ Walter L. Adamson, “Gramsci’s Interpretation of Fascism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41, no. 4 (October – December 1980): 626.

⁶⁰ Mabel Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 19.

such as dictatorship and genocide. Within this relationship, she also addresses artists, architects, and their products. The subject of visual art as propaganda has made for popular discourse among historians. In *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (1998), Stone suggests that the regime used a model of cultural consensus to influence the public's artistic preference and to win public support. An art exhibition, for example, served to influence the public by demonstrating a standard of art rather than authorizing an official state art. The regime was to be regarded as a patron of the arts, and not as an arts legislator. As a result, political intervention generated a culture under Fascism that propelled new aesthetics across a spectrum of influencing movements. Alongside her discussion, Stone challenges conventional thinking regarding dictatorships and the arts, as well as Modernism and politics. Her book has become a staple for those interested in the scholarly study of Fascism.

Roger Griffin, a political theorist and modern history professor, has maintained his principal focus on Fascist ideology by developing and presenting his own theories of Fascism. In opposition to Stone, Griffin underlines the modernist tendencies of Fascism, specifically a regime's ambition to achieve cultural hegemony and to replace what is perceived as rejected values and practices of the past with the new and updated ways of Fascist thinking. This exchange, according to Fascist ideology, can bring forth the rebirth of a nation, a Fascist nation. In his book, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (2007), Griffin pinpoints modernist thinking as the root of Fascism; Fascism is the descendant of Modernism. He theorizes that man needs to take from the past in order to bring meaning to his future, and this need establishes "the profound kinship that exists between modernism and fascism."⁶¹ Although the synthesis of these two concepts have been hotly contested, Griffin uses

⁶¹ Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), xv-1.

the regimes of Mussolini and Hitler to prove the existing links between these supposed contradictory forces, and consequently, another interpretation of Fascism.

Italian Fascism and Aesthetics

Historians critically debate events of the past, while cultural theorists confine their conversation to the interplay between humankind and culture. From a theoretical perspective, the human experience can be understood as a scientific analysis or as a representative methodology using semiotics; both methods pursue the knowledge of how one adapts, interprets and is affected by their environment. A scientific analysis may outline the physiological response, as instigated by the body's sympathetic nervous system, whereas a representative methodology may concentrate on the nonverbal cues of the same scenario. A review of cultural theories as they pertain to Italian Fascism introduces new perspectives to the comprehension of Petrassi as an Italian citizen during the mid twentieth century. *The Attractions of Fascism: Social Psychology and Aesthetics of the 'Triumph of the Right'* (1990), edited by John Milfull, is a collection of conference papers that attempted a multi-disciplinary approach to the understanding of Fascism's allure within various countries. Three essays are devoted to Italian Fascism: "The fascist society – ideology and reality: the attractions of Italian fascism for the church of Rome" (Jone Gaillard), "Italian fascism, legality and author's right" (David Saunders), and "The 'Export' of fascism: Italian fascism in Australia 1922-1945" (Gianfranco Cresciani). Contributors, ranging from historians to literary scholars to sociologists, endeavoured as an adroit team to answer the question, "How was it that the vast majority of apparently 'civilized' communities could tolerate, accept, even welcome regimes whose ideology and its brutal realization stood in such absolute contrast to

accepted standards of political, social and individual morality?”⁶² Many of the essays seek an etiology of Fascism through the isolation of historic experiences. Knowledge of the past can unearth Fascism’s roots when a link between events can be found and a path towards Fascism can be traced. *The Attraction of Fascism* is divided into five parts that effectively contribute to the on-going debate of Fascism’s phenomenon: “Reconstructing the Past”, “Constructing Fascism”, “Seduction of (by) the ‘Intellectuals’?”, “Fascism and Sexuality”, “The Fascist Society: Ideology and Reality”, and “The ‘Export’ of Fascism”. As a result of its eclectic authors, *The Attraction of Fascism* supplies an assemblage of subtopics, theories and personal accounts with its treatment of Fascism.

Richard J. Golsan also edited a collection of essays in response to those who believed Fascism and culture are two opposing concepts. He argues that recent pro-Fascist revelations before and during the Second World War, and the resurgence of the extreme Right in Europe during the early 1990s have necessitated a reassessment of the relationship between Fascism and culture.⁶³ Thus, Fascism and culture cannot be “neatly divorced” because it is “impossible to dismiss the relationship as insignificant or anachronistic”⁶⁴. The essays of *Fascism, Aesthetics, and Culture* (1992) address Fascism’s influence in artistic and intellectual circles throughout the interwar and postwar years. However, how does one define Fascist aesthetics, and therefore begin such a discussion? This question is at the root of each chapter. Some contributors employ methodologies that approach a work from a biographical or a thematic point of view, while others reject the existence of a methodological key that can unlock the Fascist presence within an

⁶² John Milfull, ed., *The Attractions of Fascism: Social Psychology and Aesthetics of the ‘Triumph of the Right’* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 1.

⁶³ Richard J. Golsan, ed., *Racism, Aesthetics, and Culture* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992), ix-x.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, ix.

art piece. With a profusion of critical interpretations, the contributors to this volume consider Fascism's artistic and intellectual impact in countries that both supported and opposed Fascism, and attempt to determine how Fascist ideology and culture influenced artistic production. Essays are organized nationally, and effectively demonstrate the widespread relation between Fascism and aesthetic culture, defined in this case as the artistic expressions or styles of a culture, using a variety of critical assessments.

In *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (2000), Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi investigates the relationship between Italian Fascism and the aesthetics of power via semiotics. She identifies the underlying meaning of Mussolini's physical behaviour, rituals, festivals, posters, photographs and speeches by regarding each as a symbolic gesture. Next, she returns the demystified content to its political context, thereby elevating one's understanding of history. Her interpretations show an intentional plotting of Fascism's own development, and the ability of Mussolini to establish a sense of power and identity through aesthetics. While *Fascist Spectacle* does not have a musical focus, one can begin to understand the complexity of the study of artistic disciplines within this political web. With this being said, semiotic theories have been utilized in the study of Italian musical life and the regime; Earle and David Osmond-Smith's, "Masculine Semiotics: the Music of Goffredo Petrassi and the Figurative Arts in Italy during the 1930s" exemplifies this approach. Artistic disciplines are expressive mediums, and are vulnerable to the appropriation of others. Therefore, just as hand motions and photographs were representative of a political agenda, so too did artistic forms become viable channels for Mussolini's ambition of a totalitarian state.

Politics and Fascism appear to be indivisible, and hence when attempting to demystify the attraction of Fascism, writers often begin with political discourse. Mary Ann Frese Witt, on

the other hand, proposes that politics can be divorced from this movement, and that for some, Fascism became alluring through its aesthetic appeal and not through its political incentive. In *The Search for Modern Tragedy: Aesthetic Fascism in Italy and France* (2001), Witt brings to light a new perspective to the affiliation between Fascism and the theatre, which directs the course of her work. She states that Fascism supported the revival of ancient tragedy, believing that modern tragedy was the start of a new age; “[Consequently,] the ideal modern tragedy, according to the fascist ideologues, would not be a piece of base propaganda but rather a great work of art capturing the public through poetry.”⁶⁵ Citing examples from both Italy and France, Witt concentrates on those whose attraction to Fascism appeared grounded in aesthetics and literature and not in politics; theoretical discussions are also fundamental to her work. *The Search for Modern Tragedy* raises questions as to how we interpret individual behaviours within political settings, and in turn, the precaution that must be exercised when making claims of a period where much is still under debate.

Alongside the discussion of aesthetics and semiotics, the role of masculinity emerges within Fascist ideology. Concepts, such as Nationalism, were recognized as masculine, and Mussolini promoted this gender affiliation with images of himself often bare-chested and engaged in sport. However, John Champagne argues that the conception of masculinity was not this simplistic, and in fact projected many contradictions. In *Aesthetic Modernism and Masculinity in Fascist Italy* (2013), Champagne examines art, literature, music and theatre to better understand the complexities of masculine representation during the Fascist era. By rereading representative works and tracing the genealogy of masculinity, he argues that artistic

⁶⁵ Mary Ann Frese Witt, *The Search for Modern Tragedy: Aesthetic Fascism in Italy and France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), x.

disciplines struggled to clearly exemplify a Fascist masculine identity desired by the regime.⁶⁶

For example, homosexuality interfered with the regime's image of masculinity, but persecution of homosexuals also produced a contradiction. To persecute homosexuals would be a public admission that Fascist Italy was affected by this "problem", and thus suppressed those who wanted to both secretly eliminate homosexuality and public deny its existence in Italy.⁶⁷

Champagne confronts these complexities of masculinity through art, and contributes meaningfully to a field where, much like the study of musical life and Fascist Italy, Italian studies lag behind the works on Nazi Germany.

Conclusion

This survey of literature indicates a dearth of study on the aesthetic development of Petrassi's music between 1930 and 1950, and accentuates a gap in knowledge that this dissertation will attempt to fill. Scholars have yet to contextualize Petrassi's repertoire as it relates to his experiences with the socio-political circumstances of Italian Fascism. Writers on Petrassi have depended on their own analyses or on the publication of personal interviews to advance Petrassian research, but none have blended the use of primary resources with his music and politics to propose an understanding of Petrassi's works as reflections and responses of his own experience with Fascism. The aforementioned texts relating to cultural theory and aesthetics have already observed the regime's influence upon artistic culture, but the investigation of Fascism's impact upon one's psyche and artistry within Italian musical life requires additional work. Each publication, whether favourably reviewed or not, has established a baseline for my

⁶⁶ John Champagne, *Aesthetic Modernism and Masculinity in Fascist Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 4.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

own research and has contributed to the development of my own methodology. Sachs, for example, used evidence from his interview with Petrassi to understand musical life under Fascism. I will use published interviews, including my own interviews, to better understand Petrassi's experience of Fascism, and to identify its effect upon his aesthetic journey. As has been demonstrated throughout this literature review, there is an urgent need for further research, especially for English-speaking scholars. While musicologists have yet to consider how Petrassi's works have articulated his own responses to the political and cultural changes around him, an in-depth critical analysis can bring to light two interpretations to the study of Petrassi's music: the evolution of the composer's style, and the spiritual journey of the man who composed.

Chapter Three: Socio-Political Aspects of Italian Musical Life Under Fascism

We cannot assume to understand a person or the reasons for his or her behaviour without knowledge and awareness of one's surrounding influences, specifically the framework of one's life. Likewise, the manifestation of Fascism in Italy is better understood when we consider the economic upheaval and the political resentment that had accrued after the Great War. An inspection of these realities will contextualize the discussion of Italian musical life under Fascism, and provide reasons for the varying music responses of Italian composers.

After the Great War

With the cessation of World War I, Italy existed in a state of debilitation and shame. As a result of the turmoil to follow, the years 1919 and 1920 became known as the *Biennio Rosso* (The Two Red Years). An economic calamity was swallowing the country, forcing Italians into a world of political instability, inflation, mass unemployment and food shortages. Inflation affected the middle class more severely than others, especially those with fixed incomes, and a mounting resentment became opportune for the rise of Fascism.⁶⁸ The Italian Social Party protested against the armed forces, the government, and the monarchy, and attempted a display of international solidarity with British and French Socialists (20 to 21 July 1919).⁶⁹ Regrettably, after a war that had killed and wounded too many Italians, the protests and counter protests of violence were yielding a similar outcome. Gramsci, who was an active Socialist at this time, continued to campaign against the regime until his eventual arrest and imprisonment by Mussolini's police in 1926. Strikes, land and factory occupations, and the formation of workers' councils exemplified

⁶⁸ Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 12.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

the agitation that ensued. Ultimately, social protest and resentment shifted from economic blame to politics; the hostility of the Italian people now targeted their Liberal government under Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (1860-1952) and then Giovanni Giolitti (1842-1928).⁷⁰ During the war's final year, the government had made a catalogue of promises to raise the hopes and spirits of its people, but fantasies of social justice were in reality magnificent and improbable.

Between 22 and 29 October 1922, Mussolini, former Socialist and founder of the National Fascist Party, led the March on Rome with almost 30,000 *Squadristi* or Blackshirts to establish political dominance in Italy. Alarmed by Mussolini's insurgency, Prime Minister Luigi Facta (1861-1930) declared a state of siege and commanded that the army halt Mussolini and his Blackshirts. Conversely, King Vittorio Emanuele III (1896-1947), whose signature was necessary to complete the military order, rejected the request; to this, Facta and his government resigned. Having refused military action, the king now feared a civil war, and invited Mussolini to form a government. It marked the beginning of Fascist rule in Italy. Mussolini's receipt of power through intimidation was a success, and on 31 October 1922, he assumed the role as Italy's youngest Prime Minister in history.

Mussolini was a charismatic man whose gift for rhetoric masked his true weakness as a leader. He was exciting, witty, and powerful. His very presence, pronounced gestures and facial expressions commanded attention. Even Winston Churchill (1874-1965), who had met Mussolini, confessed that he, too, would have been a Fascist had he lived in Italy throughout the 1920s.⁷¹ Extensive segments of the Italian people, demoralized after the war, identified with this man of modest upbringing who spoke with conviction of a restoration of Italy, the completion of

⁷⁰ Ibid., 23.

⁷¹ Bruce F. Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini. Totalitarianism in the Twentieth Century*, 3rd ed. (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson Inc., 2009), 55.

Italy's resurgence and national unity regardless of class, the final achievement of what had begun in the nineteenth century: *Il Risorgimento*.

Fervent about attaining personal power through mass support, Mussolini blatantly decorated buildings with the slogan, "Il Duce ha sempre ragione"⁷² ("Mussolini is always right"). Like his contemporaries, Hitler and Joseph Stalin (1878-1953), he believed the absence of opposing parties was not sufficient; he desired profuse support, particularly from those who influenced public opinion, such as artists, authors, journalists, and teachers.⁷³ Newspapers, journals, and radio allowed the transmission of propaganda messages, and were utilized strategically to promote Mussolini as saviour of the Italian people, a national hero who would redeem strong and resolute civilians. Elide and Vincenzo Paolone, who lived in Italy at this time, shared in an interview how their local doctor would position a radio in their village square where everyone gathered to hear Mussolini's broadcasts:

In the whole town, there was only one doctor. The doctor, he had a radio. The radio was not in style at that time. He had the radio, he put the radio on the speaker, and when it was time for the news, everybody'd go listen. There was a little plaza in front of the doctor's house, and he'd put the speaker on the second floor, put the radio on, and everybody would go there and listen to the news. (Elide Paolone)

Wait a minute - with this announcement of Mussolini talking, you'd take your hat off. (Vincenzo Paolone)⁷⁴

In this way, many Italian citizens, despite social status, became recipients of propaganda.

Mussolini exalted violence and pro-war philosophies as mechanisms for abolishing weak individuals.⁷⁵ Early supporters of the movement included war veterans who upheld Mussolini's

⁷² R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life Under the Dictatorship, 1915-1945* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 3.

⁷³ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁴ Elide and Vincenzo Paolone, interview by Alessia Macaluso, Hamilton, 4 August 2013, digital recording.

⁷⁵ Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini*, 24.

pro-war philosophies, and white-collared individuals who wanted to eradicate the ties between Socialism and peasants.⁷⁶ These behaviours also marked Mussolini's youth, making violence somewhat fundamental to his core being. As an extension of him, the Fascist party also engaged in violent action, be it murder or torment. It was common that one's allegiance to the regime be tested, and that an unfavourable response be remedied with a dose of castor oil:

The people used to travel by train, by bus, you know? You may sit in the train and one guy sits beside you. He starts to talk bad about Mussolini, 'He's no good'. If you agree with him, and talk bad about Mussolini, once you come out of the train, you don't go where you have to go. You go with him and get the castor oil! (Elide Paolone)

At that age, you don't think about Mussolini being bad. You think what they say. You believe. (Vincenzo Paolone)⁷⁷

Despite these acts, Mussolini was able to convey a sense of rebirth to Italians who were clamouring for a restoration of peace, efficiency, and general civilization after the Great War and the *Biennio Rosso*.

As the leader of an emerging political party, Mussolini consistently shifted and promoted different facets to win the approval of certain individuals, and to ultimately increase his following of Fascism. Antimonarchism was exchanged for Nationalism to appease King Vittorio Emanuele III and the army, and violence, which became synonymous with the Fascist party, particularly in action against Socialists, was enticing to audacious right-wing youths.⁷⁸ After the kidnapping and murder of Giacomo Matteotti (1885-1924), an Italian Socialist and longstanding opponent of Mussolini, Mussolini tightened censorship, announcing that Italy would be a totalitarian state with the disbandment of all opposition parties and the dismissal of all non-Fascists from his cabinet; by the end of 1928, all anti-regime institutions had been eliminated.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Paolone and Paolone, interview.

⁷⁸ Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini*, 24.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 28.

Party membership, colloquially known as “la carta del pane” (“the bread card”), became necessary for employment and was essential for supporting oneself and one’s family. Post 1935, party membership was required for all civilians, and beginning in 1940, membership was mandatory for career advancement.⁸⁰ However, despite the Fascist monopoly over Italian civilization, Mussolini’s ambition of a totalitarian regime was flawed; the monarchy and the Church were never eliminated and thus their influence upon the Italian people remained active.⁸¹

King Vittorio Emanuele III contributed uniquely to the rise and fall of Fascism in Italy, as he was the one who both ignited and extinguished Mussolini’s career as Italian prime minister. Different theories have surfaced concerning the king’s reason for authorizing Mussolini’s March on Rome. It has been proposed that that the king was dubious of his army’s loyalty had he signed the then Prime Minister Facta’s request for military support against the march, while others have suggested that the king feared a civil war as a result of the Vatican’s support of the regime.⁸² This one decision of the king brought drastic repercussions: Facta was succeeded by Mussolini, and Liberalism was replaced by Fascism. Had the king been regretful of this outcome, his fears stifled any opportunity to remedy the situation. Throughout 1924 and early 1925, it was believed that Mussolini could be easily expelled from office. Senator Ettore Conti (1871-1927) led a group to persuade the king to oust Mussolini. The king denied the request, fearfully anticipating that Mussolini’s dismissal would resurrect the anarchism experienced after the war.⁸³ It was an echoing of the dismissal of Facta, who had implored the king’s authority to restrain Mussolini’s power.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 29.

⁸¹ Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 50.

⁸² Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini*, 25.

⁸³ Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 46.

While his actions allowed Mussolini to maintain his position as prime minister of Italy, the king also showed public support for Fascist ideology. Whether it was another gesture rooted in fear, the king played a vital role in the passing of racial laws that were later imposed throughout the country. In July 1938, after a visit by the Nazi Racial Bureau, a racial manifesto was issued. The manifesto was a declaration by various academics advocating the exclusion of Jewish people from the Italian race, including a ban on intermarriage; from this, a decree-law was formulated on 17 November that bore the king's signature.⁸⁴ It was not until 25 July 1943, during World War II, that the Grand Council of Fascism passed a vote of no confidence against Mussolini and a change of government for Italy.⁸⁵ The Fascist regime had fallen, and by order of the king, Mussolini was deposed and arrested. Immediately, the king appointed Pietro Badoglio (1871-1956) as Mussolini's successor, and together they replaced Fascism with a newly established royal-military dictatorship. All Fascist organizations and groups were abolished; the only element of Fascism to remain was the anti-Semitic decree because of German presence in Italy at that time.⁸⁶

Like the king, Pope Pius XI demonstrated inconsistent behaviours towards the regime. Mussolini initially won favour with the church by granting it Vatican City and a greater influence in Italian public life, especially within schools.⁸⁷ The church maintained its tie with the regime, despite controversies resulting from governmental decisions. However, the developing partnership between Mussolini and Hitler weakened the church's coalition. No longer the regime's silent partner, Pope Pius XI, on behalf of the church, expressed his rage over the

⁸⁴ Ibid., 242.

⁸⁵ Gianfranco Bianchi, *25 Luglio: crollo di un regime* (Milan: Mursia, 1989), 704.

⁸⁶ Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 312.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 64.

persecutions occurring in Nazi Germany and Hitler's forthcoming visit. The pope's fury was effective in stimulating a response from educated Catholics who shared his view.

Futurism and Modernism as Political and Artistic Influences

While Fascism was transforming Italy politically, artistic movements and ideologies, such as Futurism and Modernism, were continuing to prove influential. Futurism was founded by the Italian poet, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), who condemned Italians for rooting their modern lives in nineteenth-century culture. His manifesto was published in the Italian newspaper *Gazzetta dell'Emilia* on 20 February 1909 and later in France's *Le Figaro*, encouraging an Italian life compatible with the modern world. Marinetti used verbs of combat, while exalting war, celebrating beauty through struggle, and demolishing verbal and physical references to the past, moralism and feminism. War was a necessary hygiene for the world's cleansing, while art and literature were the greatest means to realize his Manifesto.⁸⁸ Although largely a pre-war movement, there was a revival of Futurism after the Great War called *Il secondo futurismo* (The Second Futurism). Marinetti admitted there was a straying from some of the manifesto's initial impositions, and that Futurism was no longer the same Futurism as before the war.⁸⁹ Painters, such as Gino Severini (1883-1966), gradually departed from the Futurist style and embraced Neoclassicism, but for those who remained with the movement, "speed and mechanization", particularly as "aeropittura" ("aeropainting") developed as a primary artistic expression.⁹⁰ The fascination had begun before the war, but it was in the 1920s that Marinetti advocated the

⁸⁸ Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, xviii.

⁸⁹ Kenneth E. Silver, *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914-1925* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 348.

⁹⁰ Tim Benton, "Dreams of Machines: Futurism and l'Esprit Nouveau," *Journal of Design History* 3, no. 1 (1990): 25.

airplane as the epitome of man enhanced by machine.⁹¹ This obsession with machinery, be it airplane or automobile, was reflected in the promotion of mechanical art, and is aligned with the resurgence of Futurism. In 1922, the painters Vinicio Paladini (1902-1971) and Ivo Pannaggi (1901-1981) published the *Manifesto dell'arte meccanica futurista* (*Manifesto of Futurist Mechanical Art*) to proclaim a Futurist art that was wholly mechanical. By doing so, mechanical art maintained Futurism's ideology of destroying what was outdated, while embracing what was technologically modern. Maria Elena Versari summarizes:

The machine is thus an irresistible, totalizing influence that grants an inner, timely coherence to the Futurists' outburst of revolt against a stale and backward aesthetics...The temporal urgency of the new day, where the machine marks the fulfilment of the modern Golden Age, becomes the final guarantee of the movement's long-expected stylistic and thematic coherence...⁹²

For musicians, Marinetti and composer Aldo Giuntini wrote the *Manifesto futurista della aeromusica sintetica geometrica e curativa* (*Futurist Manifesto of Synthetic, Geometric and Therapeutic Aeromusic*) (1934), a manifesto that outlined the principles of "aeromusicali" ("aviation music") and even attributed the proposed genre with a curative quality.⁹³ Mechanical art was inclusive of all art forms, and Futurists enthusiastically promoted the celebration of advanced technology through many manifestos. The sense of mechanics – trains whistling, gears grinding, engines roaring – was limitless in its inspiration to artists, and became a distinct avant-garde movement of the twentieth century.

Whereas Futurism worked to abolish tradition, Modernism reinvented traditional thought so its finished product was both of the past and of the present. Modernists valued traditional art, but believed it to be outdated, especially within a new society of industrial development and

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Maria Elena Versari, "Futurist Machine Art, Constructivism, and the Modernity of Mechanization," in *Futurism and the Technological Imagination*, ed. Günter Berghaus (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009): 150.

⁹³ Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, 97.

changing social conditions. They turned to the past for inspiration for contemporary works, and then presented their art in an updated, modern way. Accordingly, this art became a reinterpretation, revision, imitation, parody or pastiche of past art.⁹⁴ Modernists also rejected the certainty of Enlightenment thinking, and many also rejected religious belief.⁹⁵ There was not the same distribution of manifestos as was occurring with Futurism, and so there existed a freedom of adaptation whereby Modernism was shaped by individual interpretations. Earlier modernists were apt to regard tradition as a defined set of rules from which they could create their own work, but later, some modernists strayed drastically on the grounds of originality.⁹⁶ Modernism also brought with it an element of science and rationality. Schoenberg's twelve-tone system, for example, is the result of the chromatic scale being presented as an ordered series of twelve notes; hence, it can be said that although he rejected traditional tonality, the traditional form of the chromatic scale was made new by means of a calculated system. This sense of rationality was a result of modernist thinking, namely "an attitude to the modern world which demands that the arts use rational compositional methods, so that we get down to a more fundamental level of reality, which is often fantasized to be common to art and science."⁹⁷

Mussolini wanted to be viewed as a modernist, and he used opportunities of speech and action to demonstrate this tendency. He declared, for example, that Italian Fascist art should be both modern and traditional.⁹⁸ He advocated for a national style that was rooted in the past, a

⁹⁴ Christopher Butler, *Modernism: A Very Short introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 11.

⁹⁵ Lewis Pericles, *Modernism, Nationalism, and the Novel* (Port Chester, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 38-39.

⁹⁶ Butler, *Modernism*, 41.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹⁸ Raffaello De Rensis, *Mussolini musicista* (Mantua: Paladino, 1927), 33.

contemporary restructuring of traditional practice. In classrooms, Mussolini had portraits of himself and King Vittorio Emanuele III positioned next to the crucifix:

In the school, you see how we have a picture here? Mussolini. (Vincenzo Paolone)

As soon as you'd come in, it was a picture of Mussolini, a picture of the King, and the crucifix in the middle. (Elide Paolone)⁹⁹

It was a gesture that signified that religion, specifically Christianity, was of equal importance to the government and the monarchy, or that Mussolini was as omnipotent as God. If Modernism rejected religion, Mussolini was symbolically displacing Christian reverence. In 1932, after the issuing of Alceo Toni's (1884-1969) *Manifesto of Italian Musicians for the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century Romantic Art*, Mussolini again showed his modernist streak by siding with the modernists. The manifesto was published on 17 December 1932 in Italy's leading three newspapers *Il popolo d'Italia* (Rome), *La Stampa* (Turin), and *Il Corriere della Sera* (Milan), and indirectly attacked progressive composers and musical trends. Malipiero, one of the unnamed composers targeted by the manifesto, shared a private audience with Mussolini days later, and expressed that Mussolini gave the impression of being in favour of progressive composers.¹⁰⁰ It may have been that Mussolini's position to contest the manifesto was an encouragement of traditional reinvention, or as he said, “an art that must be traditional and at the same time modern, that must look towards...the future”¹⁰¹, and that to have sided with the conservative composers who signed the document would have condoned what he perceived as outdated and stagnant Italian art. These examples support the idea that Mussolini adopted modernist ideology to propagate Fascism. Therefore, this discussion is aligned and supportive of

⁹⁹ Paolone and Paolone, interview.

¹⁰⁰ Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, 148.

¹⁰¹ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 16.

the historian Roger Griffin's theory that "fascism itself can be seen as a political variant of modernism."¹⁰²

Music as a Political Platform

Mussolini promoted a cultured image of himself as music lover, amateur violinist, and patron of various orchestras and musical academies to satisfy a political agenda. The sincerity of his musical interest is debatable, but it manifested itself in the restoration of opera houses, promotion of regime-sponsored music festivals, and the establishment of the National Fascist Union of Musicians. In 1927, the well-known musical journalist Raffaello DeRensis (1879-1970) was commissioned by the Library of Fascist Propaganda to write a booklet, *Mussolini musicista*. Mussolini's artistic self was advantageously presented to the public, while underlining his meagre beginnings to remind Italians that he too was born without rank or title. The booklet is a melodramatic work, escalated by sensational direct quotations. Mussolini attests, for example, that music's therapeutic abilities provided immediate physical and mental relief when he was once a homeless and hungry youth.¹⁰³

The regime's regulation and interference of the Italian arts scene attempted to convert Italian musical life into Fascist propaganda and a glorification of Fascist ideology. To illustrate, an inspection of the 1940 *National Fascist Union of Musicians'* membership listing reveals 105 names, but is exclusive of any female names.¹⁰⁴ This exclusion mirrors Mussolini's belief that a woman's place was in the home, and that women should be preoccupied with nurturing children instead of careers. This is not to say that Italy was without female talent in the arts or that women

¹⁰² Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, 6.

¹⁰³ De Rensis, *Mussolini musicista*, 17.

¹⁰⁴ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 30.

were ignorant of politics. Instead, the omission of female names underlined the regime's disdain for women in society. Many Italians held party membership, or at least belonged to the *Corporation of the Professions and the Arts*, as a governmental prerequisite for their profession, but maintained an aloofness from Fascist politics.¹⁰⁵ There existed an element of freedom, as long as one pledged loyalty to the regime; membership was a ticket to employment preservation. Artists, too, at least in the beginning, proceeded with their craft without adherence to aesthetic dogma, and were exposed to foreign influences that circulated openly throughout Italy.

The majority of musicians joined the union, but some, Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957) being the most prominent example, resisted. The Ministry of Pop Culture initiated the abolition of agents, the regulation of pay for musicians, the fostering of new musicians via festivals and competitions, the promotion of international tours to glorify Italian art, the commissioning of works for political propaganda, and the arrangement of special concerts for members of the recreation and leisure group, Dopolavoro, so that all classes could experience Italian music at a modest price.¹⁰⁶ However, this generosity masked an authoritarian scheme, whereby, in the case of Dopolavoro, the enjoyment of live music was done according to the regime's music program, thus imposing and influencing the musical interest of Italian civilians who were Dopolavoro members.

Festivals became a platform for political demonstration; successful musicians were often decided on a prejudiced rationale. Awards went beyond the title of festival winner, and often presented these musicians with inclusion on significant concert programs.¹⁰⁷ Fascist music festivals also carried alternative motives, specifically *Il Maggio Musicale*, which was to

¹⁰⁵ Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 140.

¹⁰⁶ Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, 949-950.

¹⁰⁷ Harry Beard, "The State Patronage of Italy," *The Musical Times* 78, no. 1137 (November 1937): 950.

demonstrate to the world the regime's commitment to artistic supremacy.¹⁰⁸ In turn, ambitious musicians were apt to attain public recognition and adoration, while receiving private honours, prominent positions at cultural institutions, and commissions; accordingly, aesthetic choices were affected by these musicians in order to accommodate this strategy.¹⁰⁹ However, there were those for whom artistic compromise was not an option. Musicians deemed "racially and nationally 'undesirable'" were banished from musical life; musicians who vocalized their opposition to the regime were "attacked, forced into exile or imprisoned."¹¹⁰

Stylistically, Mussolini preferred strong, grandiose works, such as symphonies and marches, and he showed a strong distaste for light music, such as dance.¹¹¹ The symphony orchestra was of a particular liking because, as Mussolini commented, it gave the idea of collective group discipline.¹¹² In this context, the symphony orchestra might be seen as a metaphor of a preferred disciplined Italy with Mussolini as the conductor, and Italian civilians as the orchestra members. Composers were aware of Mussolini's musical preferences, but a defined list of good Fascist music was never administered publicly as an artistic policy. Alessandro Pavolini (1903-1945), president of the *Fascist Confederation of Professionals and Artists*, outlined to Italian musicians that they make contributions to Italian musical life with works and not polemics, and that these works be of one tendency, Italianness.¹¹³ Such instruction appears ambiguous, but historian Marla Susan Stone explains that as the Second World War neared, "the consent of artists conflicted with [the regime's] intensifying propaganda demands...[P]riorities

¹⁰⁸ Ben Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 72.

¹⁰⁹ Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, 34.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 17.

¹¹¹ Vittorio E. De Fiori, *Mussolini: The Man of Destiny* (New York: Dutton, 1979), 52.

¹¹² Benito Mussolini, *Opera omnia*, ed. E. and D. Susmel, vol. 41 (Rome: G. Volpe, 1979), 424.

¹¹³ Alessandro Pavolini, "Consegna," *Il musicista* 5, nos. 1-3 (October-December 1937): 2.

shifted and Fascist culture demanded explicit representations of *italianità, romanità*, empire, war, and autarchy.¹¹⁴ The Fascist film, *Scipione l'Africano*, to be discussed later, epitomized these artistic demands.

Because the regime distributed support to everyone, it has been theorized by musicologist Massimo Mila (1910-1988) that the regime lacked awareness of Italy's musical life; this inferiority, as he calls it, is why a defined musical policy was nonexistent.¹¹⁵ Mussolini's favorite composers were Italian and included Palestrina, Monteverdi, Frescobaldi, Galuppi, Scarlatti, Corelli and Vivaldi.¹¹⁶ When asked about his favourite contemporary Italian composers Mussolini replied towards the end of his dictatorship that they were Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924), Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945), Pizzetti (despite his "opportunistic and vulgar soul"), Malipiero, Dallapiccola, and Annibale Bizzelli (1900-1967).¹¹⁷ Mussolini's ambition for the Italian arts is best summarized in the following politically charged statement from *Mussolini musicista*, as translated by Sachs:

A great art can be developed in our land, an art that comprises within itself all of life's manifestations and at the same time shapes them, an art that must be traditional and at the same time modern, that must look towards the past and at the same time towards the future. We must not remain mediators, we must not take advantage of the heritage of the past; we must create a new heritage to set alongside the ancient one, we must create a new art, an art that is of our times, a fascist art.¹¹⁸

The remaining sections of this chapter will present miniature studies on three Italian composers to elucidate the varying responses to Italy as a Fascist state. The cases of Respighi, Pizzetti, and Dallapiccola represent the different realities of Italian musical life within the interwar years.

¹¹⁴ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 16.

¹¹⁵ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 53-54.

¹¹⁶ Francesco Saporì, *L'arte e il Duce* (Milan: Mondadori, 1932), 61.

¹¹⁷ N. D'Aroma, *Mussolini segreto*, (Bologna: Cappelli, 1958), 304-305.

¹¹⁸ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 16.

Appropriation of Music: The Case of Ottorino Respighi

Respighi was born into an environment conducive to an enriched musical upbringing. His father was a local music teacher, and his birth city, Bologna, was one of Italy's premier musical centres. He was in many ways a traditionalist, influenced by the styles of his predecessors ranging from Gregorian chant to Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713), and his studies at the Liceo Musicale generated within him an interest and love of his country's cultural heritage.¹¹⁹ He was mildly curious about experimenting with innovative techniques, and his style became a mild concoction of traditionalism and Modernism. As a result, his style is described as "middle-of-the-road eclectic, difficult to 'place' neatly in any over-schematized outline of the Emergence of Modern Italian Music, yet unmistakably characteristic of certain aspects of Italian culture of his time."¹²⁰

As he matured, he became less tolerant of progressive movements in the arts, even signing, alongside other conservative composers, the *Manifesto of Italian Musicians for the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century Romantic Art* (1932), a document that opposed avant-garde music and proclaimed the superiority of Romanticism. The *Manifesto*, understood as an attack on progressive composers such as Casella and Malipiero, created pandemonium within the Italian musical community. Both modernists and conservatives maintained that theirs was the true way by which Italy under Fascism would be reborn.¹²¹ Respighi's disbelief of the public's uproar exposes his naïveté; he understood his signature to be homage to the romantic heritage. With haste, he wrote a letter to Malipiero explaining that the document had been misinterpreted as a

¹¹⁹ Lee Barrow, "Guilt by Association: The Effect of Attitudes toward Fascism on the Critical Assessment of the Music of Ottorino Respighi," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 42, no. 1 (2011): 81.

¹²⁰ Waterhouse, "The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940)," 554.

¹²¹ Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy*, 67.

dangerous and demagogic work, falsely connecting certain people and politics.¹²² Respighi's involvement with the *Manifesto of Italian Musicians for the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century Romantic Art*, however, was not his first entanglement with politics.

Respighi glorified Italy and as an internationally renowned composer, he represented Italian greatness to the world. *Le fontane di Roma* (*The Fountains of Rome*) (1916) premiered in 1917, five years before Mussolini assumed his role as Italian Prime Minister, and transformed Respighi into an international celebrity. *Le fontane di Roma* began his Roman trilogy, and was followed by *I pini di Roma* (*The Pines of Rome*) (1924), and then *Feste romane* (*Roman Festivals*) (1928). These Roman tone poems presented an ideal opportunity to the Italian Fascist regime for political appropriation. The colouring and diversity of Respighi's music was appealing to the masses, and through these works, the beauty of Rome was revered. There has been speculation about whether *I pini di Roma* was written to appease the regime, as its public debut occurred while Mussolini was completing his second year as Prime Minister of Italy. Respighi's wife, however, declares that the idea of *I pini di Roma* had been formulated well before Fascist rule.¹²³

A closer examination highlights Nationalism as Mussolini's attraction to Respighi's music. *I pini di Roma*, for example, is a work in four movements. Each movement journeys to various Roman settings, illustrating scenes of pine trees throughout different times of the day, while exuding an ambiance of the fantastical: *I pini di Villa Borghese* (*Pines of the Villa Borghese*), *Pini presso una catacomba* (*Pines Near a Catacomb*), *I pini del Gianicolo* (*Pines of the Janiculum*), and *I pini della Via Appia* (*Pines of the Appian Way*). Respighi begins with an

¹²² Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, 141.

¹²³ Elsa Respighi, *Ottorino Respighi: His Life Story*, trans. & abr. Gwyn Morris (London: G. Ricordi, 1962), 89-90.

idyllic scene of children at play by the looming pine trees of the Villa Borghese; there are games of soldiers and the sing-song of nursery rhymes.¹²⁴ The second movement evokes a solitary chapel in a deserted open land with pine trees dotting the landscape; then a hymn is heard, rising and sinking from an open space, perhaps the catacomb.¹²⁵ *I pini del Gianicolo* is an evening landscape atop the hill of Janiculum, while the full moon casts light over the pine trees; it is in this movement that Respighi requires a recording of a real nightingale to be used during performance.¹²⁶ At last, Respighi completes his orchestral tone poem with a recollection of Rome's past glories along its famed military road; the sun rises, and the triumph in the sky seems to parallel the triumph of the country.¹²⁷ The work is an expression of Italian pride that can easily be broadcast as a proclamation of Italian superiority.

It is effortless to understand why Mussolini was drawn to some aspects of Respighi's music for the purpose of propaganda. With music that was so overtly patriotic, it required fewer twists for political endorsement. Consequently, Respighi's music appeared on programs sponsored by the regime, particularly when attendance was needed. In Mussolini's favour, Respighi was assured a successful and undisputed musical career.¹²⁸ The regime's support produced unique opportunities and privileges. For example, in 1932 Fascist authorities awarded Respighi a prestigious membership to the *Reale Accademia d'Italia*, an elite organization established by Fascists by royal decree. Although an unrequested gesture, Respighi's acceptance was another link to the chain connecting his name with the regime. To put it succinctly, "Respighi did not attempt to ingratiate himself with the regime because he was the one composer

¹²⁴ "Ottorino Respighi: Pini di Roma," *Naxos Music Library*, accessed 10 October 2013, <http://york.naxosmusiclibrary.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/work.asp?wid=11311&cid=0724358654950>.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 149.

of his generation whom the regime backed without being asked...the fascists opened doors for Respighi before he knocked.”¹²⁹ Regrettably, because of his political affiliation, a critical trend of condescension ensued, and distaste towards Respighi and his music existed for decades after the fall of Fascism.¹³⁰

The regime’s favouring of Respighi may suggest that Respighi was a Fascist when in fact, he was without official party membership and completely apolitical. Evidence suggests that Respighi was unsupportive of the regime. In his wife’s book, *Ottorino Respighi*, Elsa Respighi stresses that her husband did not belong to a political group and that he detached himself from progressive music circles; in fact, it was in his nature to isolate himself:

Era stato chiesto ancora una volta a Respighi di far parte del comitato dirigente, ma come sempre, il Maestro rifiuta e Casella insiste invano con una sua lettera del 14 marzo 1934. In questa lettera egli parla di <<antipatia personale>> di Respighi per la S.I.M.C., ma anche questa volta l'interpretazione è arbitraria. Ottorino non ha mai aderito alla S.I.M.C., come a nessun'altra associazione musicale per la sua <<impossibilità>> a legarsi con chichessia.¹³¹

Once again, Respighi was asked to be a part of the executive committee, but, as always, the Maestro refused and Casella insisted in vain with his letter of 14 March 1934. In this letter, he speaks of Respighi’s ‘personal dislike’ of the I.S.C.M., but again the interpretation is arbitrary. Ottorino has never adhered to the I.S.C.M., as with any other musical association because of his ‘impossibility’ to bond with anyone.

Having died before the fall of Fascism, Respighi was denied the opportunity to disassociate his name from Mussolini and the regime, thus precluding him to begin anew. During the Second World War, Respighi’s music, along with others, was banned in Allied countries until Italy joined the Allies in September 1943. However, the resurrection of his music was short-lived until attacked by historians and critics. This trend continued for decades, sealing an unjustified fate in various writings found in journals such as *Music Review*, *Music Survey*,

¹²⁹ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 132.

¹³⁰ Barrow, “Guilty by Association,” 79.

¹³¹ Elsa Respighi, *Ottorino Respighi: dati biografici ordinate da Elsa Respighi* (Milan: G. Ricordi, 1954), 294.

Opera, and *Opera Quarterly*; even prominent resources maintain political commentary, notably *The Companion to Twentieth Century Music* (1992), *Green's Biographical Encyclopedia of Composers* (1985), and *The New Grove Dictionary of Music* (1981).¹³² A comparison of *Grove Music* entries exemplifies the presence and then the softening of this antagonistic tone. The 1981 edition describes Respighi's *Feste romane* as having "fascist overtones (probably unconscious) ...reflect[ing] nothing worse than the uninhibited self-indulgence of an infant with a box of gaudy toys."¹³³ On the contrary, the biographical entry currently available at *Grove Music Online* mentions Mussolini's name three times and derivatives of Fascism four times, but without hostility.¹³⁴ Perhaps with time, Respighi's name will be cleared of Fascist affiliation, but literature is still indicative of a stubborn refusal or inability to sever this political tie because of Mussolini's appropriation for political purposes.

Obsequious Behaviour and the Exchange for Fame: The Case of Ildebrando Pizzetti

Like Respighi, Pizzetti supported the ideals of the musical *Risorgimento*, looking to resuscitate Italy's cultural past through a revival of technique and transcription of older music. He, too, is considered a conservative composer, preferring tradition as his muse. Despite these commonalities, their legacies are contradictory, even though it was Pizzetti who fostered a publicized relationship with Mussolini and behaved in a sycophantic manner. It is baffling that two composers who embodied the *Risorgimento*, who withdrew from advanced musical practices, and who – intended or not – were tightly linked to Mussolini would have opposing

¹³² Barrow, "Guilt by Association," 89-90.

¹³³ J. C.G. Waterhouse, "Ottorino Respighi," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. 15, 757.

¹³⁴ Potito Pedarra, Janet Waterhouse, and John C.G. Waterhouse, "Respighi, Ottorino," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, accessed 6 September 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/47335>.

legacies. One might speculate that having lived beyond the Fascist era, the duration of Pizzetti's life was an opportunity to redefine himself, to detach and bury his Fascist ties, and to re-write his own history.

Pizzetti was born one year following Respighi in the nearby town of Parma, where he, too, was the son of a local piano teacher. As a child, Pizzetti displayed a penchant for theatre, and his path appeared ambiguous until enrolling as a music student at the Parma Conservatory. His two passions soon married in an ambitious pursuit to compose opera, a genre traditionally associated with Italy but dwindling in popularity during the interwar years. He also signed the *Manifesto of Italian Musicians for the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century Romantic Art* at a time when he was removing himself from personal associations of forward-thinking composers like Casella. Pizzetti bolstered his position in the music world as teacher, director, conductor, and music critic; however, his ultimate promotion of self and career was realized through his relationship with the Fascist regime, whereby he became the recipient of highly publicized awards, memberships, and titles.

During the interwar years, Pizzetti began to fall behind modern trends; he did not appear to understand the likes of Stravinsky and Schoenberg, and his influence on musical life began to diminish and his creativity to wane.¹³⁵ This may be in part due to a genuine disinterest in progressive trends, or from a compromise of artistic self that granted him public favour and awards from the regime. Although protective of his compositions, Sachs comments that “the degree of moral compromise fundamental to fascism was exceptional, as were the temptations extended by the regime to ambitious people willing to grace it with the aura of their names. By giving in to those temptations, Pizzetti participated in the compromise.”¹³⁶ His declining

¹³⁵ Waterhouse, “The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940),” 254.

¹³⁶ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 122.

influence within musical life may have been a reaction to this behaviour, and indicative of disapproval from his contemporaries for betraying his artistic integrity.

An inclination towards heroic themes and large-scale ambitions is characteristic of his earlier, unfinished works, suggesting that some operas written during Mussolini's regime were both an alignment of Fascist ideology and a genuine liking of bravado.¹³⁷ His relatively large number of operatic works was atypical at a time when composers focused on the advancement of concert music, and exemplifies his unrelenting clutch on tradition. Pizzetti attempted to re-invent opera by proposing new ideas, specifically through a return to Monteverdian practice. In his ariosos, this practice is recognized by the "recurrent signs of his sympathy with the Florentine monodists and the recitatives of Monteverdi", whereby a distinct richness of expression can override a tedious scene.¹³⁸ More so in his choral writing, Pizzetti, like Petrassi, draws upon the potentials of Renaissance polyphony to compose highly expressive and dramatic works.¹³⁹ He also participated in the Italian trend of reviving medieval and ecclesiastical modes, while blending folk material, a technique that addressed Mussolini's desire for "an artistic national style and the concept of Italianness."¹⁴⁰ In such ways, Pizzetti represents Modernism in Italian music.

The most striking feature of Pizzetti's vocal works is his attention to the Italian language, which may have been a gesture to support the regime's advocacy of a standardized language. Prior to the First World War, 98 percent of the Italian population spoke only a local dialect; it

¹³⁷ Guido M. Gatti and John C.G. Waterhouse, "Pizzetti, Ildebrando," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, accessed 6 September 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.Yorku.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/21881>.

¹³⁸ Gatti and Waterhouse, "Pizzetti, Ildebrando," *Grove Music Online*.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Franco Sciannameo, "In Black and White: Pizzetti, Mussolini, and 'Scipio Africanus'," *The Musical Times* 145, no. 1887 (Summer 2004): 32.

was the First World War that raised the 2 percent of official Italian speakers when youth were exposed to the national language through military training and compulsory education.¹⁴¹

Mussolini propelled national unity by abolishing the use of local dialects in favour of a universal language, which the Italian education system adopted in 1934.¹⁴² Therefore, it is fitting that the language serving to unite Italy would be so sensitively treated and highlighted by Pizzetti, as though he was maintaining national unity through his music. Among music critics, Pizzetti's sensitivity to the natural movement and inflection of each word is known as the "Pizzettian declamation"¹⁴³; his treatment of vocal polyphony later served as a model for the choral works of Dallapiccola, Luigi Nono (1924-1990), and Petrassi.¹⁴⁴ Pizzetti also became his own librettist, working to blend text with melody. The meticulous focus he placed on the Italian language through a revisioning of opera was both a nod to current Nationalism and the glorification of Italy's past; ultimately, his work bore the signature of a modernist musician, which was appealing to Mussolini.

Once Mussolini was head of state, Pizzetti became a forerunner of musicians seeking personal advantage in exchange for Fascist promotion and blatant flattery. Writing letters to Mussolini, requesting private audiences, bidding personal favours, and dedicating compositions were common practices of Mussolinian era composers. On 12 December 1925, Pizzetti performed privately for Mussolini at his apartment in Rome; this meeting began a relationship to last until Mussolini's death. Pizzetti was quick to engage himself in Fascist circles. Three months following his private meeting with Mussolini, Pizzetti was involved in the production of many

¹⁴¹ Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 12.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁴³ Gatti and Waterhouse, "Pizzetti, Ildebrando," *Grove Music Online*.

¹⁴⁴ John C. G. Waterhouse, "The Italian Avant-Garde and National Tradition," *Tempo*, New Series, no. 68 (Spring 1964): 17.

Fascist projects, such as the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, and the *Manifesto of the Fascist Intellectuals*, a précis of the Conference of Fascist Culture held in Bologna on 29 March 1925. At the forefront of nationalistic ambition, Pizzetti “wore the mantle of a Mussolini paladin, a mantle that he wore with a great deal of dignity.”¹⁴⁵

His obsequious behaviour was eventually recognized in a manner that was driving fame-hungry composers to collaborate with the regime: public recognition and celebration as a formidable composer. On 21 April 1931, the *Reale Accademia d'Italia* awarded Pizzetti's *Debora e Jaele* with the coveted Mussolini prize, *Premio per le Arti*, a 50,000 lire prize donated by the daily newspaper, *Il Corriere della Sera*.¹⁴⁶ Pizzetti accepted this award in the same way he received it, by ingratiating himself with Mussolini. In a letter, he expressed pride that his work was associated with the fateful name to all Italians, Mussolini.¹⁴⁷ Pizzetti officially joined the Fascist party on 5 January 1933, and after six years of placating the regime, he finally received the most prestigious honour in 1939, appointment to the *Reale Accademia d'Italia*. Pizzetti recognized such momentous events by dating his manuscripts for dual purposes; for example, the date marked on his score, *Quartetto in re*, represents the work's completion date, as well the date Pizzetti joined the Fascist party.¹⁴⁸ Music was not the only avenue for Pizzetti to indulge the regime; his published essays also became a political platform. In the 1930s, it became a regular practice for Pizzetti to quote Mussolini in his public statements.¹⁴⁹ The pattern was maintained that as long as Pizzetti modeled Fascist behaviour via promotion of ideology and political gestures, the regime would continue to reward his career.

¹⁴⁵ Sciannameo, “In Black and White,” 32.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 32.

¹⁴⁷ Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, 432-433.

¹⁴⁸ Sciannameo, “In Black and White,” 47.

¹⁴⁹ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 127.

A compelling musical example that underlines Pizzetti's affiliation with the regime is his scoring of the Fascist film, *Scipione l'Africano* in 1937, a film produced as propaganda to support the Italian invasion of North Africa, and funded by Mussolini. *Scipione l'Africano* glorifies the Roman Empire through Scipione, an undefeated, great Roman general known for having defeated Hannibal in the Second Punic War. The film also marked the fifteenth anniversary of the March on Rome, emphasizing a relationship between the grandeur of the past and the power of the present.¹⁵⁰ Pizzetti's *Inno a Roma* (Hymn to Rome) became the film's anthem, the lyrics patriotically singing of Rome's eternal life and strength to the rest of the world.¹⁵¹ It was rumoured that *Inno* would also become an official Fascist hymn, but the timing was amiss. Instead, Puccini's *Inno a Roma* (1919) was selected as a Fascist Youth Party hymn "because by then everybody had [it] in their ears...a *de facto* imperial hymn, performed after the *Marcia reale* and *Giovienzza*", and initially written for Roman schools.¹⁵² After *Scipione l'Africano* won the coveted *Coppa Mussolini*, Pizzetti sent an autographed piano reduction of *Inno* to Mussolini. The letter is a brief but syrupy puddle of adjectives, and ends with a dedication to Mussolini. Beneath the title of the score sent to Mussolini, Pizzetti scrawled a series of numbers. Referencing the aforementioned theory of Pizzetti's dating of manuscripts, these numbers can be decoded. Pizzetti writes, 1937, which matches the work's completion date, but next to this, he writes in Roman Numerals, XV (Example 3.1). Thinking within a political context, XV likely identifies the fifteenth anniversary of the March on Rome, which was to occur in October of that same year. In this way, Pizzetti linked his work to the regime, or at least showed support for it. The hymn's dedication to Mussolini, his involvement in the film, *Scipione*

¹⁵⁰ Massimiliano Sala, "Dal muto al sonoro: le musiche di Pizzetti per Cabiria e Scipione l'Africano," in *Italian Music During the Fascist Period*, ed. Roberto Illiano (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2004), 174.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 180-181.

¹⁵² Sciannameo, "In Black and White," 38.

l'Africano, and the homage of a significant event in Fascist history, enhance Pizzetti and his music's Fascist affiliation.

Pizzetti's political involvement was deliberate and obvious, and although he demonstrated a bias from the beginning towards nationalistic and dramatic subjects, his music and behaviour did conform to Fascist expectations to meet the approval of Mussolini and to win him personal favours and awards. Despite these intentional acts, this appears overlooked in literature, more so in English than Italian resources. For example, with reference again to *Grove Music Online*, Respighi's entry is peppered with mention of Mussolini and Fascism, while Pizzetti's biography is devoid of this language. Further inquiry proposes that communication errors may have arisen from poor translations or from the overall unavailability of translated sources. As a result, composers are now viewed in a particular context because of the omission of facts or incorrect details; posthumous reception in academe and elsewhere, accordingly, must be reassessed. It is imperative to maintain an objective and accurate stance in order to assess the legacy of those who have been silenced or misunderstood by neglect and flawed assumptions.

Example 3.1: Autographed Piano Reduction of *Inno a Roma*¹⁵³

Inno
(1937 - XX - I)

Autante motto

G. Nino

O Ro-ma, o tu che hai

fat-to di cen-to gen-ri un po-po-lo, o Ro-ma, o

al-la-dre, o al-la-dre, chie-di: tut-to, tut-to che *chiesi* tu a-
che-di

¹⁵³ Sala, "Dal muto al sonoro," 185.

Protest Music: The Case of Luigi Dallapiccola

Political suppression, imprisonment, and the fight for freedom were themes that began knitting themselves through Dallapiccola's life at a young age. He watched as politics drove his family into captivity, and when music later became a close companion and he again was forced into hiding, his quest for liberation was voiced through a musical protest in response to Mussolini's racial laws. Dallapiccola is best known for his lyrical compositions that employ the twelve-tone series, and he is recognized as an Italian pioneer of this style. Whereas some understood the twelve-tone series as linear and calculated, Dallapiccola perceived a new means of emotional expression and took liberty with his adaptation. It is interesting and perhaps appropriate that Dallapiccola chose a system that was restricted by the use of a tone-row and bound to the rules of dodecaphony; in this way, art imitated life. Just as he sought freedom from political confines, he sought and developed freedom of expression through music, regardless of convention.

Dallapiccola was born to Italian parents in Pisino d'Istria (now Pazin), Croatia. Unlike Respighi and Pizzetti, he neither had a musical parent nor a solid musical upbringing. His piano studies were more to satisfy the cultural expectations of a bourgeois family living in Central Europe, and despite his piano teacher acknowledging a rare aptitude for music, he did not imagine music as a vocation and neither did his mother encourage it.¹⁵⁴ The Dallapiccolas moved frequently because of political disputes, and were victims of political accusations. In March 1917, suspected of Italian Nationalism, the Dallapiccolas were placed in internment in Graz, Austria for 20 months where they suffered the scarcity of food and money. Perhaps as a distraction, his mother used what little money

¹⁵⁴ Luigi Dallapiccola, "The Genesis of the 'Canti di prigionia and il Prigioniero': An Autobiographical Fragment," trans. Jonathan Schiller, *The Musical Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (July 1953): 357-358.

was had to send Dallapiccola to the opera house; it was a performance of Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* that awakened an inward calling of a composer.¹⁵⁵ After the First World War, Dallapiccola commenced regular travel to Italy to pursue his musical studies with Antonio Illersberg (1882-1953). Illersberg tapped an affinity for early Italian music, particularly of Monteverdi and Gesualdo, but Dallapiccola was also greatly influenced by Debussy and Schoenberg. Dallapiccola's admiration of the Second Viennese School inspired and propelled his music to original heights, whereas Pizzetti, for example, never understood the music of Schoenberg and was disinterested in methods that stepped outside of Mussolini's basic musical preferences.

A modernist finds his inspiration to create based on traditional models that appear outdated, and the final work can fluctuate between a modest reinvention to an original and innovative piece. Dallapiccola's early works were foretelling of a conservative, modernist career, whereby one composed within updated traditional forms and maintained a formula of tonality and convention, but as his career advanced, he expanded the walls of Modernism. Rather than present a reinterpretation of the past, as Pizzetti did with his reformation of Italian opera, Dallapiccola blended together dodecaphony with tradition. Gradually, he ventured the unorthodox grounds of dodecaphony, and became an active member of progressive music circles, such as the International Society of Contemporary Music (I.S.C.M.), forming close relationships with the likes of Casella and Malipiero. His compositional style evolved through an increased use of chromaticism until his music began resembling twelve-tone rows.¹⁵⁶ The

¹⁵⁵ Virgilio Bernardoni and John C. G. Waterhouse, "Dallapiccola, Luigi," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, accessed 6 September 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/07081>.

¹⁵⁶ Roman Vlad, *Luigi Dallapiccola*, (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1957), 4.

familiar sensitive and lyrical qualities of his music now existed in a new form, a personalized execution of the twelve-tone series.

As a crusader of protest music, it is startling to learn that Dallapiccola was once an ardent Fascist, complying with and advocating that which he later abhorred. Like so many others, Dallapiccola was allured by propaganda. His music of the 1920s, a product of his Fascist days, remains unpublished with the exception of one revised movement printed in a periodical; these works are accessible only under strict control, and remain unperformed, as per Dallapiccola's wish.¹⁵⁷ Many of his later works are renditions of personal strife and intimate expressions of his own distress that employ the twelve-tone series. He describes, "What I wrote, I wrote with the hope of convincing people that even a composer very much in sympathy with the twelve-tone technique is not a person detached from life but one who, like every man, lives his own life with many sorrows and some joy."¹⁵⁸ Successfully, Dallapiccola defied the notion that the twelve-tone series is mechanical and weak in emotional expression by producing impassioned, memorable works.

It was not until the Abyssinian Campaign and the Spanish Civil War that his political view began to shift.¹⁵⁹ His contemporary, Petrassi, recalls that "Dallapiccola was at first a fervent fascist – so fervent that he sometimes annoyed us, his friends...then, with the coming of the special laws and above all the racial laws, things changed for him and he became a passionate anti-fascist."¹⁶⁰ The internment of Dallapiccola's family had introduced suffering and injustice at a young age, and the experience remained with him like emotional shrapnel. Against the tragedy of a new political setting, namely the initiation of Italian racial laws, his emotions were eruptive.

¹⁵⁷ Bernardoni and Waterhouse, "Dallapiccola, Luigi," *Grove Music Online*.

¹⁵⁸ Dallapiccola, "The Genesis of the 'Canti di prigionia and il prigioniero'," 372.

¹⁵⁹ Bernardoni and Waterhouse, "Dallapiccola, Luigi," *Grove Music Online*.

¹⁶⁰ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 146.

That he and the Italian people were forced to submit to a prejudiced law of hatred was too much to bear. Furthermore, at the onset of this racial campaign, Dallapiccola had married a Jewish woman, Laura Luzzatto. It began another dark period within his life of political friction, secrets, and hiding; a repeated chapter whereby the want of freedom was chafed by an unforgiving reality. In response to the announcement that the racial manifesto was tainted with pseudo-science, Dallapiccola expressed, “I should have liked to protest; but at the same time, I was aware that any gesture of mine would have been futile. Only through music could I express my indignation.”¹⁶¹ Accordingly, composition became his refuge. Music was the only opportunity through which he could voice his want for freedom, as well as spiritually rise beyond human tragedy.¹⁶² Dallapiccola composed a trilogy of protest music that overlapped with the experience of World War II: *Canti di prigionia* (Songs of Imprisonment) (1938-41), *Il prigioniero* (The Prisoner) (1944-48), and *Canti di liberazione* (Songs of Liberation) (1951-55).

Canti di prigionia marked the beginning of Dallapiccola’s protest work, and the completion of his anti-Fascist metamorphosis. As a musical response to political injustice, Dallapiccola felt compelled to compose a work that would voice his duress and that of other Italians to present and future audiences. Although it was not originally intended as protest music, but as an autobiographical response, Dallapiccola later created the protest reputation of this work in a 1953 article.¹⁶³ *Canti di prigionia* is comprised of three movements, *Pregiera di Maria Stuarda* (Mary Stuart's Prayer), *Invocazione di Boezio* (The Invocation of Boëthius), and *Congedo di Girolamo Savonarola* (Girolamo Savonarola's Farewell). For Dallapiccola, his music not only birthed from the influence of musical heritage, but also

¹⁶¹ Dallapiccola, “The Genesis of the ‘Canti di prigionia and il prigioniero’,” 362-363.

¹⁶² Roberto Illiano and Massimiliano Sala, “The Politics of Spectacle: Italian Music and Fascist Propaganda,” *Muzikologija* no. 13 (2012): 24.

¹⁶³ Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy*, 201.

from literature and the history of other cultures. He sought the words of “other illustrious prisoners, of other individuals who had fought for liberty and for the triumph of justice”¹⁶⁴ so that he could most effectively voice his protest. From Stefan Zweig’s (1881-1942) *Mary Stuart*, Dallapiccola discovered a prayer written by the Queen of Scots when she was in her final years of imprisonment; this prayer was musically set in *Preghiera di Maria Stuarda*. He found his other warriors of freedom for the second and third movements of *Canti di prigionia* in the philosopher, Boëthius (480-525), and in the unfinished meditation of the Italian monk, Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498). These movements have become renowned in Italian twentieth-century music as an anti-Fascist demonstration of courage and resistance.¹⁶⁵ Dallapiccola’s rejection of Fascism and Nazism forced him into hiding during the Second World War, and the aesthetics of his music, and perhaps his Jewish wife, were reason of his being banned in Germany. However, despite these disruptions, he later emerged and continued his protest and search for freedom through his music.

While protest music was not a novel idea, Dallapiccola has been accredited as representing the maturation of this tradition; aside from Schoenberg “no other country has produced such powerful expressions of protest from its resident composers.”¹⁶⁶ His music elicited vehement responses throughout the Italian community, provoking politicians, musicians and Catholics. The premier of *Il prigioniero* is a prominent example. Ironically, *Il prigioniero* was scheduled for its premiere in 1950 at *Il Maggio Musicale*, a festival inaugurated by the regime. Although this premiere occurred after the fall of Fascism, the Fascist spirit was not extinguished and loyalists retaliated against Dallapiccola by

¹⁶⁴ Dallapiccola, “The Genesis of the ‘Canti di prigionia and il prigioniero’,” 363.

¹⁶⁵ Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy*, 200.

¹⁶⁶ Waterhouse, “The Italian Avant-Garde and National Tradition,” 22.

protesting the performance of his work. *Il prigioniero* was a cynical piece, metaphorically tracing Dallapiccola's disillusionment with Fascism through the demoralizing of a prisoner. Dallapiccola recognized the political motives: "The Communists feared -- with good reason - that every denunciation of tyranny would be reported to Stalinist Russia. The crypto-Fascists (nobody then dared declare himself) knew that in writing the opera I had been impelled by hatred of Fascist dictatorship."¹⁶⁷ He also faced protest from local music groups who opposed the twelve-tone system, and from Catholics who perceived *Il prigioniero* as an attack on the Church in a Spanish Inquisition fashion.¹⁶⁸

In closing, this chapter has provided a brief overview of Fascist Italy to contextualize Italian musical life during the interwar years. Musicians operated within a tumultuous and unsteady framework, responding diversely to the socio-political and artistic influences surrounding them. The experiences of Respighi, Pizzetti and Dallapiccola demonstrate music's force as a vehicle for creative expression, propaganda, sycophancy, or protest. Each response stems from a motive, and in turn, music becomes a historical testimony and an exposé of its composer. The following chapters will focus on the aesthetic development of Petrassi's music during the era of Fascism in Italy, and can be more intimately understood against a political and cultural background. Chapters proceed chronologically and are divided into aesthetic periods that simultaneously document his shifting political views, thus revealing an autobiographical leaning within his output.

¹⁶⁷ Luigi Dallapiccola, "A Dallapiccola Chronology," trans. Rudy Shackelford, *The Musical Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (July 1981): 420.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

Chapter Four: Neoclassicism and a Fascist Spirit: A Career in Music

L'arte riflette la vita dell'uomo e della società in cui essa vive...Così la vita dello spirito non è mai avulsa dalla vita reale ma palpita e soffre con essa.¹⁶⁹

- Petrassi

Art reflects the life of man and the society in which he lives...Thus, the life of the mind is never divorced from real life, but pulsates and suffers with it.

- Petrassi

The Pursuit of a Musical Career under Fascism

In many ways, Petrassi typified the common civilian who worked alongside Fascism in an attempt to maintain a livelihood and to pursue a vocation. He occupied positions affiliated with the regime, satisfied obligatory party membership, and suppressed political opinions that may have disrupted the fulfillment of his own ambitions. It is here that the similarities end. The cultural influence and prestige of Petrassi's employment allowed him a unique experience that was unlike other Italians. Petrassi took seriously his oath of fidelity, and displayed an outward conformity in order to pursue a profession in music.¹⁷⁰ The oath pledged an allegiance to the regime, and was to unite the state, as well as mould its students in accordance to Fascist values. Citizens who swore the oath were to be devoted and obedient to the regime and to its ideology, and to suppress any form of dissent. An example of the oath, as pledged by university professors, is given below:

I swear to be faithful to the King and his royal successors and to the Fascist régime, to observe loyally the statute and other laws of the state; to exercise the teaching function and to fulfill all academic duties with the purpose of forming citizens active, bold and devoted to the fatherland and to the Fascist régime. I swear that I do not belong and will

¹⁶⁹ Goffredo Petrassi, "Sulla musica religiosa," in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 82. Previously published as "Sulla musica religiosa," *Il Campo* 1, no. 4 (April 1946): 153-156.

¹⁷⁰ Andrew Thomson, "Goffredo Petrassi and the Phantoms of Fascism," *The Musical Times* 133, no. 1792 (June 1992): 289.

never belong to any association or party the activities of which are not in harmony with the duties of my office.¹⁷¹

After pledging allegiance, an individual became a participant of the cultural politics of Fascism, and fortified the regime's ambition towards cultural hegemony. Without an individual's consent, he or she was removed from the system, and violence and coercion then gained precedence. The oath for university intellectuals, for example, was refused by eleven professors who were then purged from their university chairs.¹⁷² As theorized by Gramsci, the regime's strategy of consent weighted one's participation within a cultural institution so that hegemony could be achieved. Hegemony in this context refers to the "consensual basis of any given political regime within civil society...[the] diffusion of the philosophical outlook of a dominant class in the customs, habits, ideological structures, political and social institutions, and even the everyday 'common sense'" of society.¹⁷³ It became irrelevant whether one detested or supported the regime; the act of employment satisfied political objectives and maintained a well-oiled machine. In the example of Petrassi, his oath was his consent, and his employment was his cultural participation. An overview of Petrassi's career reveals varying musical appointments, and suggests that Petrassi could have been a successful musician without having been a composer. In fact, the thought of composing arrived later in life; Petrassi wrote, "la mia decisione di dedicarmi alla composizione maturò piuttosto tardi, verso i 22-23 anni."¹⁷⁴ ("my decision to devote myself to composition matured quite late, around 22 to 23 years of age.")

¹⁷¹ "Italian Professors and the Fascist Government," *Science* 75, New Series, no. 1933 (15 January 1932): 73.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Adamson, "Gramsci's Interpretation of Fascism," 627.

¹⁷⁴ Raffaele Pozzi, "La mia musica. Intervista di Raffaele Pozzi," in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 351. Previously published as "La mia musica. Intervista a Goffredo Petrassi," *MondOperaio* 40, no. 3 (March 1987): 144-148.

After graduating from the conservatory, part-time teaching was Petrassi's primary source of income. He gave lessons privately in his home, providing "lezioni di tutti i generi, dalla storia della musica...all'armonia, ma non ancora di composizione."¹⁷⁵ ("lessons of all kinds, from the history of music...to harmony, but not yet composition.") As his career moved forward, he secured distinguished titles within cultural institutions and participated in various projects and opportunities affiliated with the Ministry of Popular Culture. Selected appointments will be discussed to illustrate how Petrassi navigated his career under Fascism. He returned to teaching in 1940 as Professor of Composition at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia where he taught a number of high calibre aspiring composers including Norma Beecroft (b. 1934), Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988), Peter Maxwell Davies (b. 1934), Ennio Morricone (b. 1928), and Eric Salzman (b. 1933).

Norma Beecroft

Canadian composer Norma Beecroft studied composition with Petrassi at a time when composers favoured France as their foreign learning centre. While at Tanglewood in 1958, it was the renowned conductor, Claudio Abbado (1933-2014) who suggested that Beecroft study with Petrassi in Italy. Beecroft elaborated, "Well, the curious thing was most people, Canadian composers of my generation or a little bit older, went to France and they studied with Nadia Boulanger or Honegger or people like that, but nobody sort of went to Italy, so it was kind of an interesting choice. And so, I wrote to Petrassi, and he said that I should bone-up on my Italian, but he was going to be starting to teach a new class at the Academy of Saint Cecilia in Rome, the *Corso di perfezionamento* it was called."¹⁷⁶ The two formally met in the fall of 1959 before the

¹⁷⁵ Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," 13.

¹⁷⁶ Beecroft, interview.

course began in January 1960. Beecroft's classmates included a medley of nationalities, where she was the only woman in the class. United in their ambition to compose, the class communicated in two languages that required a constant practice: music and Italian. Sensitive to the students' varied knowledge of spoken Italian, Petrassi exemplified patience with his students; "He was a very, very friendly person, and he learned to speak rather slowly in Italian because he had all these foreigners in the class who didn't necessarily speak Italian, but he wanted everything to be understood...he was very sensitive to his students"¹⁷⁷.

Beecroft was only in her mid-twenties when she boldly decided to move to Italy. She was fearless in the pursuit of what beckoned her soul, and gave little attention to what society deemed suitable for a young, unmarried woman. She recalled her achievements in Petrassi's class with great pride, "I was so proud of myself...I had to do the analyses and write it all up in Italian. I ended up with nine out of ten points. I was the highest in the class...Not bad for a female, eh?"¹⁷⁸ Perhaps her resilient character had been nurtured since her childhood, although Beecroft credits her fortitude as a result of her parents' divorce: "My parents split up when I was 12, so you grow up very quickly under those circumstances when you're left to your own devices to figure out where you're going in life...There was no protective shield around me at all. I suppose I had learned to fend for myself, too."¹⁷⁹ Born in Oshawa, Ontario, Beecroft was the second eldest of five children: Jane, Norma, Eric, Charles and Caroline. Both of Beecroft's parents were musically trained, and introduced her to music through choir singing and violin lessons. Her father, in particular, was a model of a devotion to music, exchanging a formal education for the life of a concert pianist and a composer. This dream, however, was ill-fated when a machinery

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

accident removed three of his fingers before a meeting with George Gershwin (1898-1937) in New York.¹⁸⁰ The loss of his fingers meant the loss of a pending career in music, but still, he played lovingly and with wonder for his family at home. His passion for music, regardless of circumstance, was mirrored in the young Beecroft as she relentlessly carved her own path. It was after two years of piano lessons, and while working as a file clerk for *Manufacturers Life* that she felt an impulse to compose; with this curiosity, she decided more time must be allotted for music.¹⁸¹ Her musical pursuit led her to the private teachings of John Weinzwieg (1913-2006), examinations at the Royal Conservatory of Music, presidency of the Concert Committee of the Canadian Music Associates, and a position with the newly established CBC Television. A meeting with Aaron Copland (1900-1990) prompted the suggestion that she apply to study at Tanglewood, and it was there that she met Abbado who encouraged her to study with Petrassi; “After all, he was the big name. [Petrassi] and Dallapiccola were the big names in Italy at that time.”¹⁸²

Six or seven students attended Petrassi’s course, and met once weekly for a three hour session.¹⁸³ The lessons involved primarily analysis of works by internationally known composers, and the final examination required an original composition for orchestra, accompanied by two analyses. Of the exam, Beecroft proclaimed, “It was an incredible exam actually because we had to write a piece for orchestra in literally three or four months and do two analyses, written analyses, in Italian.”¹⁸⁴ The course itself was not to teach one how to compose, but to refine skills and to honour the individuality of each composer:

¹⁸⁰ Peter Such, “The Suspended Sounds of Norma Beecroft,” in *Soundprints: Contemporary Composers* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Ltd., 1972), 81.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Beecroft, interview.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

We did a lot of analysis. I think that was his main forte there. It was really primarily a lot of analyses of other composers' works and whatnot...it was not too much in a personal criticism of one's work...the whole focus was, I suppose, it was like a finishing course. What would you call *perfezionamento* in Italian? It's like finishing, completing your studies. I mean, after all, all of us had careers of a certain kind up to that point, so it was kind of like, I call it my post graduate work type of thing.

At this time, Beecroft was struggling to process the music she had experienced at Tanglewood. She was overwhelmed, and her creativity halted; post-serialism surpassed her understanding of serialism and left her perplexed with who she was and where she now belonged in the music world. She confided her conflict of aesthetics and identity to Petrassi:

...it really began when I was in Tanglewood, and I started to be exposed to what was going on in some of the rest of the world, and it was leaving me a little bit mystified about where I was going. I had just been introduced to serialism as taught by John Weinzweig, which was really the Schoenberg mould, but in Europe they were into post-serialism and very much the influence of John Cage and aleatory and all of these things were going on. I got absolutely stopped creatively. I just couldn't figure out where do I fit into this whole scheme of things? Is this for me? Is it not for me? And I used to have these conversations with Petrassi...he could see my frustration...he just said, 'Don't worry about it until you are secure what you want to do or what you want to write. Just come to the class, glean what you can glean from the class and go to the concerts and listen to everything.'¹⁸⁵

With his students, Petrassi was always encouraging and supportive. In our interview, I asked her to describe Petrassi as a teacher:

...his musicality and his understanding of what was going on in the rest of the world in music and his knowledge of orchestration was quite profound...It's trying to find your own voice. That's exactly what it is, and that's all really another teacher can give you at a certain point of time after you've learned your techniques to help you find your own voice. It takes quite a skilled teacher to be able to leave you alone to do that to help guide you. I think that's what Petrassi did; he was sympathetic to the struggle that probably all of us were going through to find our own *métier*.¹⁸⁶

The relationship between Petrassi and his students extended beyond the conservatory's walls. It was customary to share an aperitivo, that is a drink after class where they continued the

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

conversation on music, as well as a limitless number of other topics, primarily philosophical in nature. Beecroft described Petrassi as a “father figure”¹⁸⁷, someone with whom anything could be discussed. For her personally, “I felt I could talk to Petrassi about, just about anything... You could talk to him about things that were concerning you... I felt that the other students were a little intimidated by his stature in the society”¹⁸⁸. Beecroft’s testimony provides an intimate sketch of Petrassi as man and as teacher. Nowhere else have I discovered an account as detailed as Beecroft’s regarding Petrassi as teacher and his relationship with his students.

Ennio Morricone

Morricone is respected as an innovative and multifaceted film composer. His repertoire displays a vast range of style and sound, which has made him popular not only in film, but in other circles too, composing music for artists like Paul Anka (b. 1941) and Andrea Bocelli (b. 1958). It was his music for Spaghetti Westerns that catapulted him to international rank. *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (Sergio Leone, 1966), is considered by many to be one of the best soundtracks of all time, and was inducted in the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2008. Over 70 award-winning films are included in Morricone’s filmography such as, *Once Upon a Time in the West* (Leone, 1968), *Exorcist II* (John Boorman, 1977), *Days of Heaven* (Terrence Malick, 1978), *Once Upon a Time in America* (Leone, 1984), *The Mission* (Roland Joffé, 1986), *The Untouchables* (Brian DePalma, 1987), *Cinema Paradiso* (Giuseppe Tornatore, 1988), *Bugsy* (Barry Levinson, 1991), *Mission to Mars* (Da Palma, 2001), *The Best Offer* (Tornatore, 2013), and most recently, *The Hateful Eight* (Quentin Tarantino, 2015). While his name has been emblazoned across many coveted awards - Academy, B.A.F.T.A. (British Academy of Film and Television Arts), Golden

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

Globe, Grammy, and David di Donatello awards - the origin of his musical training is often a passing comment. Aficionados may quote Petrassi as his teacher, but little attention is given to his time spent as Petrassi's pupil. While Morricone has experienced success as an orchestrator, conductor and trumpet player, it is his compositional roots that will be the focus of this discussion.

Morricone was the first child born to Mario Morricone and Libera Ridolfi on 10 November 1928 in Trastevere, a neighbourhood of Rome south of Vatican City. Three siblings soon followed his arrival: Adriana, Aldo, and Franca. Morricone's father worked professionally as a musician, playing the trumpet in various orchestras, and his mother worked in the textile business. Almost foretelling of his son's career, Morricone's father was also involved in jazz, opera and film scores.¹⁸⁹ He earned the family a good living, and encouraged his son to similarly make music his occupation:

My father was a very good trumpet player and he worked hard and guaranteed a good life for his family up until the beginning of the Second World War. After which, things became difficult for everybody. So he said to me, 'You have to study the trumpet because the way I make my family live well can be the same for you'.¹⁹⁰

At the impressionable age of 12, Morricone's parents had him registered at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia to study trumpet. As a musician, he showed great promise. In six months, Morricone had finished the course.¹⁹¹ While studying the trumpet, Morricone's program required that he study harmony. He demonstrated an atypical complexity within his assignments that made his peers take notice: "Simple tasks that had to be simple, I made them so complicated that

¹⁸⁹ Charles Leinberger, *Ennio Morricone's The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004): 1.

¹⁹⁰ Sir Christopher Frayling, "Una conversazione con Ennio Morricone. A Conversation with Ennio Morricone," program notes for *Goffredo Petrassi: The 60 Years of Music Tour*, The Czech National Symphony Orchestra, Goffredo Petrassi (London: The O2, 16 February 2016): 11.

¹⁹¹ Leinberger, *Ennio Morricone's The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, 1.

I used to bring them and show them to my school colleagues. Then, at the end of the course, they said to me, you have to study composition. And so I did study composition.”¹⁹² It was one of his harmony teachers, Roberto Caggiano, who recommended that he study composition, which then brought him to the teachings of Carlo Garofalo, Antonio Ferdinandi, and ultimately, Petrassi.¹⁹³

Although only a boy at the time, Morricone was greatly moved by Petrassi’s mentorship. It was a remarkable opportunity, especially for one so young. Petrassi had just completed his tenure at Teatro La Fenice, was now Professor of Composition at the Conservatory, and reigned as one of Italy’s most celebrated twentieth-century composers. Morricone’s good fortune was not taken for granted. What not many know is that Morricone had already been experimenting with composition since he was six years old.¹⁹⁴ Petrassi’s influence bore deep within the young Morricone. With great reverence, he said to me, “Lui è stato un maestro incredibile.” (“He was an incredible teacher.”)¹⁹⁵ When I asked Morricone to describe his studies with Petrassi, he exuded a warmth and receptivity that affirmed this topic was a sentimental and favourable one. He emphatically stated that it was Petrassi’s technique and adherence to artistic integrity that made him an extraordinary teacher:

Ah, la tecnica, la tecnica della composizione. Lui è stato un maestro incredibile perché non è che insegnava come molti maestri di composizione, insegnava a scrivere come lui. Lui insegnava a scrivere come si deve scrivere. Ha rispettato la personalità del compositore.¹⁹⁶

Ah, the technique, the technique of composition. He was an incredible maestro because he did not teach like other composition teachers, he taught to write the way he did [by honoring his own individuality]. He taught composition the way it should be taught. He respected the personality of the composer.

¹⁹² Frayling, “Una conversazione con Ennio Morricone,” 11.

¹⁹³ Leinberger, *Ennio Morricone’s The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, 2.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁹⁵ Ennio Morricone, interview by Alessia Macaluso, London, UK, 16 February 2016, digital recording.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

In this way, Morricone's description echoes that of Beecroft; Petrassi did not work to change an individual's style, but to make each composer excel in his own artistry. The effect of Petrassi on Morricone persisted throughout his career, and was evident in person through body language and tone. Petrassi was, for Morricone, not only a teacher, but a friend and source of inspiration. As an homage, Morricone expressed his gratitude and admiration by dedicating musical works to Petrassi. He shared with me that there were two pieces written in Petrassi's honour, similar to Petrassi's series *Concerti per orchestra*: "Due pezzi. Un primo, un concerto per orchestra, e un altro pezzo - se mi ricordo quale - un altro concerto per orchestra."¹⁹⁷ ("Two pieces. The first, a concerto for orchestra, and another piece – if I could remember what – another concerto for orchestra.") While Morricone's music has evolved dramatically from the roots laid by Petrassi in his childhood, his impression has proven lasting. Petrassi was an inspiration not only for Morricone, but for many others. As our brief meeting came to an end, he expressed with emotion, "È importantissimo come maestro. È stato importantissimo non solo per me, ma per tanti altri."¹⁹⁸ ("He was very important as a teacher. He was exceptionally important not only for me, but for many others.")

The Pursuit of A Musical Career under Fascism: 1935 and Forward

Petrassi maintained relationships with powerful and influential figures, including Nicola de Pirro (1898-1979), a top-level Fascist bureaucrat who led the General Theatre Administration for Theatres and Music. De Pirro was "a great friend" of Petrassi's mentor, Casella, and was also considered a close companion by Petrassi.¹⁹⁹ De Pirro's ties with Fascism were deeply rooted,

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 142-43.

and his profile as a Blackshirt can be traced to the early days of *squadrismo*. He had fought in the Great war, held a degree in law, and served the regime through many high-profiled positions: “director-general of the National Fascist Entertainment Association, president of the Opera Consortium, member of the National Council of Corporations, editor-in-chief of *Critica fascista*, and founder-editor of a theatre magazine, *Scenario*.”²⁰⁰ He was considered the most powerful representative of music within the government, and he belonged to the most influential agency on Italian musical life, the regime’s Ministry of Popular Culture.²⁰¹ The Ministry, formerly the Ministry of Press and Propaganda, intervened in Italian musical life in various ways including but not limited to government-sponsored festivals, the directing of opera houses and conservatories, and the establishment of organizations such as the Fascist Confederation of Professionals and Artists, a requirement in 1936 for conductors wanting to work in Italian theatres. Despite de Pirro’s history and existing affiliation with the regime, he was not regarded at this time as malicious or immoral, even though the consequences of his directions were not always laudable; he was “not corrupt...[but] blindly loyal to the regime.”²⁰² De Pirro’s confidence in Petrassi resulted in his gaining many prestigious appointments.

In 1935, Petrassi was employed by the government’s Ministry of Popular Culture in the music division as Direzione Generale del Teatro (General Manager of the Theatre). Under de Pirro, Petrassi, alongside Mario Labroca (1896-1973) and Giuseppe Rosati (1903-1962), became the nucleus of state-controlled musical life including opera, spoken drama, concerts, and radio.²⁰³ It was a brief, albeit tedious bureaucratic job that he accepted for ten months: “I needed the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 21.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 20-21.

²⁰² Ibid., 68.

²⁰³ Waterhouse, “The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940),” 210-211.

salary.”²⁰⁴ It was an interesting decision for Petrassi to work for the Ministry, which at this time was a mechanism of propaganda. The position was, however, his first step towards a successful career within the government’s institutions, and it leveraged greater opportunities to follow. Afterwards, he proceeded as director of a government-sponsored concert agency, again completing bureaucratic tasks, before filling the post of General Director in 1937 at the reopening of Teatro La Fenice in Venice, an institution that he claimed “wasn’t at all [politicized].”²⁰⁵ The generosity of this invitation was again given by the hands of de Pirro. Should Petrassi be interested, the appointment was his. Petrassi said he was overcome by the offer: “I was afraid: I was thirty-three years old, and it was something unheard of for me...I pondered awhile, told myself that it would be an important experience, and then took heart and accepted – partly because the situation was attractive: I would be earning much more money”²⁰⁶. What Petrassi omits from his statement is the prestige of working at one of the most renowned institutions in Italy’s cultural history.

As General Director, Petrassi was in a position of power: he decided which compositions would be featured on concert programs, and which musicians and conductors would perform. Although he was evasive about the politics of his appointment and about the political attraction of La Fenice (“they had little interest in it”²⁰⁷), it is reasonable to assume that de Pirro had complete confidence in Petrassi’s ideological reliability and loyalty to the regime when appointing him for this position of cultural leadership. In a letter dated 16 November 1937, at the infancy of Petrassi’s appointment, de Pirro expressed his intent to publish an extensive article with photographs of the opera house in his magazine, *Scenario*, to showcase the large-scale

²⁰⁴ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 143.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

architectural restorations of this national monument.²⁰⁸ This request discredits Petrassi's statement that La Fenice was of no interest to people in power. De Pirro also instructed what was acceptable for performance at La Fenice. On behalf of the Ministry, he announced the following in a press release:

Le opere saranno scelte in prevalenza fra quelle del nostro classico repertorio dell'Ottocento e l'inaugurazione del risorto teatro si porrà sotto il segno augurale di Giuseppe Verdi il cui nome fu per molti anni legato a quello della Fenice...Di Verdi sarà rappresentata un'opera di vasta mole...un'opera contemporanea di autori italiani, nuova per Venezia, ed un'opera di autore straniero anch'essa nuova per la città.²⁰⁹

The works will be chosen primarily from among those of our classic nineteenth-century repertoire and the inauguration of the resurrected theatre will arise under the auspicious sign of Giuseppe Verdi, whose name was for many years linked to La Fenice...A large body of Verdi's works will be represented...the work of contemporary Italians, new to Venice, and the work of foreigners also new to the city.

The productions staged during Petrassi's tenure demonstrated his compliance and obedience to de Pirro's instruction, while La Fenice became a venue for Axis alliance concerts. As General Director, significant decisions were in his power, yet Petrassi maintained adherence to what he was told and what de Pirro expected of him.

Petrassi insisted that he displayed a relaxed behaviour at a time when restrictions were beginning to encroach on cultural life. For example, in 1938, the same year that Mussolini's racial laws were imposed, Petrassi said that he "did Strauss's *Elektra*, whose libretto had been written by Hofmannsthal, a Jew. I invited Strauss himself, and he came...I invited Gui to conduct, although he was known to be an anti-fascist."²¹⁰ He implies that staging *Elektra* was a somewhat daring act because of its affiliation with Hofmannsthal. However, Hofmannsthal,

²⁰⁸ Franco Rossi, ed. "Dall'archivio storico del Teatro La Fenice: Goffredo Petrassi, sovrintendente del Teatro La Fenice (1937-1940)," program notes for *Omaggio a Goffredo Petrassi nel centenario della nascita. Morte dell'aria – Il cordovano*, Teatro La Fenice Orchestra and Chorus, Karl Martin (Venice: Teatro Malibran, 3-11 December 2004): 114.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 144.

although of Jewish ancestry through his great grandfather, never identified as a Jew, and was considered to have been Aryan. Further, Hofmannsthal's wife converted from Judaism to Roman Catholicism. The risk still existed that Petrassi's actions could have provoked a controversial response from the regime, but this was unlikely. The regime mandated that Petrassi investigate all employees whose race was not clearly Aryan, and documentation indicates, in his own words, his assurance that he was thoroughly observant.²¹¹ He was overall a submissive employee of the government and obeyed the demands of Fascist authorities.

Petrassi's decision to involve Strauss and his music must receive momentary attention to understand the implications surrounding Strauss's involvement. In Nazi Germany, musical life adhered to strict political and racial standards enforced by the Reichsmusikkammer. The Reichsmusikkammer was established by the Nazis as a central organization for all of Germany's musical activities and, accordingly, controlled the musical life of the nation.²¹² As a result of these regulations, musical activity was restricted and limited; however, the organization's establishment also resulted in the recuperation and prosperity of a discipline that was suffering from an economy weakened by war. Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945), Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, invited Strauss to become the Reichsmusikkammer's first president in 1933. Although Goebbels sought to purge the German nation of all Jewish effect, he could not deny the influence of Strauss as a celebrity figure. With the presence of a man who was both an internationally prominent musician and without party membership, Strauss's acceptance of the presidency diluted negative suspicions of Goebbels and the Reichsmusikkammer; the

²¹¹ Guido Salvetti, "Il ruolo 'pubblico' di Goffredo Petrassi negli anni del fascismo," in *Musicologia come pretesto: scritti in memoria di Emilia Zanetti*, ed. Tiziana Affortunato (Rome: Istituto Italiano per la Storia della Musica, 2011), 459.

²¹² Richard Freymann, "The Eclipse of German Music Hegemony," *Music and Letters* 23/2 (1942): 188.

Reichsmusikkammer now benefited from a credible and respectable guise.²¹³ It was neither finances nor publicity that persuaded Strauss to accept the position, but his perceived opportunity to instill beneficial changes for German musicians, particularly composers.²¹⁴ In short, Strauss' ambition to satisfy personal objectives through his role as president overshadowed any hesitancy not to accept the position.

Whether Goebbels was able to recognize the potential for conflict between Strauss and the Reichsmusikkammer remains doubtful. Strauss exploited his position as president, often abandoning responsibilities and Nazi regulations in order to accomplish personal objectives. In 1935, Strauss was terminated as president on grounds of his continued association with Jewish people and his defiance of official protocols.²¹⁵ Public announcements distorted the truth, and declared that old age and poor health were reasons for Strauss's resignation.²¹⁶ The Nazis placed a ban on performances of Strauss's music, which hindered his musical career and productivity. Strauss's participation with the Nazis aroused mixed reception from his contemporaries, although he was eventually removed as president. As Toscanini expressed in 1933, "'To Strauss the composer I take off my hat; to Strauss the man I put it back on again'"²¹⁷

Despite the strained relationship between Strauss and the Nazi regime, it was not an anomaly for Petrassi to invite Strauss and to perform his music. Between 1935 and 1943, Strauss

²¹³ Erik Levi, "Music and National Socialism. The Politicisation of Criticism, Composition and Performance," in *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich*, ed. Brandon Taylor and Wilfried van der Will (Winchester: The Winchester Press, 1990), 163.

²¹⁴ Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford

University Press, 1997), 18.

²¹⁵ Pamela M. Potter, "Strauss' 'Friedenstag': A Pacifist Attempt at Political Resistance," *The Musical Quarterly* 69/3 (1983): 408.

²¹⁶ Kater, *Twisted Muse*, 19.

²¹⁷ Michael Kennedy, review of *A Confidential Matter: the Letters of Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, 1931-1935*, English translation by Max Knight, *Music and Letters* 59, no. 4 (Oct., 1978): 475.

was the most performed living foreign composer within Italian state-governed theatres; with 24 performances, he well surpassed Stravinsky who ranked as the second most performed living foreign composer with 10 performances.²¹⁸ This demonstrates that despite the alliance between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, there were inconsistencies between the two regimes with Mussolini's allowance of otherwise forbidden behaviours. Likewise, Petrassi's promotion of Strauss was in keeping with wishes of the state, and was not a defiant stand on his part.

Another inconsistency and omission of the truth is learned when inspecting Petrassi's claim that he was never asked to execute orders from the Ministry. Petrassi misleadingly stated, "I can say truly and in good conscience that no impositions were made upon me. As general manager, I would have had to execute any orders that arrived from the Ministry, but none ever came."²¹⁹ However, orders from the Ministry did arrive. In fact, Petrassi was inundated almost daily with orders from the Ministry, and was required to appear in the Fascist uniform when performing his duties.²²⁰ With the introduction of state racial laws in 1938, all Jewish people were to be immediately removed from their positions of employment. As General Manager, Petrassi received his orders and he did what he was asked to do. On 9 December 1938, Petrassi wrote to the Sindacato Orchestral, dismissing Bruno Polacco from his post as orchestral musician:

In ossequio a precise disposizioni emanate dell'On. ministero della Cultura Popolare per il regolamento della Legge sulla razza, Vi comunico che il contratto già da noi stipulato con il Prof. Bruno Polacco è da considerarsi annullato. Saluti fascisti²²¹

In compliance with specific provisions issued by the Hon. Ministry of Popular Culture for the regulation of the Law on race, I inform you that the contract already signed with us with Prof. Bruno Polacco is considered cancelled. Fascist greetings

²¹⁸ Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, 29.

²¹⁹ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 143.

²²⁰ Salvetti, "Il ruolo 'pubblico' di Goffredo Petrassi negli anni del fascismo," 459.

²²¹ Mario Avagliano and Marco Palmieri, *Di Pura Razza Italiana*, Milan: Baldini and Castoldi, 2013: 143.

On this same day, the contract was cancelled with mezzo soprano Jole Jacchia because it was suggested she was of Jewish race.²²² This behaviour contradicts Petrassi's assertions that he was without obligatory action, and also raises question as to why he decided to stay. The option of resigning was available to him, and leaving his post would have relieved Petrassi from fulfilling racial laws. In Petrassi's words, "people knew that I was ready to leave at any time...I was never obliged to do or not to do anything specific...Of course people tried, as they do in every theatre in the world, and I was perfectly free to say no."²²³ Beecroft maintained that Petrassi would have felt deeply the ethical conflict of his situation; "I'm almost sure, because the man was so sensitive, that he would have been very reactive to everything that was going on."²²⁴ And so the question remains as to why Petrassi remained a government employee as Italy became a darker and more violent state. Did fear of the regime paralyze an exit strategy? Did he numb his ethical centre so that Fascist orders could become perfunctory actions? Regardless of his interior dialogue, Petrassi's obedience supported de Pirro's appointment of Petrassi as General Manager, and his servitude was requested for other public acts. In this same year, Casella, who was outspoken and had Jewish ties, was displaced by Petrassi as Music Director of the Venice Biennale Music Festival. Casella's displacement reflected the tightened alliance between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy; with Petrassi in his place, the festival could be "lower-profile and less controversial"²²⁵. By act of his own consent, Petrassi actively implemented the regime's coercive policies, while participating in its system of cultural hegemony. For this reason, historian Benjamin G. Martin calls Petrassi "darling of the fascist patronage system"²²⁶.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 144.

²²⁴ Beecroft, interview.

²²⁵ Benjamin G. Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*, (Cambridge: Harvard, 2016): 130.

²²⁶ Ibid.

In 1940, Petrassi left La Fenice to pursue teaching as Professor of Composition at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia, but his departure was not the severance of political ties or the diminishment of his influence in Fascist culture. His relationship with the Ministry remained tight, even as the Ministry underwent a change of management.²²⁷ While teaching, Petrassi became involved with a regime-sponsored project to revolutionize the Italian education system. Giuseppe Bottai (1895-1959), Minister of Education, called upon Pizzetti, as well as other high ranking composers, to coordinate a committee dedicated to the study of Italian music methods. Musicians were summoned according to qualifications and musical profession with the expectation that a new Italian curriculum would raise teaching standards in music schools, and most importantly, eliminate the use of foreign texts.²²⁸ Documentation records Petrassi as present at these meetings.²²⁹ Alongside the names of Casella and Dallapiccola, Petrassi participated in the removal of foreign influence from Italian teaching materials with the exception of some composers like Bach and Chopin.²³⁰ Although the details of Petrassi's specific involvement are unclear, what is established is his continuing involvement in the cultural politics of Fascism. Concurrently, Petrassi served on the Permanent Council for International Cooperation among Composers. The council began as an opportunity for countries to share and to promote the unique artistry of each nation's music, but had become Nazified when Petrassi was its Italian representative.²³¹ In later years, Petrassi, with due reason, understated his former political ties:

Io non feci mai...atto di ossequio al regime, nel senso che non sono stato un pupillo del regime fascista. Certo la mia carriera si è svolta sotto il fascismo... non ho mai fatto concessioni al regime. Certo partecipavo di quell'aura ed ero anche iscritto al partito perché altrimenti non avrei potuto lavorare né guadagnarmi lo stipendio.²³²

²²⁷ Salvetti, "Il ruolo 'pubblico' di Goffredo Petrassi negli anni del fascismo," 458.

²²⁸ Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, 198.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*, 219-220.

²³¹ Ibid., 274.

²³² Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," 18-19.

I never did...act of homage to the regime, meaning that I was not a protégé of the fascist regime. Of course my career took place under fascism...I never made concessions to the regime. Sure I participated in that ambiance and I also joined the party because otherwise I would not have been able to work or earn a salary.

While he may have attempted to belie his actions after the fact, it cannot be refuted that he participated freely. There were likely feelings of angst and inner conflict, but Petrassi's consent to fill his posts was all the government required in its quest for domination.

This survey is not intended to represent Petrassi's employment in its entirety, but to provide a critical sketch of Petrassi's pursuit of a musical career under Italian Fascism. Although Petrassi held positions affiliated with the regime, Petrassi identified these positions as professional and financial opportunities or necessities. At times, he may have regarded himself as independent or even insubordinate to the regime. There are noted cases of him denying requests while acting as General Manager, such as the recommendation of a conductor or his refusal to compose a Fascist Italian hymn.²³³ Nevertheless, Petrassi ultimately conformed to socio-political expectations in order to secure an income and to pursue a profession in Italian musical life. By swearing the oath of allegiance and fulfilling his employment duties within cultural institutions, Petrassi was enmeshed in Fascist culture and participated in the regime's ambition towards hegemony. While he was not an outright advocate of Fascist ways, on a very obvious level, it can be said that Petrassi's career was successful under Mussolini.

Contemporary Influences

To understand Petrassi's music is to know the broad range of musicians who affected him. The influence of Renaissance polyphony and the great masters of this era have already been touched

²³³ Salvetti, "Il ruolo 'pubblico' di Goffredo Petrassi negli anni del fascismo," 461.

upon in Chapter One. The likes of Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643), Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) and Palestrina made impressions on Petrassi that continued to emerge throughout his compositional career and redirect him to the styles of the past. Even as Professor of Composition, Petrassi avoided analyses of post-serialist composers like Anton Webern (1883-1945), and chose, instead, to emphasize more traditional styles by returning to the roots of his own musical inspiration. Beecroft commented that Petrassi guided his students to “a lot of medieval music, early Gesualdo and things of this kind, early Italian music.”²³⁴ The impact of plainsong and sixteenth-century polyphony will be identified later in this chapter when analysing Petrassi’s music. With this influence established, the remainder of this section will focus on the musicians who shaped Petrassi’s aesthetic style after his studies at the Schola Cantorum. This profusion of techniques formed a unique musical language that Petrassi used in response to the rise and fall of Fascism in Italy.

Despite the political situation, the Italian fine arts scenes were exposed to foreign influences that passed freely throughout the country. There existed an artistic freedom in the early 1930s, whereby artists could embrace and implement non-Italian influence. Although the regime touted Nationalism, Mussolini’s government was at first highly tolerant of foreign art.²³⁵ Before artistic liberties were truncated, Petrassi recalled, “we in Rome, at least, heard music of all kinds”²³⁶. Petrassi experienced his first hearing of Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire* in 1924 while he was still an employee at the music shop in Rome. The store managers gave him leave to attend the performance, which had been organized by none other than Casella. Petrassi recalled, “Assistetti, non ci capii nulla, ma rimasi molto traumatizzato dal fatto di essere messo in contatto

²³⁴ Beecroft, interview.

²³⁵ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 166.

²³⁶ Ibid., 140.

con una visione della musica del tutto estranea, completamente diversa da tutte quelle che fino allora avevo frequentato.”²³⁷ (“I witnessed, I did not understand anything, but I was very traumatized by the fact of being put in contact with a totally foreign vision of music, completely different from all those which until then I had attended.”) This uncertainty of Schoenberg’s music remained throughout Petrassi’s life, but it stimulated enough curiosity for Petrassi to later experiment with new techniques.

Entering the conservatory was to leave behind the familiarity of the sixteenth-century world. Petrassi temporarily put to rest the spirits of Palestrina, and embraced the dynamics of contemporary innovation. The likes of Casella and Respighi introduced him to a new music, although he described his earlier attempts at incorporating these new styles as “chaotic”; accordingly, Petrassi refused publication of his works before 1931, except for *Canti della Campagna Romana* (1927), a collection of folk-songs for voice and piano, and *Siciliana e Marcetta* (1930), a work for piano and four hands.²³⁸ Ironically, it was one of his unpublished works, *Tre cori per coro e orchestra* (1932), that captured the attention of Casella. *Tre cori* was written as Petrassi’s graduation piece from the conservatory, and its performance marked the beginning of his relationship with Casella:

Rimase molto impressionato, volle conoscermi, si congratulò immediatamente. La cosa accadeva nel luglio 1932, e nell’ottobre mi invitò a casa sua. Così è cominciata una frequentazione che è durata tutta la vita e dalla quale ho tratto benefici immensi, perché, pur non avendo studiato con lui, si interessò sempre più alla mia musica aumentando via via la sua considerazione per me. E questa considerazione la esprime anche quando fece parte della giuria del concorso internazionale del sindacato fascista dei musicisti che premiò la mia *Partita per orchestra*.²³⁹

He was very impressed, he wanted to know me, he congratulated me immediately. [This all] happened in July 1932, and in October he invited me to his house. Thus it began a relationship that has lasted a lifetime and from which I have drawn immense benefits,

²³⁷ Restagno, “Una biografia raccontata dall’autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno,” 16.

²³⁸ Waterhouse, “The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940),” 783.

²³⁹ Restagno, “Una biografia raccontata dall’autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno,” 12.

because, despite not having studied with him, he became more and more interested in my music gradually increasing his esteem for me. And this esteem was expressed even when he was part of the jury of the international competition of the Fascist Union of Musicians who rewarded my *Partita* for orchestra.

As their friendship developed, the presence of Casella became more distinct within Petrassi's music. Petrassi described Casella as being "un motore di idee"²⁴⁰ ("an engine of ideas"), and that through him, "mi si aprirono gli occhi, l'intelligenza, cominciai a respirare con polmoni più ampi."²⁴¹ ("I opened my eyes, intelligence, I began to breathe with wider lungs.") The relationship was so meaningful to Petrassi that he dedicated *Il Magnificat* (1939-40) to Casella. Casella is often credited as bringing wider recognition to Petrassi.²⁴² This statement is likely tied to the premiere of Petrassi's *Partita per orchestra*, which Casella conducted. It was well-known that Casella was spellbound by Fascism, yet Petrassi also befriended many anti-Fascist painters. Hence, the political inconsistencies of Petrassi's peers support the idea that Petrassi was indifferent to the political views and behaviours of his associates. The request of political influence to promote one's career was, according to Petrassi, "human rather than immoral"²⁴³; he understood and he accepted that some artists invoked a Fascist spirit for their own gain.

While he was at the conservatory, it was Hindemith who first exerted the most influence upon Petrassi. The complexity of Hindemith's counterpoint and his vibrant rhythms are easily recognized in Petrassi's earlier works; "Mi colpirono soprattutto il ritmo, la vitalità e le ricchezze della struttura del linguaggio hindemithiano."²⁴⁴ ("I was struck especially by the rhythm, the

²⁴⁰ Pozzi, "La mia musica. Intervista di Raffaele Pozzi," 355.

²⁴¹ Michelangelo Zurletti, "Alfredo Casella: Hanno un suono europeo quelle note italiane. Intervista di Michelangelo Zurletti," in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 256. Previously published as "Alfredo Casella: Hanno un suono europeo quelle note italiane," *La Repubblica* (Rome) (9 March 1977).

²⁴² Restagno, "Petrassi, Goffredo," *Grove Music Online*.

²⁴³ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 146.

²⁴⁴ Pozzi, "La mia musica. Intervista di Raffaele Pozzi," 355.

vitality and the richness of Hindemith's language structure.") As if having exhausted his passion, Petrassi explained that his hearing of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* and *Symphonie de Psalmes* in the early 1930s meant that "naturalmente abbandonai Hindemith per Stravinsky"²⁴⁵ ("naturally I left Hindemith for Stravinsky.") It was an allegiance that Petrassi devoted himself to much longer than he did with Hindemith. Stravinsky became a departure from the confines of tradition, and introduced to Petrassi a Neoclassical model that encouraged novel interpretations. For Petrassi, "fu proprio la folgorazione della *Sinfonia di salmi* a determinare la mia devozione per Stravinsky...era quello che incarnava la modernità"²⁴⁶. ("it was the shock of the *Symphony of Psalms* that determined my devotion to Stravinsky...he was the one who embodied modernity"). As he selectively absorbed the influences of his contemporaries, Petrassi amalgamated these styles with what he had learned at the Schola Cantorum to create music that was not representative of one technique, but reflective of many.

Partita per orchestra (1932)

The beginning of Petrassi's career is commonly marked with the first performances of *Partita per orchestra*, although, as mentioned earlier, his ability as a composer had already been recognized with his unpublished work, *Tre Cori. Partita*, a collection of three dance movements that was dedicated "con riconoscenza"²⁴⁷ ("with gratitude") to Bustini, was written in the summer of 1932 for a national competition sponsored by the Fascist Union of Musicians in December of the same year. The competition was an annual event, and was well attended by publishers. The timing of the competition overlapped with the completion of Petrassi's studies,

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 20.

²⁴⁶ Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," 20.

²⁴⁷ Goffredo Petrassi, *Partita per orchestra* (Milan: G. Ricordi, 1946): 1.

and provided an invaluable opportunity for his exposure as an aspiring composer. The competition called for music of two categories, a *partita* and a symphony.²⁴⁸ Although Petrassi states his work should have been titled, *Suite*, socio-political circumstances of the time discouraged the use of foreign words; “La mia composizione avrebbe dovuto chiamarsi *Suite*, ma era il momento della autarchia linguistica che bandiva tutte le parole straniere; dovetti perciò intitolarla *Partita*, termine settecentesco che non mi dispiaceva”.²⁴⁹ (“My composition should have been called *Suite*, but it was the time of linguistic autarky banning all foreign words; I therefore had to entitle it *Partita*, an eighteenth-century term that I did not mind”). Petrassi recognized that the regime’s emphasis to compose *partitas* was driven by nationalistic ambition; “Il termine ‘partita’ rifletteva la volontà del momento di italianizzare tutto”.²⁵⁰ (“The term ‘partita’ reflected the desire at the time to Italianize everything”). Accordingly, Petrassi continued on nationalistic grounds by naming each of the *Partita*’s three movements after traditional Italian dances: *Gagliarda*, *Ciaccona*, and *Giga*. The musical referencing of Italy’s past, particularly with folk music, was becoming popular across the continent. Between the two World Wars, “musical nationalism was ascendant...forays into national folk music traditions or other forms deemed more likely to connect with their audiences.”²⁵¹ While *Partita per orchestra* referenced Italy’s musical past in its titles, the music itself was an amalgamation of the Italian past and present, a formula that catapulted Petrassi ahead of his opponents.

A panel of highly respected composers sat on the competition’s jury, including Casella, Respighi, Bernardino Molinari (1880-1952), and Mussolini’s delegate Giuseppe Mulè (1885-1951) a powerful musician with political influence. *Partita* was awarded first prize and

²⁴⁸ Restagno, “Una biografia raccontata dall’autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno,” 13.

²⁴⁹ Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 42-3.

²⁵⁰ Restagno, “Una biografia raccontata dall’autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno,” 13.

²⁵¹ Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*, 88.

immediately published by Ricordi. Petrassi's success at the competition began a sequence of events that promulgated his name within international music circles. *Partita* proceeded to win an international competition in Brussels, and was then selected to represent Italy at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Amsterdam. He explained, "Tante vincite consecutive mi imposero all'attenzione del mondo musicale internazionale... Così Ernest Ansermet diresse il pezzo a Ginevra, a Buenos Aires e in altre città; Molinari a Roma e a Parigi; Casella ad Amsterdam e così via."²⁵² ("Many consecutive wins compelled me the attention of the international music world... Thus Ernest Ansermet conducted the piece in Geneva, in Buenos Aires and other cities; Molinari in Rome and in Paris; Casella in Amsterdam and so on.") Casella, whose support was vital during this embryonic stage of Petrassi's career, continued to conduct the *Partita* until 1935, bringing Petrassi's music as far east as Moscow.²⁵³

The *Partita*'s debut in Amsterdam at the International Society of Contemporary Music Festival enticed Petrassi to travel abroad for the first time. Once in Amsterdam, he recognized the learning opportunities that travel could bring to a willing artist, and so he extended his itinerary to Brussels and then to Bonn; "Quel viaggio fu anche l'occasione per conoscere un po' meglio quello che succedeva nel mondo internazionale della musica."²⁵⁴ ("That trip was also an opportunity to learn a bit better what was happening in the international world of music.") He also attended the *Partita*'s premiere in Paris in October 1933, under the direction of Molinari. However, despite brilliant reviews, it was an uncomfortable experience for Petrassi who found the language barrier and his own introverted nature to be cumbersome deterrents. Of his time in Paris he recalled, "Non conoscevo Parigi e parlavo male il francese, che avevo studiato alle

²⁵² Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 43.

²⁵³ Fedele D'Amico, "Le opere sinfonico-corali," in *Petrassi*, ed. Enzo Restagno (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1986), 75.

²⁵⁴ Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," 13.

scuole serali; inoltre questa volta ero solo: per la mia timidezza fu una dura prova...stavo sempre ritirato in me stesso.”²⁵⁵ (“I did not know Paris and I spoke bad French, which I had been studying at night school; furthermore this time I was alone: for my shyness it was a test...I was always withdrawn in myself.”) The British press, too, was beginning to take notice. A 1934 article of *The Musical Times* calls attention to the introduction of Petrassi in *La Rassegna*

Musicale:

In the January-February *Rassegna Musicale* Guido M. Pannain calls attention to two young composers: 'Luigi Dallapiccola has written interesting vocal music...Goffredo Petrassi was influenced by Casella, and in a measure by Hindemith. He began with Three Pieces for String Quartet (1929), but did not show much individuality until 1932, when his Three Choral Songs with orchestral accompaniment and his beautiful orchestral Partita made his name known.’²⁵⁶

The sudden success overwhelmed Petrassi. He confessed:

Le mie reazioni in quel momento erano molto emotive...sono stato ancora allievo del Conservatorio...Ricordo ancora con un sentimento molto patetico che avevo vinto questo concorso, ero stato scelto per il festival di Amsterdam, e quindi ero tutto un ribollire dentro di me di emozioni...dicevo tra me e me: <<Ma guarda un po', mi succedono tutte queste cose straordinarie...>> Erano emozioni molto intense che per un po' di tempo mi impedirono di comporre; poi cominciai a interrogarmi: <<Perché avviene tutto questo?>>²⁵⁷

My reactions were very emotional at that time...I was still a student at the Conservatory...I still remember with a very pathetic feeling that I had won this contest, I had been chosen for the festival in Amsterdam, and so it was all a ferment of emotions within me...I said to myself: 'But look a little, all of these amazing things happening to me...' They were very intense emotions that for a bit of time prevented me from composing; then I began to question myself: 'Why is all of this happening?'

For Petrassi, his winning at the regime's national competition began a chain reaction that propelled his music beyond Italian borders and brought international acclaim and recognition.

²⁵⁵ Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 81.

²⁵⁶ M.D. Calvocoressi, "Two Young Italian Composers," *The Musical Times* 75, no. 1094 (April 1934): 33.

²⁵⁷ Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," 12.

The timing of the *Partita* occurred alongside the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome. This is not to say that all works composed in 1932 are stamped with Fascist insignia, but that the *Partita*'s celebratory debut raises questions as to why this work was regarded so favourably at a time of Fascist bravado. The tenth anniversary and the *Partita* also coincided with the issuing of Toni's *Manifesto of Italian Musicians for the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century Romantic Art*, a document that proclaimed the superiority of Romanticism and Italian tradition. Toni's *Manifesto* was understood as a backlash against progressive composers, and created a pandemonium within the Italian musical community. Mussolini favoured the modernists, a gesture that dismissed what he may have perceived as outdated and stagnant Italian art. The tenth anniversary of the March on Rome was celebrated with an exhibition that commemorated past victories in the regime's history; afterwards, general restriction and censorship were announced, as well as a demand for support from intellectuals.²⁵⁸ For the regime to publically recognize and award a composition like Petrassi's *Partita* at this time was to make a statement of what exemplified good Fascist music.

Partita demonstrated Petrassi's ambition to compose a new music that honoured Italian heritage while introducing contemporary developments, an approach that aligned itself with Fascist ideology. To integrate Neoclassicism within one's music was to unite oneself, either knowingly or unknowingly, with the regime. Both Neoclassicism and Fascism became representations of "order and 'reactionary revolution'", and were advocated by Fascist enthusiasts like Casella.²⁵⁹ In turn, Petrassi's alliance with Casella and his practice of Neoclassicism contributed to the political colouring of his *Partita*. Neoclassicism broadened Petrassi's musical vocabulary, and during this period, he identified himself as a Neoclassicist,

²⁵⁸ Thomson, "Goffredo Petrassi and the Phantoms of Fascism," 288.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

“ero già molto attratto dal neoclassicismo”²⁶⁰. (“I was already very attracted to Neoclassicism”.)

With his *Partita*, Petrassi repurposed modern styles, like jazz, within each of his three traditional dance movements. While jazz remained controversial politically, as some thought it to be offensive to Italian tradition,²⁶¹ Petrassi emphasized, “Il neoclassicismo non era inteso come semplice ricalco di forme antiche...ma nel senso di riversare dentro queste forme tutta l’attualità; quindi per me non era niente di straordinario adoperare il saxofono...il jazz ce l’aveva riproposto come una novità.”²⁶² (“Neoclassicism was not intended as a simple tracing of ancient forms...but rather as pouring everything new into these forms; so for me, it was nothing out of the ordinary to use the saxophone...Jazz had repurposed it as a novelty.”) Accordingly, Petrassi understood Neoclassicism as a movement that surpassed the rediscovery of the cultural past by repurposing contemporary styles, and fusing together modern and traditional techniques. Orchestration and form were only some of the ways that *Partita* was an expression of Neoclassicism.

In each of the three movements, Petrassi adhered to sonata form, another expression of neoclassical influence; however, he recognized that a modern application of this structure yielded limitless occasions for creativity. Sonata form housed his *Partita*, but it was Petrassi’s use of rhythm that added substance and modernity to an otherwise conventional model:

Ma vede, A-B-A è naturalmente la forma elementare; dalla forma A-B-A si può anche sviluppare la forma-sonata, nel senso che, posso precisare, ci sarà un A1 e un A2, poi ci sarà un B, ci sarà uno sviluppo e una ripresa: insomma la forma elementare dà luogo a tante altre conseguenze. E queste si prestavano anche a quello che per il momento mi interessava, e che era soprattutto il lato ritmico. E qui si vede nella *Partita* che il ritmo è proprio il fondamento di tutta la musicalità e di tutta la struttura, perché ognuna di queste danze aveva un ritmo particolare e questa era la cosa che mi assicurava una struttura di base. Evidentemente la struttura di base non basta, perché le strutture ritmiche sono state poi riempite con questa freschezza, quest’ impeto giovanile, con questa voglia di fare musica.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 94.

²⁶¹ Billi, *Goffredo Petrassi*, 197.

²⁶² Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 95.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 96-7.

But you see, A-B-A is of course the basic form; the A-B-A- form can also develop the sonata form, in which sense, I can specify, there will be an A1 and an A2, then there will be a B, there will be a development and a reprise: in short the basic form gives rise to many other consequences. And these also lent themselves to that which I was interested in at the time, and that was above all the rhythmic side. And here we see in the *Partita* that the rhythm is really the foundation of all the musicality and of the whole structure, because each of these dances had a special rhythm and this was the thing that assured a basic structure. Clearly, the basic structure is not enough, because the rhythmic structures were then filled with this freshness, this youthful impetus, with this desire to make music.

While jazz inflections are notable throughout the *Partita*, it is the rhythmic influence of Hindemith that is most pronounced. Petrassi gravitated towards Hindemith's music, and the aggressive and motoric rhythms, which were typical of Hindemith at that time, are driving forces throughout each movement. It was a temporary infatuation that saturated Petrassi's music in the early 1930s, and was palpable to music critics of the *Partita*: "His endeavor to extend the range of functional concords in [*Partita per orchestra*] a free tonal framework of diatonic instead of chromatic implications discloses points of contact with Stravinsky's and especially Hindemith's idiom."²⁶⁴ Despite Petrassi's well-known devotion to Stravinsky, and in opposition to the critique above, Petrassi repeatedly underlined that, "Nella *Partita* non c'è influesso stravinskiano."²⁶⁵ ("In the *Partita* there is no influence of Stravinsky.")

In the first movement, *Gagliarda*, the orchestra begins homophonically with an angular eighth-note rhythm that is separated by eighth-note rests. This uniformity is interrupted when, against the orchestra, the trumpets dance the first subject in patters of eighths and triplets, alternating between stepwise motion and melodic intervals of a fourth. Independently, these lines generate a sense of haste, but together, their counterpoint develops an anxiety and a discomfort, not just rhythmically but with their use of dissonance, too. One need only examine the first six measures between the trumpets and the pianoforte, as shown below in an orchestral reduction, to

²⁶⁴ John S. Weissmann, "Current Chronicle: Italy," *The Musical Quarterly* 39, no.2 (April 1953): 261.

²⁶⁵ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 97.

detect this agitated energy (Example 4.1). However, Petrassi does not allow listeners the time to become accustomed to these jarring sounds. Instead, beginning in measure six, the trombones abruptly vanish and the remaining instruments, excluding the flutes, English horn, and bass clarinets, begin a smooth and stately melody marked *pesante*. These weighted quarter notes soon give way to brief gusts of eighth-note scaled passages, most notably in the strings (Example 4.1 and Example 4.2) before arriving at yet another new idea in measure 10. This rapid transmission of ideas is suggestive of multiple participants in a fervent conversation; there is little time for one participant to voice an opinion before another idea is being stated. *Gagliarda* continues to thrust forward while the background texture builds and transforms; it is much like Mussolini's reassembly of Italy, although this was not suggested by Petrassi. Then, the music suddenly softens, and a new ambiance begins.

Example 4.1: *Partita per orchestra, Gagliarda* (mm. 1 to 6)²⁶⁶

al mio maestro Alessandro Bustini, con riconoscenza

Partita per orchestra I

G. Petrassi

Gagliarda
Mosso e energico
I. II. a 2

3 Trombe in Do

Pianoforte

Partita per orchestra by Goffredo Petrassi
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²⁶⁶ Petrassi, *Partita per orchestra*, 1.

Example 4.2: *Partita per orchestra, Gagliarda* (mm. 6 to 10)²⁶⁷

Gagliarda
Mosso e energico ♩ = 120

Partita per orchestra I

G. Petrassi

(2) Violini I
pesante

(2) Violini II
pesante

(2) Viole
uniti

Violoncelli
uniti

Contrabbassi
uniti

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In Example 4.3, the alto saxophone begins a hypnotic melody, marked *dolce espressivo*, and gives way to an impish character. The rhythmic punches have dispersed, and this slurred melody that wavers between semitones sounds somewhat improvised and seductive. Against the alto saxophone's solo, the strings quietly accent the off-beat in small rhythmic figures with the occasional burst from the brass and then the woodwinds. It exemplifies Petrassi's talent of allocating an individuality to each instrument, while maintaining a sense of unity as a whole. As expressed in *The Musical Quarterly*, "the most significant feature of the Partita is the extremely effective display of his contrapuntal gifts"²⁶⁸. Between the expressive saxophone melodies and its varying rhythmic patterns, there is an impulsive feel that is reminiscent of jazz, particularly against the predictable pulse of the strings. However, this idea of jazz is more than a probable interpretation by listeners; it was in fact an intentional suggestion made by the composer.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 1-2.

²⁶⁸ Weissmann, "Current Chronicle," 261.

Petrassi did verify the nuance of jazz that is detected in his music, both rhythmically and instrumentally, but he also stressed that jazz was not a distinct style for him:

Non è stato mai pronunciato. Del jazz probabilmente ho preso, appunto, soltanto questi suggerimenti timbrici che mi interessavano e qualche larvato andamento ritmico, ma niente di più. Ossia, non mi sono mai calato nel jazz...[perché] verso tutte le cose di moda io sono molto restio e molto guardingo.²⁶⁹

It was never pronounced. Of jazz I probably took, in fact, only these suggestions of timbre that interested me and some disguised rhythmic pattern, but nothing more. That is, I have never fallen into jazz...[because] towards all things in fashion I am very reluctant and very cautious.

Overall, *Gagliarda* refuses submission to one technique by expressing a myriad of past and contemporary influences, a method that is also apparent in the *Partita*'s second and third movements, *Ciaccona* and *Giga*.

²⁶⁹ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 95-6.

Example 4.3: *Partita per orchestra, Gagliarda* (mm. 77 to 85)²⁷⁰

Gagliarda Partita per orchestra

G. Petrassi

Meno Mosso

Ob. Fl.

C. i. p

Sxf. C. p

Mi mf (dolce) espress.

Trb. pp

Do Fg.

Trbn. Cr. Fa. IV

Vni

Vle pizz.

Vc. p

Cb. pizz.

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It is likely that the *Partita*'s energy, modern flair, and its reincarnation of Italian idioms gave reason for the regime's attraction to his music. It was a blending of the principles materialized in propaganda, and a demonstration of the Fascist art desired by Mussolini, as outlined in the propaganda booklet, *Mussolini musicista*. The opposing characteristics of Fascism, namely tradition, violence and iconoclasm, are manifested in the *Partita* in what has

²⁷⁰ Petrassi, *Partita per orchestra*, 13-14.

been described as an “almost overwhelming brashness and athleticism”²⁷¹. This same energy was then magnified and channeled into Petrassi’s *Concerto per orchestra* (1933-4), the first of eight concerti. Of his first concerto, Petrassi acknowledged “che riprendeva lo slancio vitale della *Partita* ma in modo più sfacciato, più aperto, più scenografico.”²⁷² (“that it took the life force of the *Partita* but in a bolder, more open, more dramatic way.”) In 1976, Petrassi acknowledged in a seminar that the violent nature of his *Concerto* was stimulated by Fascist culture:

Questo *Concerto* dimostra una padronanza, una spavalderia, una sicurezza di mezzi e di quello che si vuol dire addirittura oscena. È così violenta questa sicurezza, questa improntitudine, che a ripensarci c’è quasi da vergognarsene... Questa certezza è una certezza astratta... e che probabilmente corrispondeva al momento storico di allora: era un clima fascista quello nel quale io vivevo...²⁷³

This *Concerto* demonstrates a mastery, a swagger, a confidence of means of what might even be called obscene. This confidence is so violent, this impudence, that thinking about it there is some shame... This certainty is an abstract certainty... and it probably corresponded to a historical moment of the time: it was the Fascist time in which I was living...

The press, however, responded to the energy as an overstimulation of ideas, and commended Petrassi for demonstrating an early mastery of the orchestra:

More recently there has been the biennial National Review of modern Italian music. At the first of these concerts the most interesting work was a 'Concerto for Orchestra' by Petrassi. This young composer belongs to the 'pure music,' or more precisely the 'non-programme music' school. The first movement is made monotonous by its barbarously regular rhythm - a tendency common among many so-called purists of today. In the second the composer has committed some youthful indiscretions with the tuba. But the work as a whole shows that Petrassi has plenty of ideas (perhaps too many), and an exceptional understanding of the modern orchestra.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Thomson, “Goffredo Petrassi and the Phantoms of Fascism,” 288.

²⁷² Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 44.

²⁷³ Goffredo Petrassi, “Seminario di composizione,” in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 132. Previously published as “Seminario di composizione,” *Chigiana* 33, New Series, no. 13 (1976): 307-329.

²⁷⁴ Harry Beard, “Musical Notes from Abroad: Rome,” *The Musical Times* 76, no. 1107 (May 1935): 461.

For Petrassi to demonstrate such brazen idioms in his music was likely a subconscious amalgamation of artistic, social, and political influences, especially when acknowledging his own philosophy on art and life:

Tutto quanto avviene in arte non può dissociarsi dalla vita complessiva del mondo. L'arte riflette la vita dell'uomo e della società in cui essa vive...Così la vita dello spirito non è mai avulsa dalla vita reale ma palpita e soffre con essa.²⁷⁵

Everything that happens in art cannot be dissociated from the overall life of the world. Art reflects the life of man and the society in which he lives...Thus, the life of the mind is never divorced from real life, but pulsates and suffers with it.

From this statement, the effect of politics on Petrassi's artistry is reinforced. These works are not, however, an appeal to the regime for public favour. The *Partita* may have become even more attractive after its 1933 performance at the International Society of Contemporary Music festival in Amsterdam. Not only was the *Partita* the only Italian work performed, but it was conducted by Petrassi's close friend Casella, who describes the opportunity with great pleasure in his memoirs.²⁷⁶ Martin explains, "The habit of seeing composers as national representatives was widespread and deeply rooted, held in common across Europe by music critics, audiences, and many composers themselves."²⁷⁷ Therefore, the *Partita* as a solo representation of Italian music, and its conducting by Casella, an enthusiastic supporter of Fascism, were appealing to a regime that sought an international reputation of strength and glory.

Salmo IX (1934-36)

Petrassi's decision to musically laud the regime occurred between 1934 and 1936 with his first major choral work, *Salmo IX* (Ninth Psalm). While *Partita per orchestra* spotlighted Petrassi as

²⁷⁵ Petrassi, "Sulla musica religiosa," 82.

²⁷⁶ Alfredo Casella, *Music in My Time: The Memoirs of Alfredo Casella*, trans and ed. Spencer Norton (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 196-7.

²⁷⁷ Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*, 88.

one of Italy's young and leading composers, it was *Salmo IX* that many recognize as his first true masterpiece. Both audiences and critics received *Salmo IX* with an enthusiasm that had not been seen since the success of his *Partita*, thus *Salmo IX* became Petrassi's most significant work of the 1930s.²⁷⁸ It is an interesting observation that both landmark achievements of Petrassi's career at this time would be two regime-affiliated works. His *Partita* was renowned because of a national competition sponsored by the Fascist Union of Musicians, and then *Salmo IX*, a work that supported the regime, propelled his name to even greater heights of fame.

Salmo's first performance was conducted by Vittorio Gui (1885-1975) on 18 December 1936 at the Teatro Eiar in Turin, and then by Molinari in Rome in 1938. Petrassi recalled:

Nella mia attività di compositore, debbo ricordare il *Salmo IX*, che fu eseguito...con un successo inaspettato per un'opera del genere. È accaduto che nella pausa minima di stacco fra la prima e la seconda parte del *Salmo* sono scoppiate tali acclamazioni e applausi che mi sono dovuto presentare tre volte benché fossimo a metà esecuzione. Poi, alla fine della seconda parte non so quante volte dovetti andare avanti e indietro.²⁷⁹

In my work as a composer, I must remember *Salmo IX*, which was executed...with an unexpected success for a work of this kind. It happened that in the brief pause between the first and the second parts of the *Salmo* burst these cheers and applause that I had to present [myself] three times while we were in mid-execution. Then, at the end of the second part I do not know how many times I had to go back and forth.

The public's reception of *Salmo IX* was mirrored by music critics, "Psalm IX for chorus, strings, brass, two pianos, and percussion is the masterpiece of this period, a work that [has] assigned Petrassi among the elite of the new music in Italy."²⁸⁰ Like the *Partita*, *Salmo IX* was also decorated with accolades, most notably the San Remo Prize, an award reserved for published works, in 1939. The press announced he was in fact a multi winner, having been awarded both prizes in his category: "The jury of the [San Remo] musical competition decided to withhold the

²⁷⁸ Waterhouse, "The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940)," 793.

²⁷⁹ Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 48.

²⁸⁰ Weissmann, "Current Chronicle," 261.

25,000 lire first prize for lyrical music, and awarded the second prize (15,000 lire) to Ghedini; both prizes for symphonic music, totalling 10,000 lire, go to Petrassi for his Psalm ix.”²⁸¹

Petrassi accredited such competitions and festivals as opportunities for young individuals to be known.²⁸² He, too, took advantage of such occasions to promote himself.

There arises a sacred expectation to *Salmo IX* when one considers Petrassi’s own Catholicism, as well as the word “psalm” in the work’s title. The psalm itself is about God’s power and justice, but considered within historical context, it became a metaphor for Mussolini and Italy. This may appear to be a convenient assumption; metaphors can be abstract and the score is dedicated to his parents. However, a political interpretation is indeed accurate: *Salmo IX*, despite its dedication, is a demonstration of Petrassi’s support of Mussolini.

Obsequious behaviour towards the regime was common practice throughout the interwar years both in Italy and across Europe, but Petrassi’s *Salmo IX* appears to be a genuine celebration of Fascism and Mussolini. His decision to set the *Ninth Psalm* to music occurred in 1934 at a time when the pandemonium of Socialist Giacomo Matteotti’s murder had finally been quieted, and there was a general acceptance of Italian Fascism; Mussolini held Europeans spellbound, and there was a sense of peace and optimism within Italy.²⁸³ Hitler, too, was enticed. In the same year as *Salmo IX*’s completion, Mussolini announced an official partnership with Nazi Germany. The Rome-Berlin Axis was declared on 1st November 1936, and was the ambition of a new German-Italian culture. Together, the two dictatorships proclaimed the superiority of culture, their culture, and that “the German-Italian cultural Axis was not the enemy of European culture,

²⁸¹ “Musical Notes from Abroad,” *The Musical Times* 81, no. 1168 (June 1940): 282.

²⁸² Fausto Razzi, “A colloquio con Goffredo Petrassi. Intervista di Fausto Razzi,” in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 380. Previously published as “A colloquio con Goffredo Petrassi,” *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 34, New Series, no. 2 (April – June 2000): 221-232.

²⁸³ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 108.

but might well be its salvation.”²⁸⁴ Although Petrassi at first insisted on other readings, after World War II he confessed to an intentional political slant, thereby affirming nationalistic suspicions of this work. He elucidated:

As for me, I never gave real, outright support to the regime except in one sole case – and a rather ambiguous one at that. I wrote a *Ninth Psalm* for chorus and orchestra, whose text invokes a legislator, in order that men recognize their responsibility as men. Mussolini was symbolized by this legislator. But it must be remembered that I had this idea in 1934...popular consensus towards fascism was at its maximum in Italy and when international infatuation with and attention for Mussolini was at its height. Still, to avoid having people think that I was trying to flatter or glorify a specific individual, I dedicated the *Psalm* to my parents. It was easy, obviously, to identify Mussolini in the law-maker; but there was also the idea of personal human responsibility – an idea I always continued to pursue in successive works, during and after the war.²⁸⁵

This statement raises questions as to whether *Salmo IX* is, as Petrassi describes, an ambiguous work, or if Petrassi hoped for ambiguity after recognizing its overt political features. The inclusion of a dedication to his parents softens or allays accusations of political flattery, but a political interpretation is inescapable. Petrassi said he was compelled by “un grado di necessità”²⁸⁶ (“a degree of necessity”) when choosing a religious text, and that each text must be justified; “ho scelto sempre dei testi indicativi di qualche cosa, indicativi di pensieri o di emozioni o di altro, sono testi che, perché raggiungano lo scopo, devono essere intesi.”²⁸⁷ (“I always chose texts indicative of something, indicative of thoughts or emotions or other, they are texts that, because they achieve their purpose, they are to be understood.”) With this knowledge, there is no room for ambiguity. It was only in hindsight that Petrassi admitted Mussolini’s presence in his work, leading one to question his retrospective objectivity and what other secrets are concealed behind the dedication to his parents. Like an autobiography, a bias is unavoidable

²⁸⁴ Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*, 79.

²⁸⁵ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 146.

²⁸⁶ Restagno, “Una biografia raccontata dall’autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno,” 22.

²⁸⁷ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 69.

when a hero tells his own tale; similarly, *Salmo IX* is a chapter of Petrassi's musical autobiography.

The psalm gives praise to God, the righteous judge, thanks Him for destroying the wicked, and asks that He rise before man to instill fear and to judge all nations. In the Bible, the psalm begins with a dedication, "To the leader,"²⁸⁸ consequently changing the psalm's tone. This psalm is not a personal reflection or a series of literary verses about someone; it is a proclamation to someone, to God, or to someone who is God-like. In turn, Petrassi's musical setting of this psalm speaks directly to Mussolini, or to God about Mussolini and his regime. The description of events in the psalm can be likened to the repercussions of World War I. Similarly, the closing verse is effortlessly read as a plea for a legislator - or more specifically, for Mussolini - to resurrect a war-torn Italy. An English translation of the *Ninth Psalm* is given below, but it must be noted that Petrassi was staunchly traditional in this regard and adhered to Latin, the language of the Roman Catholic Church, at least pre Vatican II:

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.
I will be glad and exult in you;
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

When my enemies turned back,
they stumbled and perished before you.
For you have maintained my just cause;
you have sat on the throne giving righteous judgment.

You have rebuked the nations,
you have destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name forever and ever.
The enemies have vanished in everlasting ruins;
their cities you have rooted out;
the very memory of them has perished.

But the Lord sits enthroned forever,
he has established his throne for judgment.

²⁸⁸ Ps. 9 (New Revised Standard Edition).

He judges the world with righteousness;
He judges the people with equity.

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed,
A stronghold in times of trouble.
And those who know your name put their trust in you,
for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.

Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion.
Declare his deeds among the peoples.
For he who avenges blood is mindful of them;
he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

Be gracious to me, O Lord.
See what I suffer from those who hate me;
you are the one who lifts me up from the gates of death,
so that I may recount all your praises,
and, in the gates of daughter Zion,
rejoice in your deliverance.

The nations have sunk in the pit that they made;
In the net that they hid has their own foot been caught.
The Lord has made himself known, he has executive judgment;
the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.

The wicked shall depart to Sheol,
all the nations that forget God.
For the needy shall not always be forgotten,
nor the hope of the poor perish forever.

Rise up, O Lord! Do not let mortals prevail;
let the nations be judged before you.
Put them in fear, O Lord;
Let the nations know that they are only human.²⁸⁹

Petrassi expunged any suspicions of fallacy about the selection of text when he said, “Per quanto questo qui del Salmo, come Le ho detto prima, [il testo] non è del tutto casuale, è anche un po’ intenzionale.”²⁹⁰ (“As for this *Psalm*, as I said before, the text is not entirely random, it is even a little intentional.”) As cited earlier, Petrassi confirmed the presence of Mussolini as a legislator

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 113.

in the final verse. However, to be just, it must also be mentioned that Petrassi was tenacious about differentiating between legislator and dictator; “non intendevo affatto glorificare il legislatore in quanto dittatore: la differenza è appunto tra legislatore e dittatore, esplicitata nel versetto finale.”²⁹¹ (“I did not mean at all to glorify the legislator as a dictator: the difference is in fact between the legislator and the dictator, [which is] clarified in the final verse.”) In retrospect, this distinction excuses Petrassi’s support by emphasizing that he supported Mussolini as a democratic leader, not as a tyrant who inflicted suffering and oppression on his people.

Petrassi was not a Futurist, but there are characteristics of his writing that do reflect Mussolini’s promotion of certain Futurist principles in Fascist ideology, namely youth, vigour and power. Of his *Salmo IX*, Petrassi said, “on the whole it presents many youthful characteristics of immediacy, of strength...and even cockiness”.²⁹² This pomp and circumstance also reflected a zealous Italian public. Petrassi wrote:

Salmo IX non era un testo qualunque: già nella scelta si riflettevano i sentimenti che muovevano il mio animo e che trovavano rispondenza nel clima politico-sociale che si respirava in quel momento. Questo *Salmo* voleva, in certo senso, rendere testimonianza di quella monumentalità fittizia che si presentava allora ai nostri occhi di grandi ingenui.²⁹³

The *Ninth Psalm* was not any text: already in the choice [of text] was reflected the feelings that moved my heart and they found correspondence in the socio-political climate that reigned at the time. This *Psalm* wanted, in a sense, to bear witness of that fictitious monumentality that presented itself to our large, naïve eyes.

Although its political affiliation has been stressed, *Salmo IX* is also momentous within Petrassi’s repertoire because it marks the end of a stylistic period for him. Specifically, of his landmark works, *Salmo IX* was his final diatonic composition before he transitioned to a style

²⁹¹ Ibid., 108.

²⁹² Billi, *Goffredo Petrassi*, 117.

²⁹³ Petrassi, “Seminario di composizione,” 132.

that attempted a balance between diatonic and chromatic spheres.²⁹⁴ *Salmo IX* is a work in two parts, written for chorus, brass, percussion, two pianos and strings. Generally, the orchestration is less sparse than the *Partita*, such as the omission of all woodwind instruments, but *Salmo IX* is more theatrical. The brass ensemble, for example, comprises fourteen instruments: six horns, four trumpets, three trombones, and one bass tuba. As Lele D'Amico wrote in *La Rassegna Musicale* (1937), which was then quoted by *The Musical Times*, "There are composers whose main preoccupation is with texture and idiom: Chopin, Debussy and Ravel, for instance. Petrassi is the very reverse. No striking or in any way unusual style-features are discoverable in his Psalm. He is content with using the ordinary vocabulary of music, and innovative in the way he uses his materials rather than in the selection of them."²⁹⁵

In Part I, there is an immediate demonstration of extremes, notably the urgency of the choral writing, the contrast between a hushed orchestra and a noticeably present choir, and the exploitation of dynamics. The chorus begins homophonically, while the orchestra remains almost entirely silent, excluding an accented eighth note on the first beat in the first measure and an accented eighth note on the first beat in the third measure. The commencement is alarming and dramatic: a sudden chord and then the immediate domination of the choir. All parts are marked *fortissimo* until the sound drops to a *piano* marking in measure five, only to return to a *fortissimo* again in measure 9 (Example 4.4). Petrassi leans on the expressive features of Gregorian chant to meet the emotional demands of the psalm by incorporating recitative-like, syllabic and melismatic vocal styles.²⁹⁶ There is a doubling of voices in this example, soprano with tenor and alto with bass, and movement is primarily stepwise and with the characteristic melodic intervals

²⁹⁴ Waterhouse, "The Emergence of Italian Music (Up to 1940)," 793.

²⁹⁵ M.D. Calvocoressi, "Music in the Foreign Press," *The Musical Times* 79, no. 1147 (September 1938): 676-77.

²⁹⁶ Weissmann, *Goffredo Petrassi*, 22.

of fourths and fifths. Such vocal writing is representative of his years at the Schola Cantorum where he was immersed in sixteenth-century Italian compositional practice. Contemporary scholars agree that “chiunque conosca Palestrina...troverà nell’opera di Petrassi molte analogie significative”²⁹⁷. (“anyone who knows Palestrina...will find in the works of Petrassi many meaningful similarities”).

²⁹⁷ Fedele D’Amico, “Petrassi e il suo *Salmo*,” *Quaderni della Rassegna Musicale* (1938): 365.

Example 4.4: Salmo IX, I Parte (mm. 1 to 9)²⁹⁸

Salmo IX

ai miei genitori
I Parte
Goffredo Petrassi

Mosso

The musical score is written for a full orchestra and vocal soloists. The instruments and voices are listed on the left: Corni in Fa (1-2), Corni in Fa (3-4), Corni in Fa (5-6), Trombe in Do (1-2), Trombe in Do (3-4), 2 Tromboni, III Trombone Basso Tuba, Timpani (3), Tam - Tam, Gran Cassa, Soprani, Contralti, Tenori, Bassi, 2 Pianoforti, Violini I and II, Viole, Violoncelli, and Contrabbassi. The vocal parts (Soprani, Contralti, Tenori, Bassi) have lyrics in Italian. The score is in 8/8 time and features various dynamics (ff, pp, p, f) and articulations (accents, slurs). The tempo is marked *Mosso*. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Salmo IX by Goffredo Petrassi
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²⁹⁸ Goffredo Petrassi, *Salmo IX* (Milan: G. Ricordi, 1937): 1.

The honouring of Italian tradition emerged as it did with *Partita*, but this time with vocal techniques that served as a nod to his years at the Schola Cantorum. Music critics easily detected these references, “His treatment of the singing voice shows his relation to the traditions of Italian music most convincingly in the essentially vocal inspiration of his melodic invention. The influence of Gregorian chant in particular is easily recognizable at the root of his vocal style”²⁹⁹. Petrassi explained that the idea of writing a piece for choir and orchestra was a private affair, an exorcism of childhood ghosts; “dovevo dare voce a questi fantasmi giovanili. Li dovevo acquietare”³⁰⁰. (“I had to give a voice to these ghosts of my youth. I had to quell them”).

Alongside the stylistic references to Roman polyphonic tradition, there existed a deeper, autobiographical reference for Petrassi. He recounted how his chorister days affected the aesthetics of *Salmo IX*:

Dai dieci ai dodici anni, infatti, mi mandarono a cantare nelle basiliche, e venni a contatto con quel mondo di architetture e sonorità, con le sontuosità barocche, avendone influenze psicologiche incancellabili...Allora era vero: in *Salmo IX*... ritorna una mia infanzia di visioni, odori, avventure.³⁰¹

Between ten to twelve years old, in fact, they sent me to sing in the basilicas, and I came in contact with the world of architecture and sound, with the Baroque splendour, having indelible psychological influences...Therefore it was true: *Salmo IX*...returns to my childhood sights, smells and adventures.

Accordingly, the music that pervaded Petrassi’s early adolescence served as a model for his own choral writing, as well as a catalyst for his own artistic emancipation. In his words, *Salmo IX* was

²⁹⁹ Weissmann, “Current Chronicle,” 261.

³⁰⁰ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 105-106.

³⁰¹ Alberto Bevilacqua, “Goffredo Petrassi: Le due facce della città. Ricordi e pensieri su Roma di Alberto Bevilacqua,” in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 245. Previously published as “Goffredo Petrassi: Le due facce della città,” *Il Corriere della Sera* (20 May 1976).

“il momento della liberazione dai traumi giovanili”³⁰² (“the moment of liberation from the traumas of youth”) and “tutte le aspirazioni di espressione che nutrivo in quel tempo.”³⁰³ (“an expression of all the aspirations that I harboured at that time.”)

Petrassi’s experience as a chorister and his receptivity of Renaissance influence blended together to accentuate the sentiments of *Salmo*’s text. Example 4.5 illustrates how Petrassi layered the voices, so that the staggered entries became a gradual building of sound, much like an anticipation of the crescendo indicated above the first soprano’s entry. The Latin text, “et sperent in Te”, translated as “let them trust in You”, becomes more embellished and melismatic with each repetition until Petrassi uses augmentation to draw out each syllable via quarter notes and half notes. Although *Salmo IX* transitions through mixed time signatures, this passage marks the first appearance of a 5/4 time signature. Each voice begins with a quarter rest, and emphasizes the third beat and the word, “sperent” (“trust”). As the phrase finishes for the first time, Petrassi stresses the significance of the word “Te” (“You”) in three ways: “Te” is placed on the opening and strong beat of the following measure; “Te” is sung as a half note or a whole note, a contrast from the preceding eighth notes; “Te” achieves the highest pitch within each voice. This creates a series of aural peaks for the listener. The first and second altos reach their apex at a B, and the second soprano builds upon this intensity by ending higher on a D; however, it is the first soprano that completes this ascent by singing a *forte* “Te” as a whole note on the G# above the treble clef. Petrassi elaborated this model and continued the staggered voice entries as “et sperent in Te” is repeated. With such techniques, Petrassi showcased his ability to write for and to understand the emotional capacity of the human voice. His vocal writing is musically

³⁰² Enrico Cavallotti, “Petrassi, il curioso della musica ‘seria’.” Intervista di Enrico Cavallotti,” in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 264. Previously published as “Petrassi, il curioso della musica ‘seria’,” *Il Tempo* (7 February 1978).

³⁰³ Goffredo Petrassi, “Seminario di composizione,” 132.

Salmo IX, composed one year following his hearing of *Oedipus Rex*, is not surprising. The effect of *Oedipus Rex*, however, was not exclusive to Petrassi:

It made a profound, and in many ways seminal impression on Petrassi, and indeed upon the ethos of fascist musicmaking at large...Strauss' impact upon the stylistic practice of fascist music was arguably minimal. Stravinsky's, on the contrary, was inescapable. That Stravinskiy was tough, and that a fascist aesthete had to be tough enough to cope with him, had been clear to Mussolini.³⁰⁵

This outcome was pleasing to the regime, and just as Stravinsky exalted Mussolini, proclaiming in 1930 that he was “il ‘salvatore dell’Italia [...] e dell’Europa’”³⁰⁶ (“the saviour of Italy...and of Europe”), the regime exalted him. Stravinsky's veneration of the regime was rooted in his own terrors that the Bolsheviks would dominate Europe, and in response, he swung forcefully to the right; he welcomed Fascism and even tolerated the National Socialists in Germany.³⁰⁷ This is not to say that Stravinsky was unaware of looming darkness around Fascism in the early 1930s, but that his own politics were no longer weighted by social and moral objectives; self-preservation was his impetus.³⁰⁸ Leftism now meant Bolshevism, and so in its place, Stravinsky desired an order and security, which he found in Fascist Italy under Mussolini's dictatorship.³⁰⁹ Performing and conducting regularly throughout Italy, it has been recorded that Stravinsky even joyfully fulfilled a request to perform the Fascist hymn, *Giovinezza*, at the start of one of his concerts.³¹⁰ Between 1935 and 1943, the Ministry of Popular Culture authorized performances in state-governed theatres of specific foreign composers. Of twenty-one foreign living composers,

³⁰⁵ Earle and Osmond-Smith, “Masculine Semiotics,” 28.

³⁰⁶ Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, 284.

³⁰⁷ H. Colin Slim, “Stravinsky's Four Star-Spangled Banners and His 1941 Christmas Card,” *The Musical Quarterly* 89, no. 2/3 (Summer-Fall 2006): 395.

³⁰⁸ Stephen Walsh, *Stravinsky: A Creative Spring. Russia and France, 1882-1934* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 521-22.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 522.

³¹⁰ Joan Evans, “Stravinsky's Music in Hitler's Germany,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 533.

Richard Strauss was performed twenty-four times, and Stravinsky was the second most performed living composer with ten performances.³¹¹ Of foreign deceased composers, Wagner eclipsed all composers with 73 performances.³¹² The presence of Strauss and Wagner is predictable given the alliance between Italy and Germany via the Pact of Steel in 1939. However, it was Stravinsky whose influence upon musical life and Petrassi prevailed.

Petrassi's borrowing of Stravinskian gestures, such as rhythmic articulation and repetition of notes, are as noticeable in *Salmo IX*, as they are present in *Oedipus Rex*.³¹³ Petrassi openly discussed his insertion of gestures, while also maintaining the direct effect of *Oedipus Rex* upon his work. He has repeatedly emphasized that, "delle derivazioni stravinskiane...partendo dall'*Oedipus Rex*, non dalla *Sinfonia di Salmi*"³¹⁴. ("of the Stravinskian derivations...[they begin] with *Oedipus Rex*, not *Symphony of Psalms*".) This manifestation of Stravinsky within *Salmo IX* also marks Petrassi's departure from Hindemith's influence. As an homage to Stravinsky, Petrassi inserted "una rievocazione" ("a re-enactment") of musical ideas from the opening of Stravinsky's *Capriccio* for piano and orchestra (1929) at the beginning of *Salmo IX*'s second part.³¹⁵ On this note, Stravinsky's international clout and Petrassi's borrowing of musical gestures bring the work's Fascist affiliation full circle, and intensified the political angle evident in *Salmo IX*. Example 4.6 and Example 4.7 isolate the pianoforte and strings sections of *Salmo IX, II Parte* and Stravinsky's *Capriccio*. Both works utilize octaves in the pianoforte with a bass line that descends by step, while the strings play rising glissandi in thirty-second notes. As Petrassi stated, "del *Capriccio* per pianoforte e orchestra, sono certamente presenti, ad esempio,

³¹¹ Nicolodi, *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, 29.

³¹² Ibid., 30.

³¹³ Billi, *Goffredo Petrassi*, 38.

³¹⁴ Lombardi, *Coversazioni con Petrassi*, 107.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

nel *Salmo IX*.³¹⁶ (“the *Capriccio* for piano and orchestra, is certainly present, for instance, in the *Salmo IX*.”) *Salmo IX*’s blending of Italian tradition and contemporary influence is both a celebration of the past and of the present, and impeccably illustrates an aesthetic sought by the regime.

Example 4.6: *Salmo IX*, II Parte (mm. 1 to 3)³¹⁷

Salmo IX
II Parte

G. Petrassi

Adagio
a due

P.f. *ff secco* *ff*

1 Vni *f* 14 15

2 Vni *f* 14 15

V.le *f* 14 15

V.C. *f* 14 15

C.B. *f* 7 8 9

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³¹⁶ Pozzi, “La mia musica. Intervista di Raffaele Pozzi,” 356.

³¹⁷ Petrassi, *Salmo IX*, 89.

Example 4.7: *Capriccio* (mm. 1 to 3)³¹⁸

Capriccio
I

Igor Stravinsky
1929, revised version 1949

Presto ♩ = 132

Piano

Violini

Viola

Violoncelli

C. Bassi

Ripieni

Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra (Revised 1949) by Igor Stravinsky

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³¹⁸ Igor Stravinsky, *Capriccio* (London: Hawkes & Son, 1952): 1.

Chapter Five: Disillusionment with Fascism and World War II: An Aesthetic Turn

Quando la scrivo, la scrivo sempre con tutto me stesso. Il cammino umano e l'artistico sono segnati da svolte.³¹⁹

- Petrassi

When I write, I write always with all that I am. The human journey and art are marked by turning points.

- Petrassi

Catholicism, Spirituality, and Nihilism

Petrassi's contemporaries and the progression of Italian Fascism have proven influential on his compositional style, and so too did his spiritual departure from Catholicism manifest itself in the aesthetics of his works. As a child, Petrassi's morals and beliefs were founded upon the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. Faith was intrinsic to the Petrassi household, particularly to his mother, and religious practice shaped a traditionally Catholic family. Petrassi commented:

Per quel che mi riguarda sono stato educato in una famiglia religiosa, mia madre era una fervente cattolica e sebbene a quell'epoca ci fossero parvenze di bigottismo che ho sempre rifiutato, ho altresì conservato una religiosità che identifico con la speranza, con un'interiore esigenza di trascendenza. Dunque, anche se non sempre ricorro alla religione, avverto in essa una liberazione dallo sporco che assorbiamo nella vita comune, quotidiana, e proprio questa esigenza di trascendenza in me sempre presente mi ha portato a scrivere le opere religiose che ho scritto.³²⁰

For me personally I was brought up in a religious family, my mother was a devout Catholic and although at the time there were semblances of bigotry which I always refused, I still maintained a religiousness to identify with hope, with an inner need for transcendence. So even if I do not always have recourse to religion, I feel it as a liberation against the contamination that we absorb in everyday life, daily, and just this need for transcendence in me always brought me to write the religious works that I have written.

Outside of his home, Catholic dogma was present and reinforced in his education and at the Schola Cantorum, where the repertoire was often sacred and performed within holy settings. It

³¹⁹ Galliano, "La germinazione della musica nella musica stessa," 366.

³²⁰ Pozzi, "La mia musica. Intervista di Raffaele Pozzi," 360.

was therefore natural that Catholicism imprinted itself on Petrassi's spiritual being, and affected his choice of text for works like *Salmo IX* and *Il Magnificat*, as well as the mirroring of Gregorian chant within his own compositions.

Over time, Petrassi's Catholicism became less rigid, and his spiritual beliefs evolved into a general sense of religiousness. It was a spirituality that escaped the rules of worship, but still offered repose and moral direction throughout his daily living. He believed this state of spirituality was concealed beneath the formalities of organized religions, and that as he removed himself from his perfunctory participation, he discovered a metaphysical presence. He explained:

Io vengo da una famiglia cattolica – questo si sa – e praticamente sono cresciuto nella Schola Cantorum...Ho vissuto tutte le pratiche religiose, quelle pratiche che poi con l'età sono diventate sempre meno frequenti, e quindi anche tutti gli orpelli della religione piano piano sono caduti o sono stati considerati per quello che realmente sono, per una certa loro funzionalità che non ha niente a che vedere con la religione. Quindi una religiosità, una cattolicità che ho praticato e mantenuto, piano piano si è trasformata in un senso religioso. Religiosità del pensiero e religiosità in senso metafisico...È stata una trasformazione che con il tempo mi ha portato...stabilire una differenza fra religione e fede. Oserei dire che sono un religioso con pochissima fede.³²¹

I come from a Catholic family – everyone knows that – and I pretty much grew up in the Schola Cantorum...I have experienced all religious practices, these practices that later with age became increasingly less frequent, and thus even all the frills of religion gradually fell or were considered for what they really are, by a certain functionality that does not have anything to do with religion. Therefore a religiosity, a catholicity that I practiced and maintained, gradually turned into a religious sense. Religiosity of thought and religiosity in the metaphysical sense...It was a transformation that with time has led me ... to establish a difference between religion and faith. Dare I say that I am religious with very little faith.

Although Petrassi continued to identify himself as a religious man, his religiousness negated the divine. In place of a god, he revered ethical principles, and instead of faith, he placed his trust in morality. An authentic artist was a moral man, and a dignified man was governed by morality; “Dico che l'artista deve essere anche un uomo morale...Io sono convinto che la morale debba

³²¹ Restagno, “Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno,” 21.

essere la guida di ogni azione dell'uomo...La morale è la suprema dignità dell'uomo."³²² ("I say that the artist must also be a moral man...I am convinced that morality should be the guide of every human action...Morality is the supreme dignity of man.") Petrassi did not specify any one event that lessened his Catholic practice, but it was likely a blend of philosophical thinking and his own life experiences that founded his own sense of religion. His spirituality empowered his desire for an earthly utopia, whereby justice for humanity was realized and without divine intervention. To explain, he said:

La religione mi aiuta a sperare nella giustizia, non dico nella giustizia divina, ma nella giustizia degli uomini. Spero ardentemente che si possa verificare un momento in cui la giustizia presso gli uomini venga onorata e venga stabilita; e la religione mi aiuta a sperare che questo possa verificarsi un giorno.³²³

Religion helps me to hope for justice, I do not say in the divine justice, but in the justice of men. I hope very much that we can see a time when righteousness before men will be honoured and established; and religion helps me to hope that this will happen one day.

Although this statement was made in 1986, 47 years after the outbreak of World War II, Petrassi's preoccupation with justice was already occurring before the Second World War, as was discussed in the previous chapter regarding *Salmo IX*.

Until the outbreak of the Second World War, Petrassi remained rooted in a spiritual transcendence that was initiated by Catholicism, and then shaped by life and personal reflection. Despite his piety, the actuality of Italy entering another war collapsed his value system. Cynicism billowed and sheathed his spirit with darkness. This metaphorical death of personal values brought him to the edge of nihilistic thinking:

ho attraversato questo periodo con grande ambascia... Lasciare delle cose certe per altre incerte, privarsi di alcuni ideali, non dico rimpiazzarli con degli altri, ma farne a meno, tutto questo mi ha portato per molti anni a una specie di cinismo, a non credere più quasi in nessun valore.³²⁴

³²² Cavallotti, "Musica, arte e morale in Goffredo Petrassi. Conversazione con Enrico Cavallotti," 285.

³²³ Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," 22.

³²⁴ Ibid., 25.

I went through this period with great anguish...To leave certain things for other uncertainties, to deprive yourself of several ideals, I am not saying to replace them with others, but to do without them, all of this led me for many years to a kind of cynicism, not to believe anymore in nearly any values.

This spiritual destruction left him hollow, and composing now served as a sanctuary in which to express his pain. *Coro di morti* (1940-41) is the manifestation of this desolation.

Il Manifesto del razzismo italiano

It is understandable that Italy's return to war would extinguish Petrassi's faith in the regime and in humanity, but it is curious that he remained spiritually intact when two years prior a racial policy was segregating the nation and removing civic privileges from Italian Jews. This is not necessarily to suggest that Petrassi was anti-Semitic, but to examine how Fascist propaganda was able to successfully condition the Italian nation. Anti-Semitism was officially integrated into Fascist ideology in 1938. How Mussolini prepared Italy for racial segregation, and how this affected Petrassi and the arts scene requires critical attention.

Before 1938, Mussolini presented an unprejudiced semblance to the public. His many friends, collaborators, political party members, and even his mistress and official biographer of that time, Margherita Sarfatti (1880-1961)³²⁵, were of Jewish faith, and so it was convincing that Mussolini was a man accepting of Jewish people. Likely as a political strategy, Mussolini repudiated any anti-Semitic elements of Fascism, appeared supportive of Zionism, and during 1933-5 even condemned Nazi Germany and its anti-Semitic principles.³²⁶ However, as he erected this façade, he simultaneously coached journals like *La Tribuna*, *Il Tevere* and *Quadrivio* to

³²⁵ Andrew Stille, "The Double Blind of Italian Jews," in *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule 1922-1945*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 26.

³²⁶ Iael Nidam-Orvieto, "The Impact of Anti-Jewish Legislation on Everyday Life and the Response of Italian Jews, 1938-1943," in *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule 1922-1945*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 160.

publish anti-Semitic articles and to then attest that the beliefs were that of the editors.³²⁷ Why Mussolini introduced an anti-Semitic policy continues to be debated among specialists. Some theories propose that Mussolini was attempting to indulge Hitler or to tighten the relationship between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, while others propose Mussolini was always racist and more violently so than Hitler.³²⁸ Mussolini's conflicting behaviours and the present day's array of theories circulate the same question; without the charisma, without the opportunistic conduct, and without his mastery of political skill, who was Mussolini?

A racial manifesto was issued in July 1938 by the Ministry of Popular Culture after a visit by the Nazi Racial Bureau. An official name was never ascribed to the manifesto, and accordingly, it is commonly referred to as *Il Manifesto del razzismo italiano* (*The Manifesto of Italian Racism*) or as *La Carta della Razza* (*The Charter of the Race*) in literature.³²⁹ It was a document tainted with pseudo-science in which leading university dignitaries declared the exclusion of Jewish people from the Italian race based on biological reasoning: Italians were of Aryan origin and Jewish people were not of Aryan origin. Judaism was not regarded as a faith, but as a race; accordingly, an Italian Christian with Jewish parents was also susceptible to racial profiling because of his heritage. Mussolini justified anti-Semitic principles by borrowing from

³²⁷ Illiano and Sala, "The Politics of Spectacle," 20.

³²⁸ Historians have proposed various theories regarding Mussolini and anti-Semitism. Theories mentioned in this statement have been extracted from the following sources:

Fabio Levi, "Anti-Jewish Persecution and Italian Society," in *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule 1922-1945*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 200.

Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini*, 162, 262.

Michele Sarfatti, "Characteristics and Objectives of the Anti-Jewish Racial Laws in Fascist Italy, 1938-1943," in *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule 1922-1945*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman, trans.

Loredana M. Melissari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 74.

Sandro Servi, "Building a Racial State: Images of the Jew in the Illustrated Fascist Magazine, *La Difesa della Razza*, 1938-1943," in *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule 1922-1945*, ed. Joshua D.

Zimmerman, trans. Antony Shugaar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 148.

Stille, "The Double Blind of Italian Jews," 32.

Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 199, 241-242, 316.

³²⁹ Servi, "Building a Racial State," 150.

the Futurist movement and manipulating certain Futurist concepts. Both Fascists and Futurists were nationalists who exalted violence and opposed democracy; Fascism's birth, in fact, occurred under the influence of Futurism when Marinetti's *Partito Politico Futurista* (*Futurist Political Party*) of 1918 became a part of Mussolini's *Fasci di combattimento* (*Fasci of combat*) in 1919. However, it was the reactionary behaviour of the regime, and the manipulation of their joint ideologies that soon dissuaded Futurists. While both agreed that war was necessary for the cleansing and reviving of a nation, Mussolini radically extended this philosophy to rid Italian culture of Jewish influence. In response, Marinetti wholly disassociated himself from Mussolini's anti-Semitic legislation.³³⁰ Following the policies of Nazi Germany, intermarriage was prohibited and Jews were excluded from all areas of public life, although some citizens were exempted. Exemption criteria were established in October 1938 via the concept of *Discriminazione*, whereby a *discriminato* with certain merits, such as having been a medal recipient for military service in World War I, could receive exemption from some prohibitions.³³¹ Persecution of Italian Jews was decided in that same month by the Fascist Grand Council on 6 October 1938, and became law by decree, as signed by the king, on 17 November 1938.

In an article that was at first believed to be unsigned, "Il Fascismo e i problemi della razza" ("Fascism and the problems of race"), *Il Giornale d'Italia* was the first journal to print the racial manifesto on 15 July 1938. This article was reprinted by other national newspapers, and ten days following its first publication, the National Fascist Party released a *Comunicato* that outlined the rationale and identified the alleged authors of the *Manifesto*: Lino Businco, Assistant

³³⁰ Ann Halamora Caesar and Michael Caesar, *Modern Italian Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 147.

³³¹ Nidam-Orvieto, "The Impact of Anti-Jewish Legislation on Everyday Life and the Response of Italian Jews, 1938-1943," 159-60.

Professor of Pathology at the University of Rome; Lidio Cirpiani, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Florence; Arturo Donaggio, Director of the Neuropsychiatric Clinic at the University of Bologna, and President of the Italian Society of Psychiatry; Leone Franzi, Assistant in the Pediatric Clinic at the University of Milan; Guido Landra, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Rome; Nicola Pende, Director of the Institute of Pathology at the Medical University of Rome; Marcello Ricci, Assistant Professor of Zoology at the University of Rome; Franco Savorgnan, Professor of Demography at the University of Rome, President of the Central Institute of Statistics; Sabato Visco, Director of the Institute of General Physiology at the University of Rome, Director of the National Institute of Biology at the National Research Council; and Edoardo Zavattari, Director of the Institute of Zoology at the University of Rome. Recently, however, a personal document revealed that it was Landra (1913-1980) alone who had been summoned by Mussolini in February 1938 to assemble a racial campaign under Mussolini's direction, and to later pen the article printed in *Il Giornale d'Italia*.³³²

The Manifesto of the Fascist Scholars did not strip Jewish people of their Italian citizenship, but it did revoke the rights for Italian Jews to own property, to maintain employment, to pursue an education, and to fraternize with non-Jews.³³³ It was only the beginning of an agenda to eliminate Jewish people of foreign and Italian origin from Italian civilization. On 5 August 1938, three weeks after the *Manifesto*'s first print, the inaugural issue of the journal, *La Difesa della Razza*, published a synopsis of ten core statements. Each statement was

³³² Servi, "Building a Racial State," 114-5.

³³³ Nidam-Orvieto, "The Impact of Anti-Jewish Legislation on Everyday Life and the Response of Italian Jews, 1938-1943," 159.

accompanied by a brief explanatory paragraph that stressed the biological reasoning of the racial policy (Example 5.1). The ten points were as listed:

1. Le razze umane esistono.
2. Esistono grandi razze e piccole razze.
3. Il concetto di razza è concetto puramente biologico.
4. La popolazione dell'Italia attuale è nella maggioranza di origine ariana e la sua civiltà ariana.
5. È una leggenda l'apporto di masse ingenti di uomini in tempi storici.
6. Esiste ormai una pura 'razza italiana'.
7. È tempo che gli Italiani si proclamino francamente razzisti.
8. È necessario fare una netta distinzione fra i Mediterranei d'Europa (Occidentali) da una parte gli Orientali e gli Africani dall'altra.
9. Gli ebrei non appartengono alla razza italiana.
10. I caratteri fisici e psicologici puramente europei degli Italiani non devono essere alterati in nessun modo.³³⁴

1. Human races exist.
2. There exist superior races and inferior races.
3. The concept of race is a purely biological concept.
4. The population of Italy today is of Aryan origin and its civilization is Aryan.
5. The contribution of large masses of men in historical times is a myth.
6. There now exists a pure 'Italian race'.
7. It is time that the Italians proclaim themselves openly racist.
8. It is necessary to make a clear distinction between the Mediterranean people of Europe (Westerners) on one side and Africans and 'Easterners' on the other.
9. The Jews do not belong to the Italian race.
10. The purely European physical and psychological characteristics of the Italians must not be altered in any way.

Not only did these anti-Jewish laws isolate Italian Jews from non-Jews, but they also served to de-Judaize the Italian race so that an Aryan character could reign supreme.³³⁵ For non-Jews, life continued as normal, but almost overnight, Italian Jews found themselves culturally quarantined, stripped of memberships, and expelled by their employers. Subsequently, many Jews suffered in poverty.

³³⁴ Guido Landra et al., "Razzismo italiano," *La Difesa della Razza*, I, no. 1 (5 August 1938): 2.

³³⁵ Sarfatti, "Characteristics and Objectives of the Anti-Jewish Racial Laws in Fascist Italy, 1938-1943," 77.

Example 5.1: *La Difesa della Razza* (5 August 1938), "Razzismo italiano"³³⁶

LA DIFESA DELLA

ANNO I - NUMERO I
5 AGOSTO 1938 - XVI

ESCE IL 5 E IL 20 DI OGNI MESE
UN NUMERO SEPARATO LIRE 1
ABBONAMENTO ANNUO LIRE 20

Direttore: TELESIO INTERLANDI

Comitato di redazione: prof. dott. GUIDO LANDRA
prof. dott. LIDIO CIPRIANI - dott. LEONE FRANZI - dott.
MARCELLO RICCI - dott. LINO BUSINCO

RAZZA

SCIENZA DOCUMENTAZIONE POLEMICA

RAZZISMO ITALIANO

Un gruppo di studiosi fascisti docenti nelle Università italiane sotto l'egida del Ministero della Cultura Popolare ha fissato nei seguenti termini quella che è la posizione del Fascismo nei confronti dei problemi della razza:

6

ESISTE ORMAI UNA PURA "RAZZA ITALIANA". — Questo enunciato non è basato sulla confusione del concetto biologico di razza con il concetto storico-linguistico di popolo e di nazione, ma sulla purissima parentela di sangue che unisce gli Italiani di ogni alle generazioni che da millenni popolano l'Italia. Questo unico purza di sangue è il più grande titolo di nobiltà della Nazione italiana.

7

E' TEMPO CHE GLI ITALIANI SI PROCLAMINO FRANCAMENTE RAZZISTI. — Tutta l'opera che finora ha fatto il Regime in Italia è in fondo del razzismo. Frequentissimo è stato sempre nei discorsi del Capo il richiamo ai concetti di razza. La questione del razzismo in Italia deve essere trattata da un punto di vista puramente biologico, senza intenzioni filosofiche o religiose. La concezione del razzismo in Italia deve essere essenzialmente italiana e l'indirizzo ariano-nordico. Questo non vuole dire però introdurre in Italia la teoria del razzismo tedesco come sono o affermare che gli Italiani e gli Scandinavi sono la stessa cosa. Ma vuole soltanto additare agli Italiani un modello fisico e soprattutto psicologico di razza umana che per i suoi caratteri puramente europei si eleva completamente da tutte le razze extra europee, questo vuol dire elevare l'Italiano ad un ideale di superiore coscienza di se stesso e di maggiore responsabilità.

8

E' NECESSARIO FARE UNA NETTA DISTINZIONE TRA I MEDITERRANEI D'EUROPA (OCIDENTALI) DA UNA PARTE GLI ORIENTALI E GLI AFRICANI DALL'ALTRA. — Sono perciò da considerarsi pericolose le teorie che sostengono l'origine africana di alcuni popoli europei e comprendono in una comune razza mediterranea anche le popolazioni semitiche e camitiche stabilendo relazioni e simpatie ideologiche assolutamente inammissibili.

9

GLI EBREI NON APPARTENGONO ALLA RAZZA ITALIANA. — Dai semiti che nel corso dei secoli sono approdati sul sacro suolo della nostra Patria nulla in generale è rimasto. Anche l'occupazione araba della Sicilia nulla ha lasciato all'italiano del ricordo di qualche nome; e del resto il processo di assimilazione fu sempre rapidissimo in Italia. Gli ebrei rappresentano l'unica popolazione che non si è mai assimilata in Italia perchè essa è costituita da elementi razziali non europei, diversi in modo assoluto dagli elementi che hanno dato origine agli Italiani.

10

I CARATTERI FISICI E PSICOLOGICI PURAMENTE EUROPEI DEGLI ITALIANI NON DEVONO ESSERE ALTERATI IN NESSUN MODO. — L'unione è ammissibile solo nell'ambito delle razze europee, nel quale caso non si deve parlare di vero e proprio ibridismo, dato che queste razze appartengono ad un corpo comune e differiscono solo per alcuni caratteri, mentre sono uguali per moltissimi altri. Il carattere puramente europeo degli Italiani viene alterato dall'incrocio con qualsiasi razza extra-europea e portatrice di una civiltà diversa dalla millenaria civiltà degli ariani.

1 **LE RAZZE UMANE ESISTONO.** — La esistenza delle razze umane non è già una creazione del nostro spirito, ma corrisponde a una realtà fenomenica, materiale, percepibile con i nostri sensi. Questa realtà è rappresentata da masse, quasi sempre imponenti, di milioni di uomini, simili per caratteri fisici e psicologici che furono ereditati e che continuano ad ereditarsi. Dire che esistono le razze umane non vuol dire a priori che esistono razze umane superiori o inferiori, ma soltanto che esistono razze umane differenti.

2

ESISTONO GRANDI RAZZE E PICCOLE RAZZE. — Non bisogna soltanto ammettere che esistono i gruppi sistematici maggiori, che comunemente sono chiamati razze e che sono individuati solo da alcuni caratteri, ma bisogna anche ammettere che esistono gruppi sistematici minori (come per es. i nordici, i mediterranei, i danarici, ecc.) individuati da un maggior numero di caratteri comuni. Questi gruppi costituiscono dal punto di vista biologico le vere razze, la esistenza delle quali è una verità evidente.

3

IL CONCETTO DI RAZZA E' CONCETTO PURAMENTE BIOLOGICO. Esso è quindi basato su altre considerazioni che non i concetti di popolo e di nazione, fondati essenzialmente su considerazioni storiche, linguistiche, religiose. Però alla base delle differenze di popolo e di nazione stanno delle differenze di razza. Se gli Italiani sono differenti dai Francesi, dai Tedeschi, dai Turchi, dai Greci, ecc., non è solo perchè essi hanno una lingua diversa e una storia diversa, ma perchè la costituzione razziale di questi popoli è diversa. Sono state proporzioni diverse di razze differenti che da tempo molto antico costituiscono i diversi popoli, da che una razza abbia il dominio assoluto sulle altre, sia che tutte risultino fuse armonicamente, sia, infine, che persistano ancora incassimate una alle altre le diverse razze.

4

LA POPOLAZIONE DELL'ITALIA ATTUALE E' DI ORIGINE ARIANA E LA SUA CIVILTÀ E' ARIANA. — Questa popolazione a civiltà ariana abitata da diversi millenni la nostra penisola; ben poca è rimasta della civiltà delle genti preariane. L'origine degli Italiani attuali parte essenzialmente da elementi di quelle stesse razze che costituiscono e costituiscono il tessuto permanentemente vivo dell'Europa.

5

E' UNA LEGGENDA L'APPORTO DI MASSE INGENTI DI UOMINI IN TEMPI STORICI. — Dopo l'invasione dei Longobardi non ci sono stati in Italia altri notevoli movimenti di popoli capaci di influenzare la fisiognomia razziale della nazione. Da ciò deriva che, neutra per altre nazioni europee la composizione razziale è variata notevolmente in tempi anche moderni, per l'Italia, nella sua grande linea, la composizione razziale di oggi è la stessa di quella che era mille anni fa; i quarantasei milioni d'Italiani di oggi rimangono quindi nell'assoluta maggioranza a famiglie che abitano l'Italia da un millennio.

³³⁶ Sandro Servi, "Building a Racial State: Images of the Jew in the Illustrated Fascist Magazine, *La Difesa della Razza*, 1938-1943," in *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule 1922-1945*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman, trans. Antony Shugaar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 119. Previously published as Guido Landra et al., "Razzismo italiano," *La Difesa della Razza*, I, no. 1 (5 August 1938): 2.

La Difesa della Razza was an integral component of the regime's racial campaign. Like other forms of propaganda, the regime was aggressive with the journal and used it to disseminate racial propaganda. *La Difesa* was published biweekly between 5 August 1938 and 20 June 1943, and was distributed widely throughout Italy, including cultural institutes, public schools, universities, libraries, political offices, and national industries.³³⁷ The use of illustrations enhanced written articles, catered to various reading audiences, and visually contributed to the racial tone of the journal. Illustrations supported the racist agenda by depicting Jews with stereotypical hooked noses and curly hair, as seen in the cartoon depiction of the Fascist Grand Council's legalities against Italian Jews (Example 5.2). Photographs were also used to make statements, as evident on the cover of the journal's first issue (Example 5.3). In this photomontage, a white hand uses a Roman sword to sever a Jewish bust and the face of a black woman from a Roman head; it is a portrait that literally separates non-Aryan races from the Italian race. In an attempt to maintain its pretence as a publication of popular science, the journal interspersed other topics across the pages, such as on eugenics, folklore, and Italian traditions.³³⁸ As a result of *La Difesa della Razza*, the national attitude towards the regime's racial laws began to change.

³³⁷ Servi, "Building a Racial State," 149.

³³⁸ Ibid., 117.

Example 5.2: *La Difesa della Razza* (20 November 1938), “Dopo le deliberazioni del consiglio dei ministri”³³⁹



³³⁹ Sandro Servi, “Building a Racial State: Images of the Jew in the Illustrated Fascist Magazine, *La Difesa della Razza*, 1938-1943,” in *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule 1922-1945*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 121. Previously published as “Dopo le deliberazioni del consiglio dei ministri,” *La Difesa della Razza*, II, no. 2 (20 November 1938): 24.

Example 5.3: *La Difesa della Razza* (5 August 1938)³⁴⁰



³⁴⁰ Sandro Servi, "Building a Racial State: Images of the Jew in the Illustrated Fascist Magazine, *La Difesa della Razza*, 1938-1943," in *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule 1922-1945*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Plate A. Previously published as *La Difesa della Razza*, I, no. 1 (5 August 1938): cover page.

The initial response of Italians to the regime's racial policy reportedly varied "from lukewarm approval to open hostility."³⁴¹ It is possible that the relatively small Jewish population of approximately 60,000 people was not prominent enough to cause a national protest, but it is also not surprising that in the face of a dictator who espoused war and violence, many Italians were too fearful to publically display their opposition. The king did not speak against racism, and it was his signature that endorsed the legal ramifications of the new policy for Italian Jewish people. On the other hand, the Catholic Church presented a mixed reception based on its own interests and a change in leadership. In an article featured in the *Osservatore Romano*, Pope Pius XI publically opposed the regime's order, *trascrizione*, which forbade the recording of interracial marriages within the Roman Catholic Church; his successor, Pope Pius XII (1876-1958), however, remained silent.³⁴² In addition to endorsing the publication of documents like *La Difesa della Razza*, the regime infiltrated the education system to promulgate racism. Teachers were compelled to instill racial awareness in their pupils at all levels, even at the universities, and this was further supported through textbooks and course offerings that justified the regime's racial laws; consequently, schools and mass media effectively inculcated a nation with racist thinking, bringing gradual acceptance across the country.³⁴³

From concert halls to academic institutions, all aspects of Italian musical life were in some way impacted by the prejudicial shift enforced by the regime. When the regime stripped academy memberships from foreign musicians, such as Schoenberg who had been a member of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, it expelled foreign influence and disrupted the organic evolution of musical style in Italy. Additionally, the presence of leading intellectuals was removed from

³⁴¹ Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 242.

³⁴² Sarfatti, "Characteristics and Objectives of the Anti-Jewish Racial Laws in Fascist Italy, 1938-1943," 77.

³⁴³ Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 163, 78.

Italian culture, most noticeably at the university level, while the performance of music by Jewish composers was also forbidden. With their music banned and employment prospects unsound, many Italian Jewish musicians fled the country, as did musicologist and composer, Ferdinando Liuzzi (1884-1940); composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968); music critic and composer Renzo Massarani (1898-1975); teacher and composer, Vittorio Rieti (1898-1994); and pianist, Gualtiero Volterra (1901-1967). Some, however, remained either to protest their humanitarian rights through music, as was the case with Dallapiccola, who was not Jewish but had a Jewish wife (see Chapter Three), or to keep quietly in hiding until anti-Semitic laws were abrogated. Casella, for example, divided his family and hid separately in the homes of Italian friends, while Guido Alberto Fano (1875-1961), a professor, pianist, and composer, went into hiding at Fossombrone and Assisi. Others were made to endure the brutality of concentration camps where they suffered horrendous deaths, or survived with the psychological wounds of their torture. Two Italian Jewish musicians to have escaped death include the violinist Cesare Ferraresi (1918-1981), and the soprano Frida Misul (1919-1992), who later became the first female survivor of Auschwitz to publish a testimony of her experiences in the camp, *Fra gli artigli del mostro nazista* (In the claws of the Nazi monster).³⁴⁴

While the racial campaign worked to eliminate a Jewish presence in Italy, it also forced the uncomfortable compliance of non-Jews. Composers “had to reconcile themselves”³⁴⁵ until a position of less political responsibility arose. Petrassi, as elaborated in Chapter Four, complied as General Director at the Teatro La Fenice to sign numerous anti-Semitic documents and to discuss similar issues with the Ministry of Popular Culture until his leave in 1940.³⁴⁶ In the end, the

³⁴⁴ Frida Misul, *Fra gli artigli del mostro nazista: la più romanzesca delle realtà, il più realistico dei romanzi* (Livorno: Tipografia Benvenuti & Cavaciocchi, 1980).

³⁴⁵ Illiano and Sala, “The Politics of Spectacle,” 23.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

deception of Fascist propaganda softened the reception of racial policy amongst Italians, thereby allowing the elimination of Jewish presence and influence within Italian society. Even for those who recognized the regime's manipulation of biological "truths", it was too perilous to protest. Thus, the regime's racial policy effectively segregated and systematically persecuted Italian Jews from Italian society, while misleading and indirectly affecting the rest of the nation.

Coro di morti (1940-41)

Petrassi's experience with Fascism reached its climax with Italy's return to war. Mussolini's decision to enter the Second World War is foreseeable when assessing the events leading to his announcement: Mussolini's penchant for war and the regime's violent reputation had long been established, the regime had divided the nation with its racial manifesto, rationing had begun in 1939, and the Pact of Steel, a political and military alliance between Italy and Germany, had been signed on 22 May 1939. However, despite these actions, or perhaps because of these actions, confidence in Mussolini still existed. Petrassi explained that such thinking was possible because "the news we received described all anti-fascists as criminals."³⁴⁷ Therefore, if an anti-fascist person was a criminal, then an ethical person was law-abiding and supported the regime. It was a corrupt belief that misrepresented reality. As a result, the war was a vicious awakening from this reverie, and the destruction of utopian desires became a destruction of faith and understanding. Petrassi described the realization of his own disillusionment:

With the beginning of the Second World War...anti-fascism began to grow stronger and more lively. I felt very torn, because I was friendly with many young anti-fascist painters with whom I argued about these things. I continued to have faith – very ingenuous and wavering – because I had taken seriously the oath that we had had to swear. But I lost my illusions when I realized that despite Mussolini's having said, once, that Italy had eight million bayonets, there were only 7,999,000. It was then that I began to doubt – symbolically at first. I was lacerated for a long time, torn between the nationalistic idea of

³⁴⁷ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 147.

continuing to believe in certain values that were being swept away, and the gradual emergence of an ever more burning reality – a return to square one.³⁴⁸

Ten days after an ill-prepared Italy invaded France alongside Germany on 10 June 1940, Petrassi began *Coro di morti* (Chorus of the Dead), a lament that bitterly questioned the fate of human existence.

While Dallapiccola gave rise to the genre of protest music against Italian Fascism with *Canti di prigionia*, Petrassi's *Coro di morti* was an expression of his own despondency and not a work of protest. It is necessary to distinguish Dallapiccola and Petrassi's intents, as it affects the comprehension of each work. Protest music was often driven by a sense of rebellion against a government, social movement, or significant event. Consequently, the author of such works made himself or herself publically susceptible to adverse reactions. The regime's racial laws shattered all faith for Dallapiccola, and instilled in him a ferocious desire for human justice and liberation. While racial policy contributed to Petrassi's gradual disillusionment, his naïveté was lost with the Second World War. He did not match the fierceness of Dallapiccola, but neither was this his motive; *Coro di morti* was born from cynicism and philosophical thinking. Petrassi affirmed, "Non era una musica di protesta"³⁴⁹. ("It was not a protest music"). For Petrassi, music offered solace and a means to release his inner turmoil. *Coro di morti* was not a political attack on the regime, but an emotional response to Mussolini's declaration of war. Petrassi emphasized:

non mi interessava affatto creare un pamphlet antifascista...Avevo in testa un'inquietudine per la guerra dichiarata, cercavo come meglio esprimerla in musica, senza ricorrere alla protest music. Avevo cercato qualcosa che sapesse dire i pensieri che mi agitavano.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Petrassi, "Seminario di composizione," 135.

³⁵⁰ Sandro Cappelletto, "La musica per salvarmi la vita. Colloquio con Sandro Cappelletto" in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 376. Previously published as "La musica per salvarmi la vita. Colloquio con Goffredo Petrassi," *La Stampa* (Turin) (16 July 1998).

I was not interested at all to create an anti-fascist pamphlet...I had anxiety about the declaration of war, I tried at best to express it in music, without resorting to protest music. I was looking for something that could tell the thoughts that agitated me.

Coro di morti was an expression of Petrassi's suffering, and must not be overlaid with perceptions of rebellious sentiments that then sully the intent of the piece.

When studying the manuscript, Luciana Galliano noted the autographed inscription, "a G.P."; Petrassi had hoped the inscription's ambiguity would suggest to some the illustrious Puccini, but in fact the initials were a reference to himself, "a me stesso, tuttora vivente"³⁵¹ ("to myself, still living"). It is reminiscent of when Petrassi dedicated *Salmo IX* to his parents, as an attempt to obscure any political implications of his work. With *Coro di morti*, the inscription was a subtle yet compelling gesture that juxtaposed life and death with spiritual and earth-bound realms. Physically, Petrassi was merely existing within the shell of his body; spiritually, he had died with the onset of another war. His spiritual decay did not allow for the creation of a new value system, as had occurred with his spiritual migration from Catholicism. Instead, he was enveloped by cynicism and heightened thinking that borrowed from nihilism, existentialism and metaphysics. Because Petrassi had been a religious man, he reasoned that "Ho sofferto molto per quella specie di mondo nel quale avevo creduto...i valori civili, i valori della comunità si erano in un certo qual modo spezzati, frantumati"³⁵² ("I suffered a lot for the kind of world in which I had believed...civilized values, the values of the community were somehow broken, crushed"). Dedicating *Coro di morti* to himself was an effort to express and to resolve his spiritual conflicts, the uncertainty of life and the absence of providence.

³⁵¹ Luciana Galliano, "La germinazione della musica nella musica stessa. Frammenti da una conversazione con Luciana Galliano" in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 363-4. Previously published as "La germinazione della musica nella musica stessa. Incontro con Goffredo Petrassi," *Sonus* 3, no. 4 (1991): 19-22.

³⁵² Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," 24-5.

Unlike his earlier works, Petrassi moved away from the borrowing of sacred text, a decision that signified his own wavering faith and philosophical questioning at the time of the war. This motion is more startling in context: one month prior to the commencement of *Coro*, on 4 May 1941, Molinari had directed the premiere of Petrassi's *Il Magnificat*. *Il Magnificat* is the Virgin Mary's hymn of praise to the Lord, a jubilant declaration of humility and gratitude, as recounted in Luke's Gospel (1:46-55). Recognized by the church as an extraordinary passage, the Magnificat is included in the Liturgy of the Hours, a collection of scripture that priests and other religious life are required to pray each day. Petrassi's *Il Magnificat* was written for soprano, chorus and orchestra, and dedicated to Casella; "il *Magnificat* lo dedico all'amico Alfredo Casella, il nuovo lavoro in corso - il più importante fra quanti ne ho finora ideati - l'ho già dedicato."³⁵³ ("I dedicated *Il Magnificat* to my friend Alfredo Casella, the new work in progress - the most important among those I had created - I have already dedicated it to him.") After such an expressive and sacred work, Petrassi drastically turned away from themes of religion, tradition and celebration. Now, he looked towards the nineteenth-century essayist, poet, and philosopher Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837), a known atheist who wrote with a pessimistic tone. From Leopardi's works, Petrassi selected "Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie" ("The Dialogue of Federico Ruysch and his Mummies") as his secular libretto. "Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie", penned between 16 and 23 August 1824, was one of twenty-four dialogues and essays belonging to Leopardi's magnum opus, *Operette morali* (Moral Tales). Petrassi wrote that the dialogue "rifletteva esattamente la mia situazione spirituale di quel momento."³⁵⁴ ("reflected exactly my spiritual situation of that time.")

³⁵³ Mario Rinaldi, "Il *Magnificat* di Goffredo Petrassi. Conversazione con l'autore di Mario Rinaldi," in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 198. Previously published as "Il *Magnificat* di Goffredo Petrassi. Conversazione con l'autore," *La Tribuna* (8 November 1940).

³⁵⁴ Petrassi, "Seminario di composizione," 132.

Coro di morti is a cynical and philosophical meditation, and the musings within the text are “una specie di metafisica laica...chi siamo, da dove veniamo, dove andiamo.”³⁵⁵ (“a kind of secular metaphysics...who we are, where we come from, where we are going.”) In “Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie”, Leopardi searches the human desire to know of man’s fate and the purpose of life. Existentialist thinking infuses the dialogue with a transcendental quality, and with the exclusion of religious dictation, Leopardi philosophizes that life’s meaning can be found through death. However, Leopardi concludes that these questions do not cease with death, nor are they answered through the experience of death. For Leopardi, the answer is nothing. Petrassi was struck by Leopardi’s treatment of nihilistic and existentialist themes, and felt the dialogue spoke as if from his own soul:

Perché non è detto affatto che per ogni atto della vita, per ogni emozione che io voglia esprimere, io ricorra a un testo religioso, tutt’altro; nella vita dell’uomo e nel pensiero dell’uomo non c’è soltanto la religione, ma ci sono delle riflessioni di tutte le nature possibili. E quindi mi è sembrato che in quel momento, per quella situazione che mi ribolliva internamente, proprio questo testo fosse l’esatta misura del pensiero e l’esatto veicolo che mi permetteva di esprimere quello che sentivo.³⁵⁶

Why not say at all that for every act of life, every emotion that I want to express, I have recourse to a religious text, far from it; in human life and in human thought there is not only religion, but there are reflections of all possible natures. And then it seemed to me that in that moment, for that situation that was seething within me, exactly this text was the exact measure of thought and the exact vehicle that allowed me to express what I was feeling.

Leopardi’s dialogue gave a voice to Petrassi’s suffering. Now having words by which he could express himself, Petrassi aspired to compose a work that could musically deliver the sentiments of the text.

Petrassi’s interest in Leopardi was congruent with cultural interest at the time. Since the early twentieth-century, Leopardi had been receiving critical attention in Italian Fascist culture

³⁵⁵ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 117.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

by the movement's official philosopher, Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944). Gentile recognized the exceptionality of Leopardi as a poet, but failed to "articulate the inner movement" of his poetry.³⁵⁷ Nevertheless, he proceeded to write, his essays giving way to prove one hypothesis: "to emphasize the full humanity of great poetry and yet to affirm its difference from philosophy."³⁵⁸ Gentile's longest study was his essay on Leopardi's *Operette morali*, the same work that contained Petrassi's selected dialogue, "Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie". In opposition to the melancholic character affiliated with Leopardi's works, Gentile pursued an optimistic reading that recast Leopardi as a hopeful, joyous, and even heroic figure that endured life's tribulations. Gentile's argument, written in 1916, has been abridged below:

With detailed, scholarly evidence used as support, he claims that Leopardi composed the *Operette* in three sections...The first section of the *Operette* is like the thesis of the dialectic, immediate feeling, blind joy, the *vis naturae* which is pure pleasure for all who are at one with it. The second is the antithetical, objective moment. Here Leopardi articulates the painfulness that goes with the analytical breaking up of natural joy, as a man learns how little he is before the vast force of nature. The third would be the synthesis of the dialectic, would represent the mature joy that goes with being aware of the littleness and insignificance of men. The figures who speak in this section are aware that their pleasures are illusory, but their very awareness of the fictiveness of their triumphs provides a deeper and truer joy, the joy of knowing and facing unflinchingly the triviality and meanness of being a man.³⁵⁹

Gentile's idea of the dialectic, however, brought confusion and contradictions to his analysis, and his philosophy was criticised as incomplete; Gentile responded via two lectures in 1927 that there were no contradictions because joy and pain are integrated.³⁶⁰ Against Gentile's promotion of Leopardi as an optimistic poet, Petrassi returned Leopardi to his fatalistic tone. While Petrassi's reasoning to use "Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie" has already been

³⁵⁷ Merle E. Brown, "Respice Finem: The Literary Criticism of Giovanni Gentile," *Italica* 47, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 20.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 22-23.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 24-25.

quoted, his gesture to oppose Gentile's reading may also indicate his wanting to withdraw from Fascist culture.

On the surface, "Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie" reads as a haunting work of fiction. The dialogue begins at the stroke of midnight when a chorus sounds from within a laboratory. The anatomist and protagonist, Ruysch, is startled by the singing, and peers through the keyhole to discover that the song comes from his embalmed corpses. He longs for the protection of his bed, but dreads the mummies may find him as he sleeps. Not wanting to fear the dead, he chooses to be brave and to enter the laboratory. He begins to converse with the dead, their discourse isolating the subject of life and death. While this episode is fictitious, there are elements that are not, for in fact, the anatomist in Leopardi's work was a real person. Frederick Ruysch (1638-1731) was a Dutch botanist and anatomist, renowned not only for his preparation and preservation of the body, but for his artistic and controversial displays. Example 5.4 is an illustration of three four-month old skeletal fetuses, artistically positioned as a tableau around a mound of organs. *Vanitas* mottos, the relaying of mortal messages as represented by symbolic objects, are featured. The two skeletons on the bottom of the illustration, for instance, convey the messages, "'Man, born of woman, lives but briefly and has many weaknesses' and 'Death spares no one, not even defenceless babes.'"³⁶¹ Exhibits of his work provided the public a unique opportunity to learn anatomy. His embalming techniques were revolutionary, and the exactitude of cadavers as living beings incited great admiration, as well as accusations of sorcery. "Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie" makes reference to Ruysch's arterial embalming method with the line, "generous as I was with the artificial blood I put into your veins."³⁶²

³⁶¹ Luuc Kooijmans, *Death Defied: The Anatomy Lessons of Frederik Ruysch*, trans. Diane Webb (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 272.

³⁶² Giacomo Leopardi, *Operette Morali; Moral Tales*, trans. Patrick Creagh (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1983), 134.

Similarly, Leopardi references Peter the Great (1672-1725), who purchased such specimens for his own collection, when the anatomist asks the mummies if their returning to life is a game: “Maybe you’re getting above yourselves because of the Czar’s visit, and think you’re no longer bound by the old laws? I take it you meant this as a joke, and not in earnest. If you really have come back to life, I’m very glad for you”³⁶³. As an anatomist, Ruysch’s career existed between life and death; he prepared the deceased for internment, while the soul, liberated from its mortal shell, began an afterlife and the possibility of eternity. His skillful dissections divulged secrets of the human body, and his preservations returned the deceased to a life-like state. In Leopardi’s dialogue, Ruysch’s dissection is philosophical; he questions the deceased about life without the use of a scalpel. The presence of Ruysch within “Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie” reveals another dimension to the reading of Leopardi’s work, and so, to Petrassi’s *Coro di morti*.

³⁶³ Ibid., 133-4.

Example 5.4: Anatomical composition of three fetal skeletons from *Het eerste anatomische cabinet* of Frederik Ruysch, as illustrated by Cornelis Huijberts (1701)³⁶⁴



³⁶⁴ Kooijmans, *Death Defied*, 275.

Petrassi did not use the dialogue in its entirety for *Coro di morti*, explaining, “Mi pare che il testo è già in se stesso talmente carico di tutto il pensiero leopardiano, di tutta la filosofia, che la lettura del dialogo intero non è forse neanche necessaria.”³⁶⁵ (“I think that the text is already in itself so full of all Leopardian thought, of all philosophy, that reading the entire dialogue is perhaps not even necessary.”) Instead, he borrowed the opening poem as his libretto:

Sola nel mondo eterna, a cui si volge
 Ogni creata cosa,
 In te, morte, si posa
 Nostra ignuda natura;
 Lieta no, ma sicura
 Dall'antico dolor. Profonda notte
 Nella confusa mente
 Il pensier grave oscura;
 Alla speme, al desio, l'arido spirto
 Lena mancar si sente:
 Così d'affanno e di temenza è sciolto,
 E l'età vote e lente
 Senza tedio consuma.
 Vivemmo: e qual di paurosa larva,
 E di sudato sogno,
 A lattante fanciullo erra nell'alma
 Confusa ricordanza:
 Tal memoria n'avanza
 Del viver nostro: ma da tema è lunge
 Il rimembrar. Che fummo?
 Che fu quel punto acerbo
 Che di vita ebbe nome?
 Cosa arcana e stupenda
 Oggi è la vita al pensier nostro, e tale
 Qual de' vivi al pensiero
 L'ignota morte appar. Come da morte
 Vivendo rifuggia, così rifugge
 Dalla fiamma vitale
 Nostra ignuda natura;
 Lieta no ma sicura,
 Però ch'esser beato
 Nega ai mortali e nega a' morti il fato.

³⁶⁵ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 116.

An English translation by Patrick Creagh:

Sole in the world eternal, you to whom
 Wheels each created thing
 In you, death, reposes
 Our denuded being;
 Happy no, but safe
 From ancient sorrow. Deepest night
 In our clouded minds
 Blots out the heavy thought;
 For hope, and for desire, the withered spirit
 Feels its breath come short:
 Thus from anguish and from fear set loose,
 The slow and empty ages
 Even without tedium it consumes.
 Once, we lived: and as some dreadful spectre,
 And a cold-sweated dream,
 Haunts in the spirit of a suckling infant
 As a vague reminiscence:
 Such memory of our living
 Is left to us: but very far from terror
 Our remembrance is. What were we?
 What was that acid spot in time
 That went by the name of life?
 A thing arcane, astonishing
 Is life in our thought today, and such
 As in the thought of living men
 The unknown death appears. And as we fled
 From death when living, thus
 Our denuded being flees
 The vital flame of life,
 Happy no, but safe;
 For to be joyous, fate
 Denies to the living and fate denies to the dead.³⁶⁶

Turmoil, anguish, and hopelessness imprison the dead souls of the libretto; it is much like an emotional blueprint of Petrassi and other Italians at this time. The questions of life continue in death, and neither living nor spiritual planes can answer life's purpose. All entities are left hollow and sombre by the unknown.

³⁶⁶ Leopardi, *Operette Morali*, 132-3. Refer to the translated edition.

The dark and introspective sentiments of this work were novel for Petrassi, and marked the beginning of a new creative period. The youthful and self-assured energy that permeated his earlier works had disappeared, and in its place was the morose drone of his personal suffering. Former influences still remained, but they were blended within a new compositional style. Petrassi indicated in the subtitle that *Coro di morti* was a “madrigale drammatico”³⁶⁷ (“dramatic madrigal”). The madrigal genre, in this case, recollected Petrassi’s devotion to the Italian Renaissance, and was a deliberate nod to Monteverdi. Petrassi attested, “Monteverdi è un musicista cui debbo molto: Il *Coro di morti* non è certo un calco monteverdiano, eppure contiene un richiamo esplicito anche nel sottotitolo <<madrigale drammatico>>.”³⁶⁸ (“Monteverdi is a musician to whom I owe a lot: *Coro di morti* is not of a Monteverdian cast, but it contains an explicit homage [to him] in the subtitle ‘dramatic madrigal.’”) While Petrassi’s allegiance to Monteverdi was upheld, other influences were fleeting. *Coro di morti* demonstrated that Neoclassicism was becoming a more subtle presence, and that Stravinsky, according to Petrassi, now lingered as an older influence. Petrassi indicated that *Coro di morti* “per questa opera non si può più parlare totalmente di neoclassicismo”³⁶⁹ (“can no longer speak of Neoclassicism completely”), and that any repetition of notes, which for him was previously akin to Stravinsky, was now purely “un residuo di stravinskismo.”³⁷⁰ (“a Stravinskian residue.”) Petrassi’s dismissal of Stravinsky in *Coro di morti*, despite a clear detection of Stravinskian character, may imply a desire to be disassociated from Stravinsky, who had been denounced as degenerate and banned by Nazi officials at this time. While the influences of Neoclassicism and Stravinsky are notable

³⁶⁷ Goffredo Petrassi, *Coro di morti*, analytical introduction by Massimo Mila (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1953), 7.

³⁶⁸ Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 13.

³⁶⁹ Petrassi, “Seminario di composizione,” 134.

³⁷⁰ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 125.

features of *Coro di morti*, their presence was transitional and secondary to the new techniques Petrassi was discovering to express himself through music. The ensuing discussion of *Coro di morti* will isolate the new aesthetics of Petrassi's compositional style that emerged within this work.

In addition to a pronounced change in character, *Coro di morti* also became a landmark work in Petrassi's compositional development for the first appearance, albeit fragmented, of the twelve-tone system. With Schoenberg's music banned in Italy at the time of *Coro di morti*, Petrassi's inclusion of serialism in this work was a mild testing of the government's ruling. Lyrically, the text of *Coro di morti* was pensive and bleak, but stylistically, it was non-conformist. It was, Petrassi, wrote, "l'unica possibilità che mi si offriva per esprimere la tragedia che io sentivo"³⁷¹ ("the only option being offered to me to express the tragedy that I felt"). Although not a full adoption of the twelve-tone system, *Coro di morti* unveiled a new musical direction within his career. Ultimately, Petrassi's music, alongside the music of other Italian forward-thinking composers, was banned in Germany for aesthetic reasons. He recounted in his autobiography:

Alcuni musicisti italiani – fra i quali Casella, Malipiero, Dallapiccola e io – furono vietati in Germania...mio editore Paolo Giordani, della casa Suvini Zerboni...mi scrisse confermandomi la mia condanna come partecipe all'arte degenerata.³⁷²

Some Italian musicians – including Casella, Malipiero, Dallapiccola and I – were banned in Germany...my editor Paolo Giordani, of the [publishing] house Suvini Zerboni...wrote confirming me my sentence as a participant of degenerate art.

Coro di morti was Petrassi's only work during the war that made use of partial tone rows, but it was enough of a demonstration to make him suffer political repercussions.

³⁷¹ Petrassi, "Seminario di composizione," 135.

³⁷² Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 46.

Partial tone rows can be detected in *Coro di morti*, as if Petrassi was tentatively sampling Schoenberg's method in brief musical pockets. Petrassi said the suggestion of dodecaphony was a product of "germinazione spontanea" ("spontaneous germination"), an unconscious and natural unfolding of musical ideas that he had always employed whereby "il lavoro riflette sempre su se stesso, è una continua riflessione su se stesso" ("the work reflects itself and is a continuous reflection of itself"). The increased use of chromaticism is unlike his earlier practice; however, he had not abandoned tonality. *Coro di morti* has perceptible tonal centres that have been skillfully choreographed alongside an atonal presence. Petrassi explained that "Il *Coro di morti* è un'aperta dichiarazione di rifiuto delle certezze di prima; in esso comincio a guardare con occhi diversi quello che succede nel mondo e quindi, di conseguenza, nel mondo dell'arte."³⁷³ ("*Coro di morti* is an open declaration of the rejection of certainties from before; in it I began to look with new eyes what is happening in the world and then consequently, in the art world.") Just as the souls of Leopardi's text had departed their physical bodies, Petrassi was departing the realm of tonality and entering an "after-life" of chromaticism. The investigation of chromaticism, as opposed to the recurrence of any serial pitch order, was the principal dodecaphonic feature of *Coro di morti*.³⁷⁴ While *Coro di morti* cannot be reduced to a basic row, scholars like Anthony Eugene Bonelli and John S. Weissmann have agreed on the melodic appearances of partial tone rows. However, Petrassi omits the implication of serial order as a means of organization.³⁷⁵ This is typical of Petrassi's style; as observed with his earlier works, Petrassi was not one to subscribe absolutely to one technique, but to find a means of utilizing all that he found inspiring.

³⁷³ Petrassi, "Seminario di composizione," 133.

³⁷⁴ Anthony Eugene Bonelli, "Serial Techniques in the Music of Goffredo Petrassi: A Study of his Compositions from 1950-1959," (D.Phil diss., Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester, 1971), 5.

³⁷⁵ Bonelli, "Serial Techniques in the Music of Goffredo Petrassi," 7.

Further to Petrassi's fragmented use of the twelve-tone technique is Petrassi's unique choice of instrumentation and inclusion of stylistic markings. *Coro di morti* was scored for male voices, three pianos, brass, double-basses and percussion. It was an unusual arrangement of instruments, atypical of his own style, and cemented a new interest in timbre for him that manifested itself onwards from this work.³⁷⁶ Petrassi had a deep admiration for the piano, and had been overwhelmed by its emotional capacity since childhood. He reminisced that as a young piano student, "il pianoforte non era un oggetto pauroso, era un trasmettitore di emozioni musicali troppo intense per me."³⁷⁷ ("the piano was not a frightening object, it was a transmitter of musical emotions too intense for me.") In *Coro di morti*, Petrassi exploited the piano's faculties with a function that was reliant not on melody, but on timbre and rhythm. He explained, "Io ho impostato i tre pianoforti che fanno questo ritmo continuo, non pensando allo scorrere del tempo, ma semplicemente per cercare un'ambientazione"³⁷⁸. ("I set the three pianos that make this continuous rhythm, not thinking about the passing of time, but simply to find an ambiance"). With the pianos having developed an ambiance, the chorus and remaining orchestral instruments heighten the hopelessness and the drama within this framework. Purposely devoid of female voices and a high upper register, a male chorus became the voice of Leopardi's mummies. Petrassi's knowledge of and sensitivity to the human voice emerged with the depth of expression sung by the choir. The chorus' opening words, for example, "Sola nel mondo eternal, a cui si volge / ogni create cosa"³⁷⁹, are chanted slowly and with much weight (Example 5.5). The range is small with use of repeated notes that soon show the archaicism of parallel fifths in the last bars of this example. The parts plod along in half and quarter notes with a change of metre

³⁷⁶ Bonelli, "Serial Techniques in the Music of Goffredo Petrassi," 4.

³⁷⁷ Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 124.

³⁷⁸ Lombardi, *Conversazioni con Petrassi*, 118.

³⁷⁹ Petrassi, *Coro di morti*, 10.

reminiscent of Gregorian chant (despite the secular nature of the composition), and only gradually does the melodic line begin to move. It is as though the dead are too laden by their thoughts and burdened by despair to speak with any animation.

Example 5.5: *Coro di morti* (mm. 12 to 15)³⁸⁰

Coro di morti

So - la nel mondo e - ter - na, a cui si vol - ve o - gni crea - ta co - sa,

Coro di morti by Goffredo Petrassi
© Copyright 1953 by Edizioni Suvini Zerboni – Sugar Music S.p.A., Milano
Reprinted by permission.

To assist the realization of *Coro di morti*, Petrassi was precise and abundant with his language, directing with words like “freddo”³⁸¹ (“cold”) and “scuro”³⁸² (“dark”). Synergistically, the orchestra and chorus released the sentiments of Leopardi’s text with the enhancement of detailed stylistic markings. As one music critic wrote, “It was not so much the language of this ‘dramatic madrigal’ that caused surprise, as the considerably enlarged range of his emotional and intellectual experience and values.”³⁸³ Contextually, the melancholic blend of Petrassi’s grief and Italy’s return to war intensified the ethos of the libretto and of *Coro di morti*. Petrassi expressed in conversation:

³⁸⁰ Petrassi, *Coro di morti*, 10.

³⁸¹ Petrassi, *Coro di morti*, 26.

³⁸² Ibid., 35

³⁸³ Weissmann, “Current Chronicle,” 262.

Sono stato uno che ha vissuto, ha vissuto la vita e tutti i problemi di quel momento, vissuti in prima persona dando l'apporto che potevo. È l'esperienza umana che viene filtrata per diventare musica...che ci permette di esprimerci...³⁸⁴

I was one who lived, lived the life and all the problems of that time, lived in the first person giving the contribution that I could. It is the human experience that is filtered to become music...allowing us to express ourselves...

Petrassi's expressive language extended to his use of vivid imagery, and it is possible that his decision to centralize the decomposed body in *Coro di morti* was a revolt against Fascist ideology. Fascist culture upheld a body politic that stressed the importance, even the necessity, of a robust physical appearance to match the Fascist spirit of fortitude and discipline. To Mussolini, the body "call[ed] for strength and courage, contributing to the formation of the new man as warrior."³⁸⁵ In *Coro di morti*, the physical body is decayed and without vigour. The corpse is in opposition to the athleticism and vitality of the Fascist physique, and may have been metaphorical of Petrassi's disintegrating faith in the regime and of the regime itself.

Coro di morti was first performed during the Second World War on 28 September 1941 at Teatro La Fenice. The forlorn character of *Coro di morti* resonated with those who were in attendance. This reception was moving for Petrassi; his grief was shared, and throughout the nation there were others bereft of hope. Of this moment, he described, "Il grande successo finale mi ha rivelato che l'animo della gente si era identificato con la mia opera. È stato molto emozionante per me."³⁸⁶ ("The great success revealed to me that the spirit of the people had identified with my work. It was very emotional for me.") In the press, *Coro di morti* was proclaimed, "his best recent composition...altogether more intense and vital."³⁸⁷ So passionate

³⁸⁴ Galliano, "La germinazione della musica nella musica stessa," 364.

³⁸⁵ Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (California: University of California Press, 2000), 118.

³⁸⁶ Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 49.

³⁸⁷ Guido Panain, "News from Italy," *Tempo*, no. 12 (September 1945): 13.

was the reception that choreographer Aurel Milloss (1906-1988) attempted a ballet interpretation the following year. It was a vision that surpassed Petrassi's initial expectations of the work, but one he enthusiastically welcomed. The reception of *Coro di morti* as a staged production, however, was a stark contrast to the orchestral premiere at La Fenice. Petrassi wrote, "la stampa fu contraria e indignata, nacquero polemiche e se ne fece un gran parlare... Si vide così una massa di scheletri"³⁸⁸. ("the press was opposed and outraged, controversy arose and they made a lot of talk... It was seen as a mass of skeletons"). Only Milloss and Petrassi were satisfied with the staging, and so it was a short-lived attempt.

The darkness of Petrassi's music, his straying from tonality, and his use of a secular text, specifically "The Dialogue of Federico Ruysch and his Mummies", reflected Petrassi's inner sorrow and apprehension as Mussolini led Italy to war. A new creative period had begun for Petrassi, as was largely incited by the return of wartime Italy. The character of his music was transformed, and the influences of his earlier works, such as *Partita per orchestra* and *Salmo IX*, were drifting as Petrassi grasped new means to convey his tragedy. The occurrence of World War II and the marked development of Petrassi's compositional aesthetics was a shared experience. Petrassi professed, "quando la scrivo, la scrivo sempre con tutto me stesso. Il cammino umano e l'artistico sono segnati da svolte."³⁸⁹ ("when I write, I write always with all that I am. The human journey and art are marked by turning points.")

³⁸⁸ Goffredo Petrassi, "Le mie avventure con la danza," in *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2008): 86. Previously published as "Le mie avventure con la danza," *Musica* 1, no. 4 (Rome) (30 June 1946): 135-7.

³⁸⁹ Galliano, "La germinazione della musica nella musica stessa," 366.

Chapter Six: Desolation and a Search for Spiritual Relief: Serialism as a Panacea

Anni molti bui... Ho sofferto molto per quella specie di mondo nel quale avevo creduto.³⁹⁰

- Petrassi

Many dark years... I suffered greatly for the kind of world in which I had believed.

- Petrassi

The Fall of Mussolini

Despite the inadequacy of Italy's military forces and their lack of preparedness for war, Mussolini was persuaded by his own rhetoric to send Italy to battle. Warfare and violence had long been glorified by the regime, and this militaristic ideology was too potent for Mussolini to admit the truth of Italy's insufficiency. Combat against countries of true military power exposed Italy's weakness, and quickly revealed Mussolini's hubristic ambition for supremacy through war. Mussolini fell prey to his own propaganda when he made the decision to fight a war that could not be won. As the Italian military rapidly waned, Mussolini refused ownership of his erroneous ways, and by the end of 1942, he blamed Italians for his public humiliation; privately and publically, he accused Italians of having failed him.³⁹¹

The Second World War brought suffering to those on the battlefield and to those who remained on the home front. Italians experienced bombings from the Allies and economically entered a vortex of hardships. Taxes increased without an equivalent rise in wages, and consumer goods and services, once readily acquired, were now limited and extravagant in price. The most severe deprivation, however, was that of food. Food shortages affected all social classes, and even at public venues food was scarce. Meat was unavailable in restaurants on the weekends, and

³⁹⁰ Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," 24.

³⁹¹ Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini*, 219.

in October 1942, milk was regulated for use only in the cappuccino.³⁹² With such essentials as milk disappearing from everyday life, it is no surprise that culturally, Italy began to deteriorate. The regime ceased funding education and the arts and halted construction projects, such as the Royal Universal Exposition.³⁹³ Petrassi recounted these years of oppression:

Anni molti bui, come si sa. Non ho sofferto fisicamente e ne sono uscito indenne. Da un punto di vista materiale ho avuto una vita come tutti, soffrendo la fame, soffrendo di tutte le restrizioni e soffrendo quindi di tutte le empietà spirituali che quella condizione determinava...Ho sofferto molto per quella specie di mondo nel quale avevo creduto.³⁹⁴

Many dark years, as they are known. I did not suffer physically and came out unscathed. From a material standpoint I had a life like everyone else, suffering from hunger, suffering from all restrictions and suffering therefore from all the spiritual wickedness that this condition imposed...I suffered greatly for the kind of world in which I had believed.

Once Mussolini decided that Italy would fight alongside Germany in 1940, he condemned his people and his country to their fate. Regardless of one's political stance, financial stability, or military involvement, the war was unforgiving; only through death were those conscripted and those on the home front released from their suffering.

Mussolini's downfall was precipitated by the Allies' invasion of Sicily, code-named *Operation Husky*, on 10 July 1943. Great Britain and the United States of America targeted Sicily as a stepping stone to the European continent, as the map depicts in Example 6.1. After some subterfuge, troops landed by sea and air in an attempt to conquer the island and to begin the onslaught of occupied Europe. After 38 days of combat against meagre opposition, Sicily was purged of German and Italian troops. With the commencement of the Allies' Italian Campaign, the regime rapidly fell into disfavour with Italians who had supported the war. The collapse of Italian Fascism was ultimately a consequence of the regime's imposition of fallacious

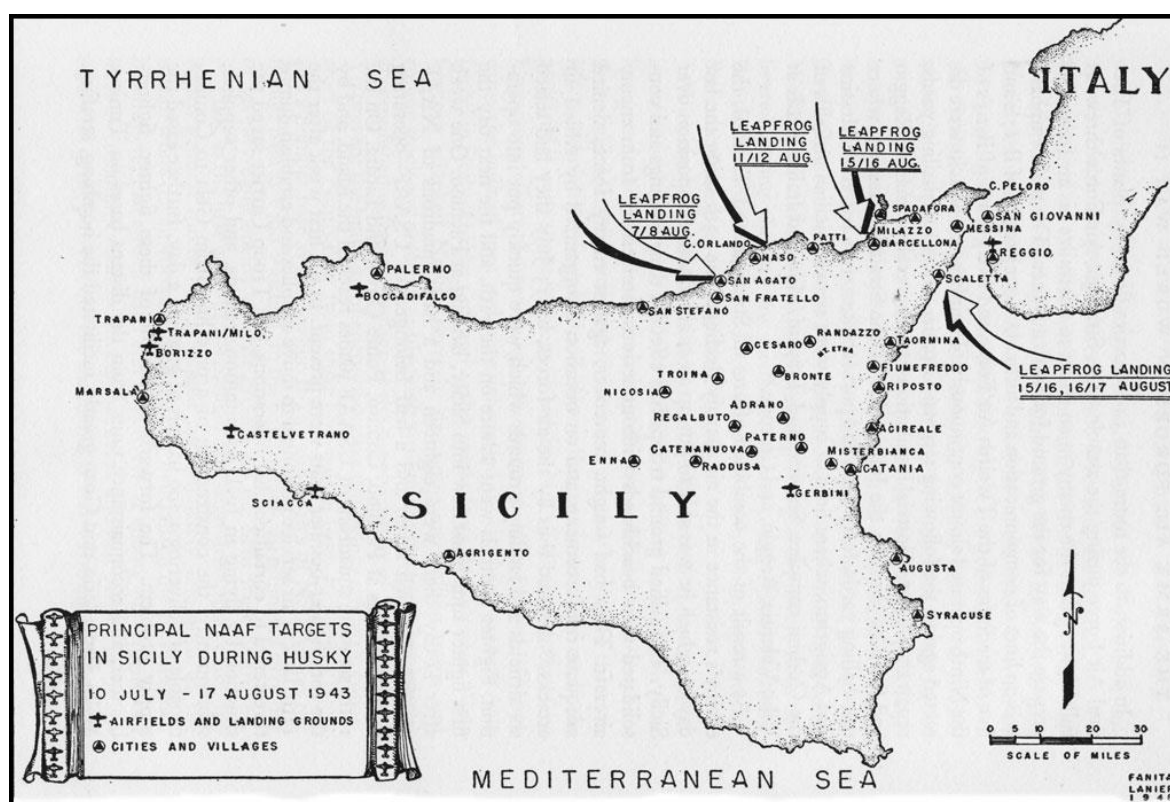
³⁹² Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 310.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," 24.

ideologies. Propaganda had effectively sold an image of power and dominance across the country, but it highlighted the actuality of Italy's lack of military readiness and Mussolini's perfidious leadership. After the Grand Council of Fascism passed a motion of no confidence, the king, who had apprehensively supported the regime for more than two decades, ordered Mussolini's arrest and deposition. On 25 July 1943, Mussolini and his Fascist government were overthrown. Two months later, he was rescued by the Germans from Campo Imperatore, Abruzzo, and reinstated until he was executed by Italian Communists in 1945.

Example 6.1: Operation Husky (10 July 1943 to 17 August 1943)³⁹⁵



³⁹⁵ Albert F. Simpson, "Sicily and Southern Italy," in *The Army Air Forces In World War II*, vol. 2, *Europe: Torch to Pointblank, August 1942 to December 1943*, ed. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 457.

Immediately Marshal Badoglio, who had opposed Italy's alliance with Nazi Germany, was appointed by the king as Mussolini's successor, and together they formed a royal-military dictatorship by which to govern Italy. The regime's fall generated mass celebration in the streets. Fascist leaders retreated from the scene, and outward symbols of Fascism were removed; citizens were hopeful that the fall would signify an early ending to the war.³⁹⁶ Secretly Badoglio and the king entered discussion with the Allies about an armistice, while publicly they announced to the nation the continuation of the war alongside Germany. An armistice between Italy and the Allies was eventually negotiated and published on 8 September 1943, but the delay had been used by the Germans to secure their presence in Italy. German forces disarmed Italian troops at the news of an armistice and attacked Rome. Italian troops were interned and made to decide whether to continue fighting alongside Germany. Those who refused to fight were sent to a prison camp in Germany. Two days following the armistice's broadcast on 10 September 1943, the German supreme command proclaimed Italy's submission to foreign occupation, "'The Italian armed forces no longer exist.'"³⁹⁷ In the same month, Mussolini was freed by the Nazis via *Operation Eiche* and made a puppet leader of Repubblica Sociale Italiana (Italian Social Republic) in northern Italy, a German occupied state. Propaganda exuded comradeship and an invitation to brotherhood. A poster of a grinning German soldier with an extended hand proclaimed, "La Germania è veramente vostra amica"³⁹⁸ ("Germany is truly your friend") (Example 6.2). Italian troops who joined the Repubblica Sociale Italiana maintained loyalty to Mussolini and continued to fight the Allies alongside Germany. At the same time, with Nazi Germany in command, Italian Jews were now deported to concentration camps. While some successfully sought refuge

³⁹⁶ Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 312.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 313.

³⁹⁸ "Manifesti della Repubblica Sociale Italiana (1943-1945)," *Musil – Museo dell'industria e del lavoro di Brescia*, accessed 9 August 2015, <http://www.musilbrescia.it>.

in the mountains of Assisi, approximately 7,500 Italian Jews died in the camps at Auschwitz. Although Fascism had fallen, the repercussions of a tyrannous and flawed regime affected Italians for years to come.

Example 6.2: Vintage Poster of Repubblica Sociale Italiana³⁹⁹



³⁹⁹ Ibid.

Serialism in Italy

Against the monstrosity of the war, Italian composers were producing music that characterized advancements similar to that of their European counterparts. Prior to the regime's censorship laws, there was already an awareness of musical happenings outside of Italy. While cost made notable scores difficult to obtain, talk ensued about the progression of western art music; Italians were receptive to and curious about these new techniques. As early as 1920, Malipiero, for example, responded to the transformation of tonality in Schoenberg's *Drei Klavierstücke*, Opus 11 (1909) with the publication of his book, *L'orchestra*. Petrassi recounted:

Intorno al 1920, Malipiero pubblicò un libretto intitolato *L'orchestra* con aforismi e illuminazioni spiritose...c'era una specie di satira sul primo pezzo dell'op. 11 di Schoenberg in cui Malipiero mostrava come, in sostanza, tutto quello che scriveva Schoenberg era riconducibile ad una teoria tonale tradizionale, semplicemente distorta.⁴⁰⁰

Around 1920, Malipiero published a small book called *L'orchestra* with aphorisms and witty insights...there was a sort of satire on the first piece of Opus 11 by Schoenberg in which Malipiero showed that, basically, everything that was written was attributed to traditional tonal theory, just twisted.

Meanwhile, the musical culture within Italy was accelerated by pivotal events and musical leaders. Casella maintained an active music scene in Rome and Milan by exposing Italians to new music. In 1924, he organized the legendary tour of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, under Schoenberg's direction, and the work was performed across the country: Naples, Rome, Florence, Venice, Padua, Milan and Turin.⁴⁰¹ Louis Fleury, a flautist who had also participated in the performances of *Pierrot Lunaire* in London and Paris, recalled his apprehension of the reaction of the Italian public: "For indeed I had started for Italy feeling sure that we should never get through an evening; and from what I knew of the irascible Latin public I was afraid we

⁴⁰⁰ Petrassi, "Seminario di composizione," 133-34.

⁴⁰¹ L. Fleury, "About 'Pierrot Lunaire': The Impressions Made on Various Audiences by a Novel Work," trans. A.H.F.S., *Music & Letters* 5, no. 4 (October 1924): 347-8.

should be pelted with tomatoes and oranges...Italy is the land of *bel canto*, and the measured and inflected diction which the composer had imagined has, in itself, nothing in common with singing.”⁴⁰² Atonal music was not widespread at the time within Italy, and *Pierrot Lunaire* was consequently an inconceivable experience. Petrassi, who attended one of the performances, described hearing such music for the first time, his words somewhat fulfilling Fleury’s anxious prophecy:

Era il 1924...Assistetti, non ci capii nulla, ma rimasi molto traumatizzato dal fatto di essere messo in contatto con una visione della musica del tutto estranea, completamente diversa da tutte quelle che fino allora avevo frequentato. Si è trattato di un trauma che doveva dare le sue conseguenze alcuni anni dopo, ma ho ancora ben viva nella memoria l’accoglienza che la maggior parte del pubblico e degli accademici riservarono a quella musica.⁴⁰³

It was 1924...I attended, not understanding anything, but I remained very traumatized by the fact of being placed in contact with a musical vision entirely foreign, completely unlike any which until then I had attended. This was a shock that was to make its impact a few years later, but I still have very much alive in my memory the reception that the majority of the public and scholars meted out to that music.

Fleury’s account captured the initial reluctance of audiences, and then their eventual intrigue and receptivity:

[Schoenberg] is no great conductor, no virtuoso of the bâton, but his leading is exact and autocratic, he knows what he wants and how to get it...in every town there was a small body of young musicians, chiefly students in the full swing of their classical studies, who were quite determined not to allow a note of this infernal music to be played. Well, as I said, we were listened to everywhere till the very end. At Rome, actually, a concert under the auspices of the *Corporatione per la nuova musica* was a real success. But elsewhere we made heavy weather with our performances. The sense of fun – of course, in the best possible spirit – took complete possession of this easily swayed public, and found vent in laughter, witticisms, and discussion.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² Ibid., 355.

⁴⁰³ Restagno, “Una biografia raccontata dall’autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno,” 16.

⁴⁰⁴ Fleury, “About ‘Pierrot Lunaire’,” 355.

Performances of such works as *Pierrot Lunaire* offered a new aesthetic and new techniques to Italian composers, and inspired them to take new directions. Both up-and-coming and established composers were fascinated by this turn in compositional style. In Florence, it was said that Puccini rode three hours by rail to experience Schoenberg's music; "He listened right through with the greatest attention and interest, and congratulated the author afterwards in the artists' room, where he discussed technical details with him."⁴⁰⁵ More than twenty years following its Italian premiere, *Pierrot Lunaire* was resurrected after the war, and performed again throughout Italy. Its effect remained spellbinding, as recorded by John Cage (1912-1992) in 1949:

Above these, and above everything heard at Milan, too, rose Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, reminding one of the way Mt. Etna rises above Taormina. Marya Freund, at the age of 74, spoke-sang this work, accompanied by an extraordinary Italian ensemble directed by Pietro Scarpini, who also played the piano. This performance, on April 23 in the Villa Igliea at Palermo, was such that anyone who heard it will never forget it. A member of the audience who came all the way from Australia said that she understood then why she made the long voyage. This reporter found himself trembling for some time afterwards and noticed others weeping. The hermetic nature of this work was given on this occasion an almost oracular character, so that one seemed to be hearing a special and profoundly necessary truth.⁴⁰⁶

Despite the impact of *Pierrot Lunaire* in 1922, Schoenberg's music remained infrequently performed; his contact with Italy appeared to have commenced and finished with these performances.⁴⁰⁷ The racial manifesto of 1938 then banned Schoenberg's music entirely within Italy; however, his influence had been established despite the inconsistent performances of his music, and the reappearance of his music was enthusiastically welcomed.

The music of the Second Viennese School existed quietly within Italy; its diffusion was a gradual process during the years leading to the Second World War. The beginning of dodecaphony in Italy is often attributed to Dallapiccola, whose works during the war were

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 356.

⁴⁰⁶ Cage, "Contemporary Music Festivals Are Held in Italy (1949)," 49-50.

⁴⁰⁷ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 170-1.

infused with serialism. Following *Pierrot Lunaire*, the works of Schoenberg's pupils could be heard in Italian concert halls. Almost ten years following the premiere of *Pierrot Lunaire*, the Swiss conductor, Ernest Ansermet (1883-1969) conducted a work by Schoenberg's student, Alban Berg (1885-1935). Berg was performed regularly, and exerted great influence on his Italian colleagues. Of the principal composers of the Second Viennese School, Sachs explains that "Anton Webern was not well enough known before the Second World War to have played an important role in international musical activities; Alban Berg was thus the only member of the Schoenberg-Berg-Webern school to have established anything that resembled a steady relationship with Italy during the fascist period."⁴⁰⁸ Professional opportunities mandated regular travel to Italy until his death in 1935. Berg's success in Italy helped to ease his wounded pride from the Nazis' ban of his music in Germany; although not a Jew, Berg was associated with Schoenberg who was a Jewish composer and founding father of the disfavoured and "un-German" twelve-tone technique.⁴⁰⁹ In 1933, Berg's Suite from *Wozzeck* (1922) was performed in Rome, a performance that had a pivotal effect on Petrassi. Petrassi remained baffled after his hearing of *Pierrot Lunaire* almost ten years prior, and it was *Wozzeck* that began to unknot the bewilderment he had been feeling. Petrassi testified:

nel 1933 ebbi un 'segnale' da un'esecuzione di musica di tutt'altro genere da quella alla quale ero abituato: fu la Suite da *Wozzeck* diretta a Roma da Ansermet. Il trauma del precedente *Pierrot lunaire* ancora non agiva; ma questo *Wozzeck* mi fece capire che ero privo dei primi elementi per poter esaminare questa musica... dischiuse ai miei occhi qualcosa di molto ambiguo, di molto problematico...⁴¹⁰

in 1933 I had a 'sign' from a performance of music completely different to which I was accustomed: it was the Suite from *Wozzeck* directed in Rome by Ansermet. It did not achieve the former shock of *Pierrot Lunaire*; but this *Wozzeck* made me understand that I

⁴⁰⁸ Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, 171.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Petrassi, "Seminario di composizione," 132.

was lacking the basic elements for understanding this music...He opened my eyes to something greatly ambiguous [and] quite problematic...

Berg became Petrassi's favourite representative of the Second Viennese School, and was paramount to his understanding of this new music. Events like his first hearing of the opera *Wozzeck*, although not realized until the Second World War, belonged to the formation of Petrassi's artistry. As the influence of Berg settled, Petrassi came to utilize "a 12-tone series [that had] a strong melodic inflection in the manner of Berg", most notably in his *Quarto Concerto per orchestra* (1954).⁴¹¹ Of this evolution, Petrassi said:

vivendo nella società, l'artista ha anche un processo interiore di maturazione, maturazione non dico tecnica ma spirituale. Questo vuol dire avere dei pensieri sempre più impegnativi o profondi, pensieri che corrispondono ad uno stato d'animo che è sempre continuamente in divenire... la scoperta di se stesso che accompagna poi il fare dell'opera.⁴¹²

living in society, the artist also has an inner process of maturation, I do not say a maturation of technique, but a spiritual maturation. This means having thoughts that are increasingly challenging or profound, thoughts that correspond to a state of mind that is always constantly in flux...the discovery of himself, which then accompanies the making of the work.

Within a framework of social, political, and cultural influence, each artist is made to pilot one's own artistic journey, a voyage that is always in motion, blends physical and spiritual worlds, and is pursued at one's own pace.

After the war, serialism was no longer a system to be deliberated over, but rather a practice that aggressively overwhelmed musical life and imposed its presence as the chief technique for composers. Those who did not comply with the movement found themselves in the shadows of musical activity, as serialism not only dominated the contemporary musical style, but

⁴¹¹ Restagno, "Petrassi, Goffredo," *Grove Music Online*.

⁴¹² Billi, *Goffredo Petrassi*, 113.

also intellectual discussion. On 4 to 7 May 1949 at Milan, the first *Congresso Internazionale per la Musica Dodecafonica* (*International Congress of Dodecaphonic Music*) was organized by Dallapiccola and Malipiero's nephew, Riccardo Malipiero Junior (1914-2003). Its attendance was modest, "twenty-odd composers", but its attendees included a list of reputable composers.⁴¹³ Among Italian composers such as Dallapiccola, Bruno Maderna (1920-1973) and Camillo Togni (1922-1993),⁴¹⁴ there was fair representation from across Europe including Hans Erich Apostel (1901-1972) of Austrian descent from Germany, Karl Amadeus Hartmann (1905-1963) from Germany, Hanns Jelinek (1901-1969) of Czech descent from Austria, Sándor Jemnitz (1890-1963) from Hungary, and Humphrey Searle (1915-1982) from England.⁴¹⁵ Also present was Cage from the United States of America, who immediately penned a review, "Contemporary Music Festivals Are Held in Italy (1949)" the following month in *Musical America*. His review was not only a report of the Congress' events, but an unabashed opinion of his European contemporaries:

... the listener was introduced to the work of twelve-tone composers who in most cases had enjoyed no direct contact with the Viennese trinity – Schoenberg, Berg and Webern. The will to set out on this unpopular path implies in some cases courage and originality of thought, but in others it is an expression of a European weakness for tradition. Jelinek, Jemnitz, Togni, Hartmann, Searle, and Aspotel bolstered up their dodecaphony with well-known forms from the past – respectively, Bach *Inventions*, Music the Whole World Loves to Play, Italian Impressionism, German Neoclassicism, student counterpoint exercises, and Beethoven – implying on their part a possible lack of faith in the new dispensation.⁴¹⁶

From Cage's critique, the musical program was also made known:

⁴¹³ John Cage, "Contemporary Music Festivals Are Held in Italy (1949)," in *John Cage – Writer: Previously Uncollected Pieces*, selected and introduced by Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Limelight Editions, 1993): 45. Previously published as "Contemporary Music Festivals Are Held in Italy (1949)," *Musical America* (June 1949).

⁴¹⁴ Irna Priore, "Theories of Histories of Serialism: Terminology, Aesthetics, and Practice in Post-War Europe – as Viewed by Luciano Berio," *Theoria* no. 18 (2011): 75.

⁴¹⁵ Cage, "Contemporary Music Festivals Are Held in Italy (1949)," 46.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Just as [Hughes] Cuénod was the hero of the Palermo Festival, so Marcelle Mercenier, playing Anton von Webern's *Variations for Piano*, at a moment's notice, beautifully and sensitively, was the heroine of the Milan Congress. her playing was particularly welcome after that of Massimo Toffoletti, who had made Arnold Schoenberg's *Suite*, Op. 25, unrecognizable. Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite* also suffered at the hands of the Vegh Quartet, who gave it a polished but sugar-sweet rendition. The principle of balance requires that this music, more than most, be read with restraint. Dallapiccola's *Five Fragments from Sappho*, a work that makes audible the beauty of the Italian countryside, its flowers, ruins, and vital nostalgia for the past; and Riegger's *Third Symphony*, a vigorous, thoroughly American work, received happier treatment. They were performed by the Orchestra dei Pomeriggi Musicali di Milano, under the direction of Hermann Scherchen. Krenek's *Kafkalieder*, for voice and piano, were exactly if not beautifully performed by Margherita de Landi and her husband, Edward Staempfli. The couple's concern for details of rhythm and intonation kept this music, which is not without character and vitality, flat and unwinged.⁴¹⁷

The Congress signified Italy's openness to serial music, and garnered varying reactions from the musical public. From Schoenberg, he made known his blessing, and from Pierre Boulez (1925-2016), he made known his contempt.⁴¹⁸ Petrassi, too, was in attendance, but the fanatical culture that accompanied serialism divided those who were present. At this time, Petrassi's only employment of the twelve-tone technique was his cautious dabbling in partial tone rows in *Coro di morti*. This lack of serialism within his repertoire was not a reflection of his disinterest or lack of curiosity, but rather an example of how Petrassi scrutinized and applied a technique only when he felt it vital to a work. Having attended the conference, Petrassi acknowledged, "io ci andai come un parente povero, come uno escluso dai lavori, perché loro erano i depositari di una nuova verità e io non la possedevo ancora, quindi ero un povero reietto."⁴¹⁹ ("I went there as a poor relation, as one excluded from the work, because they were the custodians of a new truth and I was not yet possessed by [serialism], therefore I was a poor outcast.") Beecroft affirmed, "he was

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 49.

⁴¹⁸ Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 206.

⁴¹⁹ Restagno, "Una biografia raccontata dall'autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno," 30.

not part of that avant-garde scene.”⁴²⁰ In turn, two extremes were represented, those who championed Schoenberg’s method, and those who were considered to be cultural pariahs for not adopting dodecaphony.

The influence of Schoenberg soon matched that of Stravinsky, and musicians felt compelled to proclaim devotion to one or the other. Concurrently, the postwar period was accelerating the name of another foreign composer who remedied the tension between the Schoenberg and Stravinsky camps. Bartók, considered the most anti-Fascist among non-Italian composers became a new model for Italian musicians. Although Bartók was respected in Italy prior to the Second World War, he became of even greater importance during the postwar period. To be succinct, in Petrassi’s words, “Bartók indicò la strada della libertà.”⁴²¹ (“Bartók pointed the way to freedom.”) Petrassi had met Bartók fleetingly in 1938 at the Italian premiere of the latter’s *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937) in Venice. He was riveted by Bartók’s presence, but uncertain of his music. There was merit to Bartók’s works, but why could he not comprehend what he heard? Petrassi confessed, “non avevo capito a fondo la musica di Bartók, tuttavia ne intuivo il valore, l’intensità, la profondità.”⁴²² (“I did not fully understand Bartók’s music, but I sensed value, intensity, depth.”) This intuitive response motivated him to study Bartók’s works further, and brought to Petrassi not only an understanding of Bartók’s music, but a greater awareness of Bartók’s role within musical life to his contemporaries. After the war, Petrassi recognized that Bartók “stava proprio lì a indicare che si poteva scegliere diversamente...la dimostrazione di una libertà assoluta, ovvero della possibilità di lavorare senza essere condizionati né da una tecnica né da una poetica determinata”.⁴²³ (“[Bartók] was right

⁴²⁰ Beecroft, interview.

⁴²¹ Pozzi, “La Mia Musica. Intervista di Raffaele Pozzi,” 359.

⁴²² Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 95.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 34.

there to indicate that you could choose otherwise ... the demonstration of absolute freedom, namely the possibility of working without being conditioned either by a technique or a certain poetic”). Bartók therefore released musicians from the confines of either Schoenberg’s or Stravinsky’s musical style, including Petrassi whose works of the mid 1950s later demonstrated this new direction. More than the folksong element, it was Petrassi’s focus on symmetry that reflected Bartók’s style, a simultaneous paralleling of melody, harmony, themes, and shapes. Petrassi’s *Quarto Concerto per orchestra* encapsulated these characteristics. In MacDonald’s critique, he describes “it seems like a first cousin to the Hungarian master’s *Divertimento* and *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, not to mention some of the string quartets... The most deeply Bartókian aspect of Concerto No.4 is its unusual concern with symmetry in melody and harmony - the work abounds in passages in contrary motion - as well as with melodic arch shapes.”⁴²⁴

***Noche oscura* (1950-51)**

The aesthetic progression of Petrassi’s music has been grouped into stylistic periods, and with *Noche oscura* (Dark Night), there is an end to the influence of Neoclassicism, and a foretelling of serial works to come. Framed between *Coro di morti* and *Noche oscura*, a second period was established for Petrassi between the years 1940 and 1950. This decade showcased Petrassi’s heightened awareness of chromaticism, and new expressions of introspection and discernment that were likely stimulated by the events of the war.⁴²⁵ While music enthusiasts awaited the emergence of new composers after the war, music critics encouraged that Petrassi’s music be heeded: “New composers?... Totalitarianism is no fertile soil and one will have to wait for new

⁴²⁴ Calum MacDonald, “Petrassi and the Concerto Principle (II),” *Tempo* 57, no. 225 (July 2003): 13.

⁴²⁵ Bonelli, “Serial Techniques in the Music of Goffredo Petrassi,” 4.

names, reviewing in the meantime Malipiero, Dallapiccola, Ghedini. However, I would recommend Goffredo Petrassi to the attention of our musical authorities. He is undoubtedly one of the coming men.”⁴²⁶ For Petrassi, the days of Hindemith and Stravinsky had now passed, and gradually, he allowed the influence of the avant-garde to intermix with the accumulated styles of his compositional career.⁴²⁷

It was painters, however, who inspired a bravery within him to venture stylistically unfamiliar grounds:

Quando acquistai due quadri di Burri e presi cognizione del movimento pittorico americano con Gorky, Pollock, Kline ecc., in quel momento io considerai anche quello che facevo dal punto di vista musicale...i pittori mi hanno incoraggiato a fare un salto che altrimenti da me solo forse non avrei avuto il coraggio di fare.⁴²⁸

When I bought two paintings by Burri and came to know of the American painting movement with Gorky, Pollock, Kline etc., in that moment I considered as well what I was doing in terms of music...the painters encouraged me to take a leap which otherwise I just maybe would not have dared to do.

This American movement is Abstract Expressionism, a post-World War II movement that was developed in the mid 1940s in New York City. Abstract Expressionism encouraged that an artist express him or herself implicitly with consideration of the whole self; this existential awareness would thus bring forth a synthesis of the conscious and unconscious along such themes as metaphysics.⁴²⁹ Painters of the movement used two techniques: “1. the elimination of specific

⁴²⁶ E.R., “Music in Italy To-day,” *Tempo*, no. 7 (Spring 1948): 13.

⁴²⁷ Having made this statement, it must be noted that although Petrassi had entered a new stylistic period, there are elements of octatonicism in *Noche oscura*. This suggests that the influence of Stravinsky was still somewhat present. It is, however, possible that Petrassi absorbed this style from his Italian contemporaries. In a letter to the editor of *Tempo* (January 1997), John C.G. Waterhouse wrote that some Italian music of the early 1920s also showed tendencies of this style. *Noche oscura* was not Petrassi’s first use of octatonicism. Giorgio Sanguinetti identifies octatonic collections appearing almost a decade sooner in Petrassi’s ballet, *La follia di Orlando*. See “Modi di organizzazione octatonica in ‘La follia di Orlando’ di Goffredo Petrassi” in *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* (2005).

⁴²⁸ Biamonte, “L’intellettuale? Spesso è un manichino in vetrina,” 268.

⁴²⁹ Leon Golub, “A Critique of Abstract Expressionism,” *College Art Journal* 14, no. 2 (Winter 1955): 142.

subject matters and a preference for spontaneous, impulsive qualities of experience. 2. the unfettered brush”.⁴³⁰ Petrassi’s knowledge of Abstract Expressionism encouraged him to also carve a new artistic path. The movement’s encouragement of drawing upon instinct and the unconscious was similarly an opportunity to use his own political and postwar traumas as a source of artistic inspiration. Perhaps as a combined result from the staging of *Coro di morti* and his passion for opera, this second period also revealed his interest in music for theatre, notably two one-act operas, *Il cordovano* (1944-49) and *La Morte dell’aria* (1949-50), and two ballets, *La follia di Orlando* (1942-43) and *Il Ritratto di Don Quixote* (1945). Of his incentive to pursue theatre music at this time, Petrassi explained that “ho fatto delle esperienze teatrali...in cui ho elaborato le mie idee e la mia tecnica cercando di approfondire sempre di più la mia visione dell’arte e l’impegno dell’uomo verso l’arte.”⁴³¹ (“I have some theater experiences ... in which I developed my ideas and my technique trying to deepen even more my vision of art and man's commitment to art.”) However, one of his most pivotal works within his output rests at the end of this period with *Noche oscura*.

With the commencement of World War II, Petrassi abandoned his use of religious text to mirror his inner spiritual void, but with *Noche oscura*, there is a return to spiritual declaration. Whereas *Coro di morti* set a nihilistic dialogue belonging to Leopardi, *Noche oscura* borrowed a poem of the same name from Saint John of the Cross (1542-1591) to purge Petrassi of his own despair. It was not aesthetic concern, so much as spiritual necessity that Petrassi felt bound to use Saint John of the Cross’s words; “È un moto dello spirito per me...un modo di liberarmi da un’infinità di cose spiacevoli...di cose intellettualmente e spiritualmente spiacevoli”⁴³². (“It is a

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 143.

⁴³¹ Petrassi, “Seminario di composizione,” 135.

⁴³² Restagno, “Una biografia raccontata dall’autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno,” 22.

movement of the spirit for me... a way to free myself from an infinite number of unpleasant things...of things intellectually and spiritually uncomfortable”). It is not a return to Catholicism, although his reference to Saint John of the Cross, a Roman Catholic saint, is curious. He expressed, “anch’io seguii il percorso di molti, il percorso normale di chi aderisce per poi, disilluso, vedere franare molte cose intorno a sé.”⁴³³ (“I followed the path of many, the normal path of those who adhere [to propaganda] and then, disillusioned, sees many things collapse around him.”) Consequently, the aftermath of Italian Fascism, “mi ha portato per molti anni a una specie di cinismo, a non credere più quasi in nessun valore.”⁴³⁴ (“led me for many years to a kind of cynicism, not to believe anymore in almost any values.”) As will be discussed, Petrassi’s longing to resurrect the spirituality that had once brought him solace and moral direction, paralleled the dark and solitary journey towards spiritual unity that was depicted in Saint John of the Cross’s *Noche oscura*.

Saint John of the Cross was a Spanish mystic, Roman Catholic saint, co-founder of the Discalced Carmelites with Saint Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), Carmelite friar and priest, and Doctor of the Church. On 2 December 1577, he was abducted and imprisoned by Carmelites who opposed his reform efforts, and for nine months, he remained in a small cell in Toledo where he was physically tortured, humiliated, starved, and isolated. While imprisoned, he began to write until his eventual escape on 15 August 1578. It has been estimated that his *La noche oscura del alma* was written in either 1578 or 1579. Thus, this work is situated in close proximity to his years of brutal persecution. The poem, a sensual description of a mystical experience, is told through symbolism and imagery, and parallels the experiences of Saint John of the Cross’s imprisonment. Darkness is a primary theme, and represents earthly hardships and the necessary

⁴³³ Pozzi, “La Mia Musica. Intervista di Raffaele Pozzi,” 354.

⁴³⁴ Restagno, “Una biografia raccontata dall’autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno,” 25.

trials of spiritual growth. *La noche oscura del alma* is divided into eight stanzas of five lines, and each stanza paints the gradual pursuit of light whereby the narrator's soul is ultimately united with God. Because of this spiritual union, the darkness is to be favoured; souls are brought to light from darkness. Just as the imprisoned Saint John of the Cross sought a physical escape, the narrator of *Noche oscura* sought spiritual fulfillment to release him from the physical confines of his own prison. Similarly, Petrassi sought a purging of the Fascist aftermath that had tarnished his optimism and good faith; "Questo testo lo scelsi non tanto perché era mistico, ma perché consentiva un'interpretazione diciamo terrena, realistica e quindi più umana...che usciamo da dubbio, dal caos della mente per ricercare una luce."⁴³⁵ ("I chose this text not so much because it was mystical, but because it allowed an interpretation we say earthly, realistic and therefore more human... that we get out of doubt, from the chaos of the mind to seek a light.")

Petrassi did not speak Spanish, but retained the poem's original language for his *Noche oscura*:

1. En una noche oscura,
con ansias en emores inflamada,
¡oh dichosa ventura!
salí sin ser notada
estando ya mi casa sosegada.

2. A oscuras y segura
por la secreta escala difrazada
¡oh dichosa ventura!
a oscuras y en celada
estando ya mi casa sosegada.

3. En la noche dischosa
en secreto, que nadie me veía
ni yo mirava cosa
sin otra luz y guía
sino la que en el corazón ardía.

4. Aquesta me guiaba

⁴³⁵ Petrassi, "Seminario di composizione," 136.

más cierto que la luz del mediodía,
adonde me esperaba
quien yo bien me sabía
en parte donde nadia parecía.

5. ¡Oh noche, que guiaste!
¡Oh noche amable más que la alborada!
¡Oh noche, que juntaste
Amada con amada.
amada en al Amado trasformada!

6. En mi pecho florido,
que entero para Él solo se guardaba,
allí quedó dormido,
y yo le regalaba
y el ventalle de cedros aire daba.

7. El aire de la almena
cuando yo sus cabellos esparcía,
con su mano serena
en mi cuello hería,
y todos mis sentidos suspendía.

8. Quedéme y olvidéme,
el rostro recliné, sobre el Amado.
Cesó todo, y dejéme,
dejando mi cuidado
entre las azucenas olvidado.⁴³⁶

The published score includes an Italian translation that is underlaid beneath the Spanish lyrics,
enabling a performance in either language:

1. In una notte oscura.
con ansie, d'amor tutta infiammata,
oh felice ventura!
uscii nè fui notata,
già stando la mia casa addormentata.

2. Nel buio e ben sicura
per la segreta scala trasformata,
oh felice ventura!
nel buio, e ben celata,
già stando la mia casa addormentata.

⁴³⁶ Goffredo Petrassi, *Noche oscura* (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1952): i.

3. Nella notte felice
in segreto, che alcun non mi vedea,
nè io mirava cosa
senz'altra luce o guida
fuori di quella che nel cor ardea.

4. Ed essa mi guidava
più certa che la luce del meriggio,
laddove mi aspettava
chi ben io conosceva,
in parte ove nessuno si scorgea.

5. Oh notte, che guidasti!
Oh notte dolce più che mattinata!
Oh notte che giungesti
l'Amato con l'amata.
l'amata nell'Amato trasformata!

6. Sul mio petto fiorito,
che intatto per Lui solo io mi serbava,
ristette addormentato,
ed io doni donava,
e il ventaglio di cedri ventilava.

7. Nell'aria della vetta,
quando i capelli suoi io gli spargea,
con sua mano serena
il mio collo feria,
e tutti i sensi miei seco rapia.

8. Io giacqui e mi obliai,
il capo reclinato sull'Amato.
Cessò tutto, e lasciai lo spirito abbandonato
Per entro i gigli perdersi obliato.⁴³⁷

To accommodate the nuance of both languages, syllables are aligned with the music, and where necessary, additional notes and rhythms are provided for the Italian translation in a smaller font.

An Italian translation had always been Petrassi's intention, and in interviews, he typically discussed *Noche oscura* using translation: "Permettetemi di leggere qualche verso, in italiano

⁴³⁷ Ibid., ii.

poiché temo di avere una cattiva pronuncia spagnola.”⁴³⁸ (“Let me read a few verses in Italian because I am afraid of having a poor Spanish pronunciation.”) An English translation is also provided here:

1. On a dark night,
Kindled in love with yearnings
—oh, happy chance!—
I went forth without being observed,
My house being now at rest.

2. In darkness and secure,
By the secret ladder, disguised
—oh, happy chance!—
In darkness and in concealment,
My house being now at rest.

3. In the happy night,
In secret, when none saw me,
Nor I beheld aught,
Without light or guide,
save that which burned in my heart.

4. This light guided me
More surely than the light of noonday
To the place where he
(well I knew who!) was awaiting me
— A place where none appeared.

5. Oh, night that guided me,
Oh, night more lovely than the dawn, Oh, night that joined
Beloved with lover,
Lover transformed in the Beloved!

6. Upon my flowery breast,
Kept wholly for himself alone,
There he stayed sleeping,
and I caressed him,
And the fanning of the cedars made a breeze.

7. The breeze blew from the turret
As I parted his locks;
With his gentle hand
he wounded my neck

⁴³⁸ Petrassi, “Seminario di composizione,” 136.

And caused all my senses to be suspended.

8. I remained, lost in oblivion;
My face I reclined on the Beloved.
All ceased and I abandoned myself,
Leaving my cares
forgotten among the lilies.⁴³⁹

Since its beginning, Petrassi's composition has been identified by its Spanish title, *Noche oscura*, but with omission of the definite article. By preserving the poem's original language, there is a carrying on of its authenticity and purity. Saint John of the Cross's poetry and studies of the soul are recognized as pinnacle achievements across all Spanish literature; to have substituted another language would have been to disrupt his literary merit.

Noche oscura, a cantata for mixed chorus and orchestra, was composed between October 1950 and March 1951. Petrassi surrendered to the poem, allowing its physical division and emotional content to direct the composition's structure.⁴⁴⁰ Stanzas are grouped into three sections, establishing three temperaments that correspond to the poem's content, namely a rising action, a climax, and a denouement. The orchestra plays a preparatory and transitional role through the work. At the start, an orchestral prelude establishes an ominous and suspenseful ambiance. Brief solos in the flutes and horns create an unsettling contrast with searing high pitched melodies based on a four-note motif against the deep rumbling of the cellos and the double basses. The prelude ceases when the sopranos and altos begin singing the first stanza; the tenors and basses soon enter to complete the chorus. The voices are haunting, darkly moving, and mournfully lyrical. An orchestral interlude arrives at the first stanza's close, and outlines a pattern by which *Noche oscura* will assume, specifically a musical partition that separates each

⁴³⁹ John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, 3rd rev. ed., ed. and trans. with an introduction by E. Allison Peers from the critical edition of P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, C.D. (Garden City, NY: A Division of Doubleday and Company Inc., 1959), 7.

⁴⁴⁰ Bonelli, "Serial Techniques in the Music of Goffredo Petrassi," 8.

stanza. *Noche oscura* is grouped into three sections: part one is inclusive of stanzas one through four, part two is inclusive of stanza five, and part three is inclusive of stanzas six through eight.⁴⁴¹ Stanza five contains the climax of the work when the soul finally merges with God.⁴⁴² Petrassi illustrates the soul's achievement of spiritual glory by unifying the chorus in rhythmic unison with the lines, "¡Oh noche, que guiaste! ¡Oh noche amable más que la alborada!" (Example 6.3). Just as the soul is one with God, the four voices of the chorus sing as one. The first phrase, measures 125 to 126, is based entirely on the third octatonic collection (CIII), with the exception of the C-sharp in the soprano voice. As the second phrase begins in measure 127, the soprano line continues in octatonic CIII, while the bass line now sings in the second octatonic collection (CII). The score instructs the choir to sing *molto sostenuto*, while rising for the first time to triple forte. This dynamic marking emphasizes the significance of this moment, as prior to this, *Noche oscura* seldom rises above *mezzo piano*. The orchestral interlude that follows this stanza is the lengthiest and most dramatic of the cantata; it describes the emotional settling of euphoria from rapture to serenity. The tempo markings alone sketch the soul's emotional journey: Allegretto mosso, sereno; Poco più animato; Andante calmo (senza trascinare); Adagio; movendo un poco; Molto calmo. The effect is undeniably momentous.

⁴⁴¹ Calum MacDonald, "'Tutt' ora vivente': Petrassi and the Concerto Principle," *Tempo*, New Series, no. 194 (October 1995): 9.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

Example 6.3: *Noche oscura* (mm. 125 to 130)⁴⁴³

Noche oscura
Molto sostenuto

S. *ff* *ff*
i Oh no - che, que gui - as - te! i Oh no - che a - ma - ble más que la al - bo - ra - da!
Oh not - te, che gui - da - sti! Oh not - te dol - ce più che mat - ti - na - ta!

C. *ff* *ff*
i Oh no - che, que gui - as - te! i Oh no - che a - ma - ble más que la al - bo - ra - da!
Oh not - te, che gui - da - sti! Oh not - te dol - ce più che mat - ti - na - ta!

T. *ff* *ff*
i Oh no - che, que gui - as - te! i Oh no - che a - ma - ble más que la al - bo - ra - da!
Oh not - te, che gui - da - sti! Oh not - te dol - ce più che mat - ti - na - ta!

B. *ff* *ff*
i Oh no - che, que gui - as - te! i Oh no - che a - ma - ble más que la al - bo - ra - da!
Oh not - te, che gui - da - sti! Oh not - te dol - ce più che mat - ti - na - ta!

Noche oscura by Goffredo Petrassi
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Petrassi's character has proven to be one of introspection, prudence and sensitivity; similarly, the serial elements of his *Noche oscura* were carefully and meaningfully constructed. *Noche oscura* is propelled by a central four-note motif, belonging to octatonic CIII. This motif appears immediately in the first measure: in half notes, the harp and the double bass simultaneously outline a short series of B, C, G-sharp, A, or two semitones divided by a descending major third.⁴⁴⁴ Petrassi likened the recurrence of this figure to Bach's famed musical signature, B-flat, A, C, B-natural; "[*Noche oscura*] essa comincia con quattro note-simbolo...Si, Do, Sol diesis, La. Questa la matrice di tutto il lavoro...Queste note hanno un vago legame anche col nome BACH, simbolo sacro a tutti i musicisti."⁴⁴⁵ ([*Noche oscura*] begins with a four-note motif...B, C, G-sharp, A. This is the matrix of the whole work...These notes also have a faint connection with the name BACH, a sacred symbol to all musicians.") The difference between the motifs is

⁴⁴³ Petrassi, *Noche oscura*, 34-35.

⁴⁴⁴ MacDonald, "Tutt' ora vivente': Petrassi and the Concerto Principle," 9.

⁴⁴⁵ Petrassi, "Seminario di composizione," 137.

that Bach's motif belongs to the chromatic scale, and Petrassi's motif belongs to the octatonic mode, a subset of the chromatic scale. Further, Petrassi intended that this motif be understood as "un riferimento simbolico dello spirito"⁴⁴⁶ ("a symbolic reference of the spirit"). This knowledge unravels a complexity of the work, as the motivic transformations can now be understood as a manifestation of the soul's quest towards its Creator. Just as the soul must experience its own tribulations before emerging towards the light, the motif must experience a series of changes before celebrating the soul's mystical triumph. At the climax, as the chorus sings of the soul's joining with God, there is an eruption of the four-note pattern throughout the orchestra, and when the chorus announces that the spiritual union is complete ("transformada!"), all sounding orchestral instruments then perform the motif in rhythmic unison. In Example 6.4, the choir begins with a G-sharp triad in measure 143, recalling the motif's home mode of octatonic CIII. In the next measure (m. 144), the motif G, A-flat, E, F from octatonic CII is repeated by the bass instruments, and then joined in measure 145 by the harp's motif of D, E-flat, B, C from octatonic CIII. This overlapping of modes also establishes parallel fifths. It may be that the parallel fifths sound was intended by Petrassi to evoke memories of medieval music, a nod to his musical past. Weissmann described the moment as "a stroke of genius. The tension leads to an acute dissonance, to be relinquished into a luminous concord at the mystical union. As always in great art, the effectiveness of the device is in direct proportion to its simplicity."⁴⁴⁷ Petrassi's use of the twelve-tone technique not only demonstrated his own creative independence, but a vigilant mindfulness of *Noche oscura*'s aesthetic design. Further, his resistance to adopt the technique in its entirety had him commended in the press, "this power of assimilation, the capacity to

⁴⁴⁶ Billi, *Goffredo Petrassi*, 117.

⁴⁴⁷ Weissmann, "Current Chronicle," 265.

transform extraneous influences instead of merely accommodating them, raises Petrassi above many of his contemporaries.”⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 266.

Example 6.4: *Noche oscura* (mm. 143 to 146)⁴⁴⁹

Noche oscura

Goffredo Petrassi

ritenendo Molto sostenuto 145

Fl. *f cresc.*

Ob. *f*

V. Ing.

Cl.

Cl. B.

Fg.

C. Fg.

Cr.

Trb.

Trbn.

Timp.

Batt. *Tam t. grande (f.v.)*

Ar.

S. *ma - da, trans - for - ma - da!* *sf* *Ah!* *sostenere*

C. *ma - da, trans - for - ma - da!* *sf* *Ah!* *sostenere*

T. *trans - for - ma - da!* *sf* *Ah!* *sostenere*

B. *trans - for - ma - da!* *sf* *Ah!* *sostenere*

Vni. *ritenendo* *a2* *f cresc.* *Molto sostenuto* *sf* *Div.*

Vle. *f cresc.*

Vc.

Cb.

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⁴⁴⁹ Petrassi, *Noche oscura*, 39.

Coro di morti was a tentative exploration of partial tone rows, and Petrassi's first suggestion of Schoenberg's twelve-tone system. A decade passed until Petrassi decided to re-visit this method and attempt a more orthodox application of serialism. Yet, orthodox for Petrassi was not a strict adherence to the rules, as his contemporaries were demonstrating, but a personal vernacular that was blended with the learned and favoured styles of his own aesthetic.

MacDonald describes serialism as a necessity for Petrassi's harmonic development:

Clearly Petrassi came to value serial operations as a means of securing motivic/harmonic consistency and inter-relation. But not to resurrect or invigorate classical or post-classical forms. With him the series became less a generator of meaning, the nub and kernel of the argument, than the thread along which the music would be spun, the means to release the untrammelled play of tones and affect, which is the music's real meaning, from the need for symmetry or recapitulation.⁴⁵⁰

Macdonald's description echoes Petrassi's discussion of serialism in *Noche oscura*:

Certamente lo sviluppo era inteso come elaborazione di materiali tematici...vorrei ricordare ancora le varie trasformazioni...guarda caso, sono tutte le manipolazioni seriali schoenberghiane. C'è una forte componente conservatrice in Schoenberg [però]...Per quanto mi riguarda...l'elemento più vitale e permanente delle mie composizioni è sempre stato quello contrappuntistico.⁴⁵¹

Of course the development was intended as an elaboration of thematic material...I should still mention the various transformations...as it turns out, they are all Schoenbergian serial manipulations. There is a strong conservative element in Schoenberg [however]...In my opinion...the most vital and steady feature of my compositions has always been the counterpoint.

Within Italy, serial techniques were being applied by many Italian composers including Dallapiccola, Maderna, R. Malipiero, Riccardo Nielsen (1908-1982), Nono, and Togni. Of his own use of the twelve-tone technique, Petrassi said, "Insomma, ho adoperato questa tecnica con una specie di libertinaggio, secondo i miei piaceri, e non secondo le imposizioni della regola...Il creatore deve essere, per sua natura, assolutamente infedele; infedele a tutto, meno che a se

⁴⁵⁰ MacDonald, "Petrassi and the Concerto Principle (II)," 9.

⁴⁵¹ Petrassi, "Seminario di composizione," 138, 140.

stesso”.⁴⁵² (“In short, I have used this technique with a kind of debauchery, according to my pleasures, and not according to the impositions of the rule...The creator must be, by nature, absolutely unfaithful; unfaithful to everything except himself”). While neither a full adoption of Schoenberg’s technique nor a complete serial composition, *Noche oscura* is regarded as Petrassi’s first true serial work for its serialist suggestions. Bonelli states:

The cantata may indeed mark the conclusion of one period, but in its use of serialism, it foreshadowed the gradual adoption of dodecaphonic procedures in Petrassi’s subsequent compositions...Prior to 1950, no significant serial procedures were found. The cantata...uses a four-note set which is also contrasted with non-serial elements. Nevertheless, the set and its transformations are of primary importance in the score, making this Petrassi’s first truly serial composition.⁴⁵³

As a result of his exploration with chromaticism in the 1940s, as noted earlier with *Coro di morti*, *Noche oscura* was both an end product of his chromatic study and a discernible change in direction in his creative development.

Until *Noche oscura*, Petrassi’s aesthetic journey hinged on the inspiration of his contemporaries, the influence of Italian tradition, and the effect of his socio-political circumstances. His adoption of serialism, however, was partially embedded in a personal fear that by not using it, he was at risk of becoming irrelevant and outdated. Within a musical culture that had been overtaken by serialism, “Provai la sensazione di essermi smarrito, di trovarmi totalmente ai margini; non sapevo più che cosa fare, che cosa pensare”⁴⁵⁴. (“I had the feeling that I was lost, of being totally at the edge; I did not know anymore what to do, what to think”). In our conversation, Beecroft recalled a moment when she sensed Petrassi’s distress, implying that his artistic struggle with the avant-garde had remained with him beyond his years of *Noche oscura*:

⁴⁵² Ibid., 140-41.

⁴⁵³ Bonelli, “Serial Techniques in the Music of Goffredo Petrassi,” iv, viii.

⁴⁵⁴ Restagno, “Una biografia raccontata dall’autore e raccolta da Enzo Restagno,” 30-31.

I can remember going to a concert where Luciano Berio's work [was performed]...it was quite avant-garde at that point. I remember watching Petrassi's face, and I thought, 'He's a bit mystified by what's going on with contemporary music.' Maybe that was unfair, but I could see his consternation in a certain way. Also, my own feeling was that he was reflecting on his own position in the society, in the music world because his writing was very solid, very stable. It certainly would not have been called avant-garde at that time even, so I think he was having his own difficulties, just like Stravinsky in Stravinsky's later life. He tried working with serialism.⁴⁵⁵

The war had changed everything about Italian society, and it was necessary for Italians to establish a new way of life post-Fascism and postwar. Petrassi recognized he could no longer fasten his hopes to a vision of life that no longer existed. He too needed to change; "sentivo che tutto quello che avevo adoperato cominciava ad essere un po' frusto: cambiavano i tempi, cambiava la società, cambiava il mondo ed io non potevo rimanere insensibile...come se avessi bisogno di una linfa nuova."⁴⁵⁶ ("I felt that everything I had employed was becoming somewhat shabby: times were changing, society was changing, the world was changing and I could not remain indifferent...I needed a new life-blood.") For Petrassi, serialism became a remedy by which he could resolve his perceived inadequacy, better his musical expression, and release the anguish that plagued him after the disillusionment with war and with Italian Fascism.

Noche oscura was performed for the first time in June 1951 at the Strasbourg Festival, and conducted by Mario Rossi (1902-1992), to whom the work was dedicated. *Noche oscura* was instantly acclaimed a masterpiece. *The Musical Quarterly* published the following review:

The strength of *Noche Oscura* lies in its remarkably consistent design: in its correlation of formal elements with other factors of musical construction. And their perfect fusion and balance in addition to the lofty nature of its spiritual message would confirm the belief that *Noche Oscura* is a masterpiece: it will in all probability retain a distinguished position in both Petrassi's *oeuvre* and contemporary music in general.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁵ Beecroft, interview.

⁴⁵⁶ Galliano, "La germinazione della musica nella musica stessa," 365.

⁴⁵⁷ Weissmann, "Current Chronicle," 267.

Noche oscura initiated Petrassi into the domain of serialism, even though *Noche oscura* is not wholly a serial work. Despite his uncertainty of this new musical culture, after *Noche oscura* Petrassi continued with his own non-dogmatic application of serialism, although never to the extent of Italian frontrunners as Dallapiccola. The four-note subject of *Noche oscura*, an application of serial techniques drawn from the octatonic mode, was reprised in subsequent serial works that addressed similar themes of humanity, suffering and solitude, such as *Beatudines* (1968-9) and *Orationes Christi* (1974-5).⁴⁵⁸ Additionally, with a return to large choral works in Italy, Petrassi was recognized in the press as a model for great choral composition:

The new and genuine Italian artistic demand now opening its way (though no programme has been laid down) is represented by a return to a chorus with many voices. This mode of expression which, sometimes, recalls to our minds the mystic ‘Laude’ of the Middle Ages, is particularly felt by such composers as Petrassi and Turchi. It is an interesting parallelism with Perosi's sacred music and is the finest revaluation of the human chorus that for so many decades had been surpassed by the skill of the virtuoso.⁴⁵⁹

For Petrassi, music was his diary, the medium through which he articulated his inner torments and displayed how he was artistically and personally a changed man. He avowed, “La musica, come tutta l'arte, deve far parte del nostro pensiero, del nostro respiro, della nostra stessa vita.”⁴⁶⁰ (“Music, like all art, must be part of our thoughts, our breath, our very lives.”) Petrassi is often overshadowed by Dallapiccola in the discussion of postwar serialism. However, Petrassi’s later works, although not fully serial, are valid and compelling contributions, particularly for his ability to assimilate new styles within his own musical language.

⁴⁵⁸ Restagno, “Petrassi, Goffredo,” *Grove Music Online*.

⁴⁵⁹ Vittorio Paolo Gelmetti, “Contemporary Italian music,” *East and West* 1, no. 2 (July 1950): 111.

⁴⁶⁰ Petrassi, *Autoritratto*, 56.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

From *Salmo IX* to *Noche oscura*, Petrassi sought expression through text and music to subtly impart his changing feelings towards the regime. The diversity of his musical influences and the impact of political events shaped a unique sound, a blending and a personal idiom of multiple techniques. In turn, his music became a testimony of a life lived under Fascist rule, and provides a meaningful impression of one of the least studied periods of Italian musical history. Politics, culture, society, and contemporary movements influenced the evolution of Italian music, and the allure of fame through relations with the regime swayed many to compose against their artistic truths.

At the height of Mussolini's celebrity, Petrassi was one of many composers who celebrated him through music. Political gesture was infrequent in Petrassi's music, but unmistakably pronounced in *Salmo IX*, a musical allegory of the Italian dictator. Nonetheless, when compared with the overt activities of his colleagues, *Salmo IX* was a subdued homage. Petrassi's music did not afford him the same privileges and opportunities as reaped by Pizzetti, who was generously decorated with prestigious awards and titles in exchange for his artistic compliance and promotion of ideology. Yet, Petrassi did experience a successful career under Fascism by complying with orders from Fascist authorities at the cultural institutions where he filled esteemed posts. His signature on anti-Semitic documents, while General Director at Teatro La Fenice, is a prominent example. This is not to imply that Petrassi was anti-Semitic in his private life - in fact, evidence indicates that he was not – but providing a signature to dismiss Jewish musicians from their posts at the theatre was a voluntary and public act of commitment to racial laws. This one example underlines how Petrassi's compliance contributed to the propagation of Fascism, and echoes Gramsci's theory of consent towards cultural hegemony.

Petrassi's contemporaries frequently corresponded with the regime; it was a regular practice for many in an attempt to request favours of personal audiences, as exploited by Pizzetti. For Petrassi, however, no evidence exists or has been discovered that supports a direct communication between him and Mussolini. A thorough investigation of primary documents, as a result of this dissertation's preparation, suggests that Petrassi's character would have militated against ingratiating himself with the regime. Unlike Respighi, whose legacy remains confounded with Fascism after the regime appropriated some of his music, Petrassi's music was spared. One may question whether Petrassi was naïve to accept de Pirro's invitations for government employment, but these opportunities contributed to the rising status of his musical career. He fulfilled government orders, even those that were displeasing and uncomfortable, and his consent supported de Pirro's decision to appoint Petrassi in critical roles of cultural leadership.

Petrassi's fluctuating view of Italian Fascism found expressions in his music: *Salmo IX* marked a celebration of Italy's new and "heroic" prime minister, *Coro di morti* marked the devastation of World War II, and *Noche oscura* marked an attempt to re-build one's faith in man and the spiritual world after a life lived under Fascism. Political events forced a change in Petrassi's compositional style because of how they affected him inwardly, and consequently divided his repertoire into creative periods; it is this organic and sequential progression that became this dissertation's blueprint. Within this political structure, there existed the influences of Nationalism, Modernism, Neoclassicism, Futurism, religion, and identity. Not only did these forces inundate the modern world, but for musicians, they were also compounded with an influx of new sound: the Second Viennese School and other forms of new music, such as jazz.

The *Partita per orchestra* captured the aggressive and pompous energy of Fascism, and won him first prize at a musical festival sponsored by the regime. It also established a musical

baseline of his earlier compositional style. Petrassi's sudden fame was overwhelming, and began a spiralling of introspective questioning. As Fascism entered its most favourable period with many Europeans in the mid 1930s, Petrassi allowed his political naïveté to flourish with *Salmo IX*. As the honouring of Fascism began to dissipate, particularly with the imposition of racial laws in 1938, Petrassi maintained a dwindling faith in the regime. However, regardless of his private opinion, as an employee of the government he continued to comply with Fascist instruction and to receive grander opportunities for work. It was the proclamation of war that crumbled his world, and disillusioned a man who so desperately wanted to believe in the goodness of humanity.

Bereft of faith, his soul was void and vulnerable to nihilistic rationale. *Coro di morti* was the expression of his personal tragedy, a philosophical questioning of life's purpose and meaning that borrowed dark poetry from Leopardi's "Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie". At the same time, his contemporary Dallapiccola was expressing his own duress with *Canti di prigionia* and then *Il prigioniero*. Like Petrassi, *Canti* was Dallapiccola's musical response to political injustice, and marked the beginning of his protest music. After the war, Petrassi attempted to rebuild his artistic and spiritual self through serialism and a return to divine text, this time using the words of Saint John of the Cross. *Noche oscura* introduced new musical aesthetics for Petrassi, while maintaining the themes of spirituality and human righteousness. These same themes also pervaded his later works like *Beatitudes: Testimonianza per Martin Luther King* (1969), his tribute to the humanitarian and activist, Martin Luther King Junior (1929-1968). Likewise, Dallapiccola's sense of liberation after the war was manifested in another expressive work, *Canti di liberazione*.

As outlined in the literature review, research on both Petrassi and the musical life of Fascist Italy has been sporadic and scarce with only minimal resources for English readers. While there are various scholars who have contributed to the field, only a few have remained focused on Italian Fascism and music as their specialty, namely Earle, Nicolodi, Sachs, and Waterhouse. In general, it is Dallapiccola who has overshadowed Petrassi, a development that has likely occurred because of Dallapiccola's appeal as an extroverted and controversial individual, and one who epitomised the dynamics of a suffering man. It is likely that Dallapiccola's thorough and early embracing of serialism made him more identifiably mainstream than Petrassi. Although both composers were distressed by the same crisis, Petrassi was shy and less bold in his behaviour; accordingly, he was more introverted in the exploration of his own torments. Perhaps it has been judged as falsely less interesting to dissect the mind of the quiet man; nevertheless, the complexity and depth of Petrassi was, for myself, a soulful experience.

My hope is that the original research presented here constitutes a meaningful and necessary contribution on Petrassi and his era. Scholarship has commonly isolated Petrassi as a man or as an artist. In truth, his artistry did not distinguish between these two spheres. Instead, the aesthetics of his work existed on a deeper and more complex plane. There was no division for Petrassi, and he relied on the co-dependence of these elements for the production of an authentic art. Understanding Italian musical culture against a tyrannical background provides a new insight to the musical output of the time, in this case, of Petrassi's music. Despite the cruelty of Italian Fascism, Petrassi continued to develop as a composer, and in fact forged new techniques in response to the injustices inflicted by Italian Fascism and the onset of war. Unlike many of his colleagues, Petrassi did not compromise his artistic identity in exchange for his endorsement of

Mussolini's regime; instead, his style was a steady collection of techniques for the release and the expression of his inner torments. A detailed tracing of Petrassi's aesthetic development has presented a very personal journey that has not yet been brought to light.

The methodology used, specifically the alignment of primary resources against historical circumstances and musical analyses, has demonstrated that external factors are influential upon one's psyche and artistry. I chose to prioritize the cultural context of Petrassi's career over detailed analyses of music in order to understand more closely the circumstances that influenced his musical direction. In this way, an in-depth analysis of the evolution of Petrassi's compositional style, the musical life of Fascist Italy, and the psychological and emotional effects of Fascism could be closely examined. In detailing the socio-political background of the period, one can better understand how Mussolini successfully overlaid a war-torn country with authoritarian principles, and why many Italians so easily fell to his knees in faith and obedience. After the devastation of the Great War, there was a desperation for life, as it was previously known, to be restored. My interview with Elide and Vincenzo Paolone was a testimony of two lives lived under Mussolini's rule, and authenticated the terror of the regime, the effects of propaganda, and the polished insincerity of Mussolini. Man is, I believe, innately hopeful; hope soothes and stimulates endurance. Italy's misfortune was to trust a disguised saviour; Mussolini took advantage of his people's mourning, and as a result, Italians were led astray by his bravado and deception in his pursuit for power and dominance.

For the first time, this dissertation also made available English translations of primary resources that are currently only available in the original Italian. My translations of Petrassi's autobiography, writings, conversations, and interviews support Petrassi's gradual disenchantment, a state that was entirely realized when Mussolini announced that Italy would

fight alongside Germany in the Second World War. These documents and the situating of Petrassi's own introspection affirm the influence of political events on Petrassi's aesthetic journey between the years 1930 and 1950. This dissertation was further strengthened by the oral histories so kindly provided to me by two of his renowned students, Beecroft and Morricone. From these interviews, an intimate portrait of Petrassi as man, teacher and composer was sketched. It is my desire that by making this distinctive material available, I may open avenues for future research.

The gradual dismantling of Petrassi's ideals and belief in humanity appear in his music as carefully crafted and expressive works. It was not in his character to challenge the regime, and neither could he vocally contest Mussolini's decision to return Italy to war; composition could be his only expression. Petrassi's music, his spiritual autobiography, is an expression of his inner world, and the examination of his creative evolution reveals a sensitive and independent artist, as well as a man consumed by morality, faith, and humanity. While this is a brief musicological study, it also demonstrates the vulnerability and resilience of the human spirit at a time of brokenness. "È perciò naturale" ("It is therefore natural"), Petrassi once said, "che la sua anima proceda di pari passo con quella che potremmo chiamare l'estetica personale."⁴⁶¹ ("that [an artist's] soul goes hand in hand with what we might call his personal aesthetic.")

⁴⁶¹ Rinaldi, "Il *Magnificat* di Goffredo Petrassi," 196.

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This bibliography is organized by category, so as to provide the reader with convenient method of locating sources. I list here all cited materials, as well as works consulted in the development of my own ideas and the writing of this dissertation. The reader should not consider this a complete record of all sources related to the topic, but a catalogue that demonstrates the extent and variation of works consulted in the writing of this dissertation.

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Appendix A: Unpublished Correspondence from Petrassi to Beecroft

Correspondence is courtesy of Norma Beecroft, and is printed for the first time with permission.

Figure 1: Petrassi to Beecroft. Typed letter dated 15 November 1958.

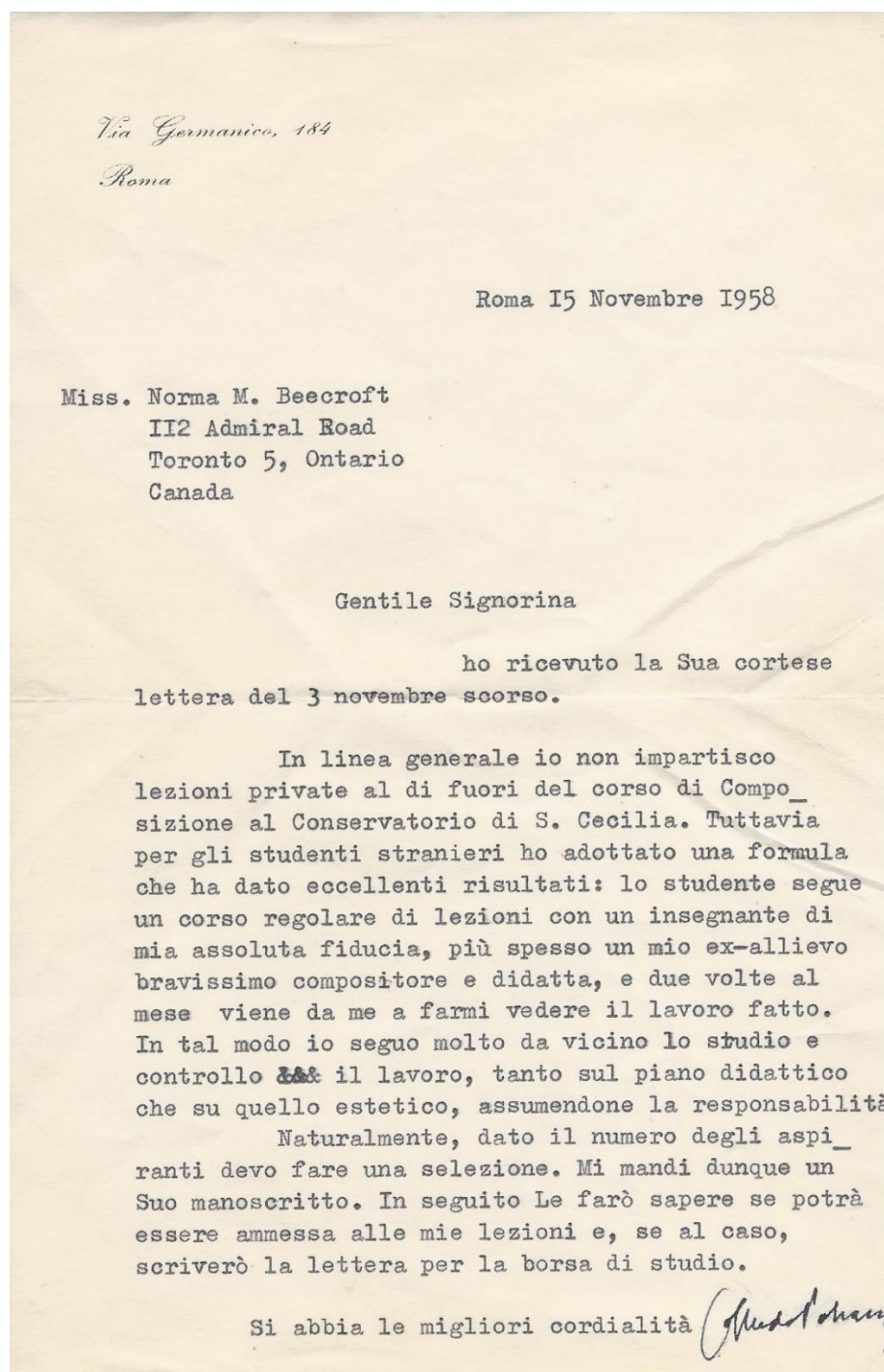


Figure 2: Petrassi to Beecroft. Handwritten letter dated 3 November 1959.

GOFFREDO PETRASSI

3 Nov. 1959

Gentile Signora
 tornando ora dal Giappone ed
 apprendo che lei è qui. Mi telefoni
 uno di questi giorni [sarò ancora a
 Roma dal 10 al 15 del mese] e sarò
 lieto di incontrarla. ~~Abbiamo~~ abitiamo
 molto vicino. A presto, con molta
 cordialità

Goffredo Petrassi

Figure 3: Petrassi to Beecroft. Handwritten letter dated 10 October 1960.

VIA GERMANICO, 184
ROMA

10 ottobre 1960

Cara Nonna

Sono molto curioso di conoscere le sue reazioni alle esperienze musicali estive, tedesche ed inglesi - Capisco; grande confusione, ma non bisogna prendere tutto sul serio quello che avviene e quello che si dice in questi due mobili luoghi di ricreazione, soprattutto a Darmstadt. Col tempo sparisce la schiuma dell'eccitazione [pensi alla birra bavarese] e si vede ciò che rimane nel fondo.

Figure 4: Petrassi to Beecroft. Handwritten letter dated 10 October 1960.

Mi farà tanto piacere di
 rivederla a Roma. Non c'è
 esame di ammissione al
 secondo anno. Venga dunque
 quando vuole; sappia però che
 ho intenzione di iniziare il
 corso verso il 20 gennaio -
 Le auguro sinceramente di
 poter trovare una conveniente
 sistemazione per superare quel
 fastidioso problema [antipatico,
 ci spinge da tutte le parti].
 Tutti cari saluti del suo
 professore [per modo di dire]
 Ottavio Petrassi

Figure 5: Petrassi to Beecroft. Handwritten letter dated 1 January 1964.

1.1.1964

GOFFREDO PETRASSI

Cara Nanna,

 mi moglie, la piccola Alessandra
 ed io le inviamo tanti cari auguri,
 ringraziandola dei suoi vœux sincères
 che sono stati molto graditi.

 Come sta? Non so più niente di
 lei e del suo lavoro, vorrei sapere
 in quale situazione si trova.

Figure 6: Petrassi to Beecroft. Handwritten letter dated 1 January 1964.

Noi abbiamo avuto una bella bambina
 il 3 dicembre, è sana, magnifica
 et extrêmement jolice, siamo molto
 felici.

 Mi scriva, e mi abbia un affettuoso
 ricordo e saluti dal

Goffredo Petrassi

anche Rosetta la ricorda affettuosamente

Appendix B: Unpublished Photographs of Beecroft, Petrassi, and Colleagues

Photographs are courtesy of Norma Beecroft, and are printed for the first time with permission.

Image 1: Left to Right: Will Eisma, unknown, Virtú Maragno, Norma Beecroft, Goffredo Petrassi, unknown. Undated photograph.



Image 2: Left to Right: Jorge Peixinho, unknown, Norma Beecroft, Goffredo Petrassi, Will Eisma. Seated: Virtú Maragno. Undated photograph.



Image 3: Left to Right: Goffredo Petrassi, Norma Beecroft, Will Eisma, Virtú Maragno. April 1960, Rome.



Image 4: Left to Right: Goffredo Petrassi, Norma Beecroft, Will Eisma, Jorge Peixinho.
April 1960, Rome.



Image 5: Left to Right: Rivka Golani, Goffredo Petrassi, Norma Beecroft. Undated photograph, Toronto.



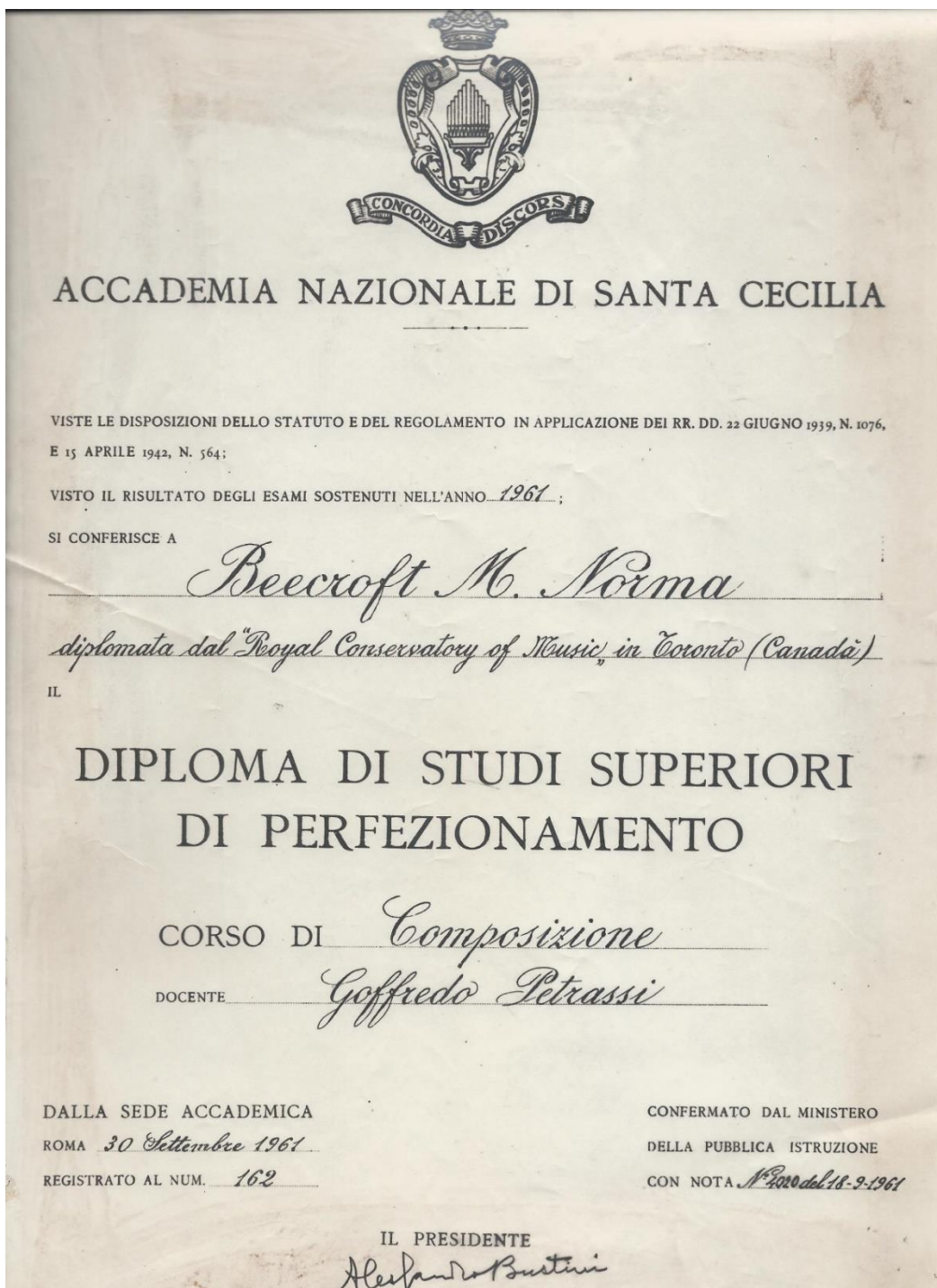
Image 6: Norma Beecroft and Goffredo Petrassi. 1985 at the Italian Cultural Institute in Toronto.



Appendix C: Beecroft's Diploma di studi superiori di perfezionamento

Diploma is courtesy of Norma Beecroft, and is printed with permission.

Figure 7: Beecroft's composition diploma from Santa Cecilia. 30 September 1961, Rome.



Appendix D: Modified Transcript of My Interview with Norma Beecroft

This transcript is a modification of an interview conducted between myself and Norma Beecroft on 18 November 2012 at 2:00 p.m. (EST) in Oshawa, Ontario. The interview was recorded digitally, and is 1:26:14 in its original length.

Norma Beecroft (NB). Well, I should go back. I was in Tanglewood in 1958, and at that time there were a lot of really quite amazing people there including Zubin Mehta, Claudio Abbado, Mario Davidovsky, people that were big names, you know, or became big names. Claudio Abbado and I we got quite friendly and chit-chatting and he said I should go and study with Petrassi, so that is how I got to the Italian side of things.

Alessia Macaluso (AM). Oh, I was wondering how it all came together.

NB. Well, the curious thing was most people, Canadian composers of my generation or a little bit older, went to France and they studied with Nadia Boulanger or Honegger or people like that, but nobody sort of went to Italy, so it was kind of an interesting choice. And so, I wrote to Petrassi, and he said that I should bone-up on my Italian, but he was going to be starting to teach a new class at the Academy of Saint Cecilia in Rome, the *Corso di perfezionamento* it was called. And, he was just going to start this course and he would welcome me into the class. I had sent him scores and everything else like that, so he knew what I was trying to do with my composition-life as it were. Anyways, so over I went. I had met with him in the fall of 1959, and his course started in January 1960, and it was really about four or five months and it was a two year course. One of these pictures was taken in April – yeah, this one here – it was taken in April 1960; I even put the date on it, and it was an interesting class. There was very few composers, but they came from all over the world. This chap, Will Eisma, was from Holland. This chap, Virtú Maranjo he was from Peru, and there is – well, that's the same group – it was fairly small. Oh, there is Jorge Peixinho who was from Portugal, and this chap here, he was from Israel and he came into the class in I believe in the second year, but I can't remember his name for love or for money. It may come to me. These were basically who these people are. We had this kind of two year relationship as a class, and at the end of the course, we were given an exam. It was an incredible exam actually because we had to write a piece for orchestra in literally three or four months and do two analyses, written analyses, in Italian.

AM. That's intense. How did you – you didn't speak Italian before.

NB. No, I had studied Italian grammar before I went there, and then I continued to study the language with a teacher there. I had a very good, quick ear for it. Anyway, so I managed to write these – I was so proud of myself, writing these papers, these analyses, two of them. One of them was on *Don Giovanni*, and the other one was on a piece by Stravinsky, a later composition by Stravinsky, and I had to do the analyses and write it all up in Italian. I ended up with nine out of ten points. I was the highest in the class.

AM. Wow! Not bad.

NB. Not bad for a female, eh?

AM. Not bad! Congratulations; that must have felt good.

NB. Well, it did, and then, I wrote a piece. I was studying with Gazzelloni at the same time, Severino Gazzelloni, the great flute player of that era. I was never a very good flute player, but anyway, I knew how to write for the flute and I had started to write a piece for the flute and orchestra, so that became my piece for the exam and that was called *Improvvisazioni Concertanti No.1*. So, that was the piece that was performed as part of the exam to a public. It was quite an amazing event actually. So, anyway that was sort of the end of it, but I kept in contact with Petrassi. He was a very, very friendly person, and he learned to speak rather slowly in Italian because he had all these foreigners in the class who didn't necessarily speak Italian, but he wanted everything to be understood.

AM. That's really sensitive and kind of him.

NB. Yeah, he was very sensitive to his students, and at that time, he was not married. He had been – I had heard this by the Italian grapevine - that he had been involved with, for many years, an Italian painter, and he eventually married her when his mother died. It was really kind of a strange, very Italian kind of situation, you know. Either way the mother didn't approve or whatever, I have no idea - it sounds very Italian to me in retrospect – and they had a child actually, a daughter. And when he came over – now that would have been 1985, I believe because that was the year that I wrote the piece on the occasion of the anniversary of Bach's 300th and Alban Berg's 100th anniversary, and my piece that I wrote was called *Je Tu Je Deux*, and I used found music from Bach and from Alban Berg. So, I remember it clearly because he was there for that for that piece.

AM. That's a special moment.

NB. Yeah, and we brought him over and he came over with his daughter, and he wouldn't let his daughter go out with anybody. He was so protective of her.

AM. Very Italian, again!

NB. Exactly, but the daughter was eventually allowed to go out chaperoned with other Italian people. Now of course, he was a very big name. This picture, this other picture, was taken with Rivka Golani. I didn't date that one, I can't remember, but it was taken before then, obviously he is much younger, and it was an occasion, some event given by the Italian Cultural Institute in Toronto, and that was where this picture was taken, and I got very familiar with them from having been in Italy and whatnot so I was constantly involved to a lot of their Anglo-Italian events, you know.

AM. So, you stayed in touch him once you returned to Canada?

NB. Yes, I did, I did, sporadically albeit. I had been invited to his place for meals and things like that. You know, he was that kind of a person, especially when he got married to the painter, and she was a beautiful woman. She was very very vivacious, stunning-looking person. Obviously, this had been a long-time relationship. Unfortunately, I did lose contact. I was in after this event

here, probably because I had left New Music Concerts in 1989, and I was up to here with contemporary music. I needed a break from the whole thing, so I sort of lost contact with what was going on in the rest of the world and I have no idea when he died. You probably know that.

AM. 1904 to 2003 are his dates.

NB. 1904? Oh dear, he was earlier than I thought then. Oh my goodness, he was almost 100; he was 99! Wow.

AM. It must have said a lot for his spirit then.

NB. Well, like I said, I lost contact with him in the latter years, and I'm sorry in a way that I did. I used to try and write in Italian, but of course the Italian got not so fluent as the more I lived back in Canada

AM. Well, let's go back then to when you were studying with him. I am curious. Was it like a Monday to Friday class or was it held a few days a week? What were the actual classes like?

NB. It was once a week, and it was kind of like a three hour session. We did a lot of analysis. I think that was his main forte there. It was really primarily a lot of analyses of other composers' works and whatnot, and I don't remember it was not too much in a personal criticism of one's work. He might have given us an exercise, but I don't even have that. I would have normally kept that stuff, but I don't have that, have anything like that. So, obviously, the major event was this big, the second year event with the concert, so the whole focus was, I suppose, it was like a finishing course. What would you call *perfezionamento* in Italian? It's like finishing, completing your studies. I mean, after all, all of us had careers of a certain kind up to that point, so it was kind of like, I call it my post graduate work type of thing.

AM. Makes sense. It's appropriate. And about how many – I'm looking at these photographs – how many people were in the class?

NB. In the class? There were about six or seven. No more than that at any one point. There was an Italian, Mario Bertoncini, but he dropped out of the course, and there was an American, Alvin Lucier whose name is still quite well-known in the United States. He sort of came into the course, but he was quite a wild character. I don't think he fit into Petrassi's scheme of things. He did a lot of cut and paste type of composing, you know, and he was quite nuts in a way.

AM. Talking about different ways of analysing music, would he always use examples from other composers, or would he bring in his own compositions?

NB. No, he left his own compositions out of it. There was a lot of concert activity in Rome at that time, and it was about new music. I suppose a lot of this was happening all over with postwar activities. I went to Darmstadt in the summers, 1960 for the first time, and I must say it was a real eye-opener for me. I came back, and I was discussing this with him. I said, 'Really, I can't believe what's sort of going on.' He talked and he tried to help you to get your own thoughts in order. It's funny when you – there's always a question in my mind: what do you

ever learn from a composition teacher? I really honestly can't put my finger on it. After a certain point of learning technique, or how to use various sort of techniques, what can another composer give to you? It's completely up to your own brain.

AM. That's what I'm thinking too as we're having this discussion.

NB. Petrassi with me was nothing but encouraging. I think he saw my music as having the romantic flair, like a lot of Canadian poets, and of course that fit into his way of thinking, too. After all, he was the big name. He and Dallapiccola were the big names in Italy at that time. I can remember going to a concert where Luciano Berio's work – I'm not sure if the title is *Circles* – I can't remember, but anyway, it was with Cathy Berberian, and it was quite avant-garde at that point. I remember watching Petrassi's face, and I thought, 'He's a bit mystified by what's going on with contemporary music.' Maybe that was unfair, but I could see his consternation in a certain way. Also, my own feeling was that he was reflecting on his own position in the society, in the music world because his writing was very solid, very stable. It certainly would not have been called avant-garde at that time even, so I think he was having his own difficulties, just like Stravinsky in Stravinsky's later life. He tried working with serialism. Well, to me, it didn't work for him. He should have stayed with his own voice.

AM. It's interesting. You stumbled right into another thought that I had before arriving here. I know that your relationship began as teacher-student, but I was also wondering if there was an opportunity where you got to see how the outside world perhaps affected Petrassi's thought?

NB. Well, this is the one particular moment that I recall outside of the number of conversations that we had, which I had with him privately. They were not part of the class. I was floundering around myself.

AM. In what way?

NB. Well, when I went to Europe. Well, actually it really began when I was in Tanglewood, and I started to be exposed to what was going on in some of the rest of the world, and it was leaving me a little bit mystified about where I was going. I had just been introduced to serialism as taught by John Weinzwieg, which was really the Schoenberg mould, but in Europe they were into post-serialism and very much the influence of John Cage and aleatory and all of these things were going on. I got absolutely stopped creatively. I just couldn't figure out where do I fit into this whole scheme of things? Is this for me? Is it not for me? And I used to have these conversations with Petrassi.

AM. That really exposes another element of him, too.

NB. Well, he could see my frustration and he just sort of...

AM. How did he respond?

NB. Well, he just said, 'Don't worry about it until you are secure what you want to do or what you want to write. Just come to the class, glean what you can glean from the class and go to the

concerts and listen to everything.’ Curiously enough, it was my contact with Bruno Maderna that really changed my life; it was not Petrassi. It was simply Bruno gave me a method of work, of organizing musical material that it was his own unique way of working. It is now quite known: Quadrati Magici, Magic Squares. Anyway, it worked and in the summer of 1960, I went back to England and stayed with my brother. I decided to try out this technique and I wrote these pieces called *Tre Pezzi Brevi*. They were immediately picked up and published by Universal Edition and played in Darmstadt, and then I was a big success! But that was Maderna, you see.

AM. Yes, so it was that contact that resolved that inner struggle.

NB. Yeah, that was really not Petrassi’s influence, but Petrassi was – when I wrote the piece for flute and orchestra, which was the following year, it had some of these same elements in it too, but it was much more lyrical, and I think this is what people saw in my music, what they refer to as *bel canto*. That fit into his way of thinking. He was very much a person involved with the voice. He loved the human voice and opera. I think he would have spent his life probably writing in that field rather than the orchestra, you know in a funny way, because I think that is where his forte was.

AM. What is your estimation of Petrassi as composer? Did it change prior to meeting him, then studying, and then post study?

NB. I didn’t know much about him when I went over there to be quite honest. I just was told that’s where I should go.

AM. So you went!

NB. Claudio Abbado said so. He lived in Milan and Zubin Mehta was at the same course in Tanglewood and we became good friends. We corresponded, and they were all starting their careers and so I got a lot of encouragement from Claudio for going to Italy, not that he ever performed any of my music. Anyway, that is beside the point. So, I didn’t really have a formed opinion of Petrassi before. I’d only heard that he was number one in Italy at that time.

AM. Was it really when you were in Italy that you heard his music?

NB. Well, then I started to get to know what was going on in Europe period because you know, you trot back and forth in Europe very easily as opposed to Canada. So I spent time in France and time in Germany and time in England of course because my brother was there at the same time. You get to know who the people are. Through Gazzelloni I met Maderna and I met Luciano Berio and Luigi Nono, and all of those people and I knew them all. I wouldn’t say they were close friends. I mean, Maderna, every time he would come to Rome, he would look me up and we’d go out and have a drink or whatever. Unfortunately he drank too much, and it killed him, too.

AM. Oh, that’s sad.

NB. Yes, but you know he was very encouraging and Gazzelloni played the *Tre Pezzi Brevi* at Darmstadt, and of course that helped. So, it was my introduction, but I came via the Italian route

rather than the French route. It's all sort of tied in the whole thing. Petrassi wasn't very respected, but he was not part of that avant-garde scene. As I said, he was a very solid, well highly-respected composer, and did I change my opinion? No, not particularly. His music actually, and I'll be very honest, didn't turn me on very much, but I'm not even sure what did at that time. I was so full of hearing everything coming out of my eyebrows.

AM. So much learning.

NB. Well, it was also because I worked at CBC and I was involved with contemporary music right from day one. From the time I met John Weinzweig and all the work I did at CBC, it was music! Music! Music! Then, later it became New Music Concerts and a lot of saturation.

AM. A lot of input.

NB. Yeah, a lot of input. You have to look at things in a total perspective. I saw his significance, whether I could see it what I would call his influence, I don't know.

AM. With these classes then, would you say it was a significant learning experience? Would you say it – did it provide direction in your career? Or really it wasn't until Bruno, your meeting with Bruno that he –

NB. Well, it's a whole cultural experience of Italy. [This] was probably more important than any one single event. Let's say it's a culture shock. It's a totally different way of living, and it was very, very salutatory for me because I was in the North American mould of go go go go go go go go! Work your brains out! At the age of 25, I almost had a breakdown. I was so frazzled with work at CBC, live television at that time, so going to Italy was really wonderful and I decided that I would spend my time not with fellow Canadians or Americans. I spent my time with Italians.

AM. That's really good. You really got the most of it.

NB. Well, I wanted to get the whole feeling of the country I was living in. When I came back here in 1962, I had a return ticket in my pocket. I was going to go back, but then I took one look at this country and I said, 'No, I better stay.' I didn't know how I was going to live. It would be very difficult to find a job. They were not very kind to foreigners trying to get work.

AM. You mean if you were trying to get work in Italy?

NB. In Italy, yeah. No no, no it would have been very, very difficult to get work. I realized that, but I had fairly intended to go back and I had this return ticket in my pocket. I became quite an admirer of Italy and Europe period. In retrospect, I wonder whether I made a mistake of not staying. You don't know about those things. I remember Bob Aitken saying to me something similar when he went to Europe that he felt that he maybe had made a mistake by coming back because the attitude towards composers – just to take the composers that are artists, probably composers, but the art field in general – is totally different. It's highly respected, especially in a

country like Germany, and if I had stayed there, I would have had a totally different life from North America.

AM. Isn't that interesting.

NB. Yes. Well, it's true. I'm quite convinced that it would have been quite the different ball game.

AM. I believe so, too.

NB. Yeah, because I was published very early by the biggest publisher in Europe at that time. Well, I guess it was pretty big anyway, Universal Edition, and they were following my career and then I came back here and it's totally different. Who cares, in a way.

AM. Was that difficult when you came back, having to –

NB. Well, it meant that I had to go back and try to carve out a life for myself and without much backing. That's the difference. There's a lot of support systems for artists in Europe.

AM. That must have been hard.

NB. I didn't call it hard as much as it was a choice, and it was my home country, so it was home and there was my family and I had been very ill over there and so I almost didn't live.

AM. Oh, so it would have been happy to come home.

NB. Yeah, and so it was kind of comfortable coming back, but I know very well that my life would have been totally different had I stayed over there. Gottfried Michael Koenig was one of the electronic music composers that I had met along the way, and he had wanted me to go to Cologne and work there, but I didn't like Germany, so I didn't want to go to Germany.

AM. Well, that would have been an important decision, too. You need to like where your home base is going to be.

NB. Oh, I know. I had quite a reaction to Germany when I first was there. I could see how all of World War II had started, especially when you go to the Southern part of Germany. It just sort of horrified me. I don't know. I've just always been a studier of human nature, I guess, so you look at people's body movements, how people congregate and talk to each other and how they treat foreigners. Not comfortable in Germany.

AM. It's a different feeling.

NB. Yeah, but Italy, my God though, if you spoke Italian or tried to speak Italian, they were all over you with hugs and kisses. It was wonderful! I mean, the warmth of the Italian people was really something else. I had quite an interesting time over there and some very good friends.

AM. So, I want to go back to something else, too, when you were talking about how after class Petrassi would take you out.

NB. Oh, yes! We always had to go for *aperitivo*.

AM. Yes, I want to know more about what that was like, too, because you have Petrassi as teacher and now we're going out of the classroom.

NB. Oh, it always reminded me of a film. There was a series of films where the head doctor and he would be tailed around the hospital by all the little interns. Well, that's what I felt like, that we were all his little chickens following behind him. I was the only female in the class. The males were very strange because they seemed to be nervous with him, and frightened of speaking their mind or whatever.

AM. Do you think they felt intimidated?

NB. I don't know. I don't know, but they just certainly didn't have that same feeling that I had where I felt I could talk to Petrassi about, just about anything if I wanted. So I was always quite comfortable, and trying to talk to him about it didn't matter what. It could have been the concert the night before. It could have been something in the class. It could have been a beautiful statue here or whatever. I was not exactly aggressive about it because I'm not an aggressive person, but I wasn't shy of him. He didn't frighten me. I almost felt that he was very supportive in a way. He was kind of like a father figure in a way. You could talk to him about things that were concerning you, not necessarily personal, but I even had to talk to him at one point about something. It was quite personal; that was a long story; I won't go into it now.

AM. It's okay, but you felt comfortable.

NB. Yeah, exactly, yeah, but I felt that the other students were a little intimidated by his stature in the society, which could have been true.

AM. That makes sense.

NB. And maybe I should have been, too, but I never grew up with that kind of feeling towards older people. John Weinzweig and his family were like my second family. I was going up there every week for dinner before my lessons. His wife sort of adopted me.

AM. So what were the conversations like when you would all go out? Did you just talk about – was it music related?

NB. Mostly music related subjects etcetera, and of course, I think – I don't know about the others – but I was all agog with the beauty of Rome, too, and I could never get over the feeling that – in this country you could feel and you could walk on a piece of grass somewhere in the country and feel nobody had ever been there before, but you have the totally opposite feeling – every piece of land, where you put your feet in Italy has been walked on before. It was philosophical, a lot of it was philosophical conversation, but the feeling of the age of the place and the history behind it, it

was culture shock, as well as being quite a beautiful culture shock in a certain way. I guess I was struggling with the language, too.

AM. It was an opportunity to practice, as well?

NB. Well, he had literally said that I would have to bone up on my Italian to be part of the course. Now, the other students, with the exception of the Italian composer, one was Portuguese, the other was from Peru, and they had Spanish or Mediterranean language in common, so picking up Italian was not too difficult for them, but for me, it was a learning curve. That is for sure, but I had a wonderful teacher and went to her every week and got to understand the formal side of the language, and of course I got to learn how to swear and everything else.

AM. Did Petrassi speak English?

NB. Very little.

AM. Very little, so you had to speak Italian.

NB. You had to speak Italian. Yes, but as I said, he spoke very slowly, so that we couldn't help but understand what he was talking about, and there is a common language in music anyway, so part of it was relatively easy. The most difficult thing was doing these analyses.

AM. And how did everybody else hear about the class? It was all hearsay that they would come to study with Petrassi, as well?

NB. I don't know how they all got there. It must have been the same kind of source as mine. Maybe it was just becoming knowledge that he was going to be teaching this course. I don't think he wanted to teach very much, and obviously, maybe he didn't have to.

AM. Did this come through in his teaching, do you think?

NB. Well, I think it just sort of evolved from I never did find out, but this course, I think he inaugurated the course the year that I went there. I could be wrong. It may have been taught by somebody else, but he took it over and he wanted us to have the experience of having an orchestra play our music so that we could hear what we were thinking in our heads, and that's an incredible experience for a young composer to be hearing for the first time what you had written for a large ensemble.

AM. How was he specifically as a teacher? He sounds like someone who was patient when you describe him speaking at a slower pace because of the languages. How would you describe him as a teacher?

NB. How would I describe him as a teacher? Well, as I said, I didn't personally get a lot from him, but what I got from him was his musicality and his understanding of what was going on in the rest of the world in music and his knowledge of orchestration was quite profound. His style was not something that particularly turned me on, but what did I get from him? That was the

question that I started to try to answer before you even asked it at the beginning. What do you get from another composer? In the case of John Weinzweig, I got from John Weinzweig all the technique, but I didn't follow in John Weinzweig's footsteps in terms of style. So, what do you get? I don't know what you get, honestly. You get an essence from them somewhere along the line, and it's probably not something that's easily understood. I don't quite know why people go to other people to study composition because it's not something really you can teach. How do you teach somebody what's going on in your head? You can only write it down and have them make a judgement call on what you've written down, and that can be valuable, but at a certain point of your life, your direction is fairly set fairly early in the game as far as I'm concerned.

AM. You have an idea of what you're doing and how you're doing it.

NB. Well, you know who you are and what you hear, and you can only hear it your way. If you've got technique, various kinds of techniques, you obviously employ those techniques, but if those techniques start to show, then the piece sounds false. I know that from various things that I've done, and when some pieces have been very hard to write, they sound like it to me. They are not successful as far as I'm concerned. So, what do you get from another composer? I studied with Lukas Foss and Aaron Copland in Tanglewood, and I was at that point where I was absolutely paralysed with what I was hearing that I couldn't write anything. Tanglewood was another one of these circumstances where everything was going on. There was opera school, there was Boston symphony, there was your composition classes, and you're supposed to be writing pieces and having them performed etcetera instantly. I guess I was so overwhelmed by what I was hearing that I couldn't get what I was hearing out of my head. Everything was derivative; it was like a fragment from this or a fragment from that. So, it wasn't me; it was what was going in. Foss simply said to me the same thing, 'Don't worry about it.' He said, 'Absorb. Absorb it and then it will sift out and become part of you in one way or the other, or it won't.' It's like grains of sand, keep pushing them away and bringing them in.

AM. There's such personal growth involved.

NB. It is; it is. It's trying to find your own voice. That's exactly what it is, and that's all really another teacher can give you at a certain point of time after you've learned your techniques to help you find your own voice. It takes quite a skilled teacher to be able to leave you alone to do that to help guide you. I think that's what Petrassi did; he was sympathetic to the struggle that probably all of us were going through to find our own *métier*. All of these people had had technique up to their eyeballs. They'd had training otherwise they wouldn't have been in the course. So, we were all in the same boat and I don't think I ever asked anybody else, 'What do you get from Petrassi?' It wouldn't occur to me at that point. It only occurred to me later when I was doing a little bit of teaching myself up at York [University].

AM. When we were discussing your experience with Petrassi, one of the questions I asked you, you responded how it was really Italy as a whole that was making an impact or affecting you.

NB. I think it was the whole thing. It couldn't help but be. Here, it was a totally different culture that I was living in; it was a long, long history of music.

AM. It makes me think. Right now I am at a point in my studies where I am still formulating how, what my dissertation's going to look like, and prior to writing it, I have to compose two comprehensives, so two larger projects that may be a part of the dissertation or may be background to the dissertation. One of the things you make me think of – that I was thinking before – to know Petrassi, per se, I really do need to know his surroundings and how it affected him. Do you see it that way, too?

NB. Oh, definitely! He was obviously influenced very much by his own cultural environment there, and *bel canto* was one part of that and the whole field of opera. Every Italian that I ever ran into would be on the streets singing arias from Tosca or Verdi or whatever. Think of it. That's unusual in this country. To think of the guy on the street out there singing his head off of something from Verdi, right? And of course, isn't the Italian national anthem, wasn't that Verdi?

NB. He is a very patriotic Italian. Maybe it is the national anthem, maybe not. I don't know, but anyway it was just so engrained in them that I'm sure that Petrassi would have absorbed all of that. It's funny. He never talked about his own life, particularly. He was a little more open when his mother died, but she didn't die until after the course was finished. He would go to one of the concerts with his girlfriend, the painter, and everybody knew that this was his friend, and she certainly was a stunning looking woman, quite a bit younger than he was, tall and very very beautiful in a very broad kind of way. I would get invited to social events where he was there because I was sort of on the ins with the people of the Canadian embassy. I was friendly with some of those people there, and so I would get these funny invitations to go to certain places in Rome, and Petrassi was there, too. I was kind of like a little bit different world than maybe some of the other students, but I think you also have to remember, too, you'd have to look at my background entirely in order to understand why. I was an old lady at sixteen. I was out working on my own at sixteen, so I was already fairly mature when I got to Italy at the age of 25. My parents split up when I was 12, so you grow up very quickly under those circumstances when you're left to your own devices to figure out where you're going in life. I think that also accounted for it. There was no protective shield around me at all. I suppose I had learned to fend for myself, too. So, I saw Italy in a different framework, maybe, than the other guys. I'll never forget after that concert, someone, one of the Italian woman, one of the wives came up to me and said, 'That music is so feminine!', and I thought, 'What the hell do you mean by that? What does feminine mean?' Of course, I think I was an anomaly in Italy anyway because there weren't many women composers around at that time, and I was kind of unique on the scene, right?

AM. Well, it seemed very bold, and you were the only female in your class.

NB. Yeah, and it was the same kind of thing in Darmstadt, too. I was kind of regarded as, 'Who's this?' Anyway, I'm just going to look over there. There's a book there, and it has some reviews. I don't know if there's anything there that might be of any use or not. I just thought about it.

NB. [John Weissmann] says, the spirit of Petrassi still evident in my piece called *Contrast*, but he doesn't say what spirit. You might just want to take a quick look at this [book] because he refers to Petrassi here quite a bit.

AM. I have one more question. The readings that I had started doing on Petrassi, with the Fascist environment - this is prior to your visiting Italy - nothing really came up did it, about Petrassi and politics?

NB. Not necessarily with him. It came up in my talking with people at the Canadian embassy and things like that. People who would come to visit, who would come over from Canada to Rome for a holiday, they would sort of say, 'How do you reconcile the political change? How do you reconcile communism with the Catholic church?' All of these things were pretty common.

AM. Those are pretty loaded questions.

NB. They are, and I couldn't answer them at that time particularly. How could you change sides in so many wars like the Italians did? I suppose, you see, I wasn't so involved in that kind of history, and I wasn't so interested in it particularly, not when I was in Italy, but I saw that - I was telling you about Germany - I saw behaviour patterns in Germany, to which the Italian temperament was volatile. I could see it could change over night. I think they loved Mussolini. He was a big hero in the eyes of many Italians, and yet somebody at the Canadian embassy, when they talked about communism, they said, 'Well, take the Italians and send them all over to Russia and see how they like communism then.' There is an opportunism within the Italian temperament that says, 'I'll take part of this world and part of that world and this is mine.' I mean, I can still be a Catholic and still be a communist, right? It doesn't make sense, but I got used to that way of the Italian thinking, and it didn't bother me particularly, it was just an observation. Petrassi would have been somebody who would have probably been very deeply concerned with all of these aspects that we're talking about right now. As a matter of fact, I'm very sure he did because I think some of his music reflected his concerns.

AM. Yes.

NB. But you know, those were subjects, it was really almost too personal to get involved with and get in talking to anybody about, and especially if you came over from Canada and had never had a war and at my age, that was not my big concern. I was a survivor of the deprivations of the war, that's for sure, and the depression, but nothing like what had happened in Europe. So, it would be very hard for me to initiate a conversation like that unless I was interested in that aspect of history.

AM. And I wouldn't have expected you to have [initiated a political conversation] either; it's a very sensitive issue.

NB. It is; it's too sensitive. It's like asking the person where do they stand, and if he had started to try to reply, I'm not even sure that I would have had the command of the language enough to have known. But I'm almost sure, because the man was so sensitive, that he would have been very reactive to everything that was going on. It was not Petrassi that referred to Mussolini, it was Gazzelloni who referred to him as the big hero. That I didn't hear from Petrassi at all. Petrassi was more of an intellectual actually. Gazzelloni was a phenomenal player, but he was not an intellectual. Petrassi moved in different circles in that respect. It was hard to know just what exactly he felt. I think you'd have to do a lot of reading.

AM. Oh, absolutely, and again, I thought I'd toss the question out there, but I wasn't really sure.

NB. I don't know whether all of this is helpful to you or not.

AM. It is. I really appreciate it, you sharing your experience with me.

NB. I just don't quite know whether I have given you anything concrete though.

AM. But you have. I can read things in books, but I'm really curious about Petrassi as a person.

NB. To me, that's very important.

AM. And I think that you've really helped with making him more real to me.

NB. Oh, he was very real. He was very kind, and very supportive, and that's extremely important to people starting out a career.

AM. Yes, and it's been a really interesting conversation with you because I got to learn about him, but also it was through your experience, and I like that. It really represents two people, of your side of the story, and also describing Petrassi at the same time. I am very grateful for what you have been able to share.

NB. Well, I just don't know whether it's anything concrete that you can write about.

AM. I will let you know! I'm in a learning process right now. You talked about [learning] when you were with Petrassi; I'm trying to learn my way, too.

NB. The thing is it's extremely difficult to pinpoint a composer down, to say what you glean from him, aside from technique. He was equally mystified by what was going on with music at that time.

AM. But see, even you just saying that is eye-opening for me, too.

NB. At least, that is my perception of him at the time. And let's face it, a lot of this came out of postwar: the whole fragmentation of the musical scale, the whole post-serialism movement. I think he found that rather distressing himself. Now, he was familiar with Schoenberg and Berg and Webern and whatnot, but what the post serialists took out of Webern was something that I don't think Petrassi even envisioned himself. This very definitely was my perception of him. So, he was at a loss, in a curious way, to know how to guide somebody who was going in that direction because I don't think he could understand it himself. I mean, he could understand it intellectually what had happened, splitting of the atom and all that stuff, but I don't think he could understand it from the point of how to make music. We never ever ever analysed Webern, for example, and of course, that was where all that post-serialism had started.

AM. So, who did you analyse then?

NB. Oh my God, everything! But a lot of medieval music, early Gesualdo and things of this kind, early Italian music.

AM. Was it always Italian music?

NB. No, no, no. For instance, everyone in the class for the exam was given an older composer and a contemporary composer to do an analysis of certain work or part of their work, and that was the assignment for everybody, so there was no duplication and for me he chose *Don Giovanni*, an Act from *Don Giovanni*, and this post-serial piece of Stravinsky's I didn't like at all.

AM. Oh, that makes it difficult.

NB. Well, to me it didn't sit well, Stravinsky's style and it didn't sit well musically, but that was my opinion. Anyway, I did it; I was very proud of what I had done there. Well, to write it all out. If you could have seen the thing

AM. No, I can't imagine; that is an accomplishment.

NB. I even have it somewhere. I typed it all up.

AM. You've just been so wonderful.

NB. Well, like I said, I'll take a look through the letters. Maybe I'll come across something that might be kind of interesting.

AM. Sure, yes, please let me know, and again, I thank you so much for your time.

Appendix E: Unpublished Photographs of Ennio Morricone

Photographs were taken by the author at the time of interview, and are printed with permission.

Image 7: Ennio Morricone. 16 February 2016 at The O2 in London, UK.



Image 8: Ennio Morricone. 16 February 2016 at The O2 in London, UK.

