

A STUDY OF CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO'S
PIEDIGROTTA 1924: RAPSODIA NAPOLETANA

by

PAOLO ANDRÉ GUALDI

(Under the Direction of Susan Thomas and Evgeny Rivkin)

ABSTRACT

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Piedigrotta 1924: Rapsodia Napoletana* is a solo piano work inspired by Neapolitan folk music. This source of inspiration is quite unusual for an early twentieth-century Italian composer, considering that the general music tastes of the time steered clear of vernacular sources and favored a rediscovery of forms and genres from the Renaissance and Baroque. The piece is the only full work in Castelnuovo-Tedesco's compositional output that is inspired by the realm of Neapolitan popular music. However, *Piedigrotta 1924* embodies many of the composer's stylistic traits, including a keenness for evoking extra-musical elements and a love for melody and thematic transformation. This study explores several aspects of *Piedigrotta 1924* that make this work a unique example in the piano repertoire, taking account of the historical and political scene in Italy in the early twentieth century, and including remarks on the composer's style, influences, and compositional characteristics.

INDEX WORDS: Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Piedigrotta, 1924, Rapsodia, Napoletana, piano, generazione dell'ottanta, fascism, Neapolitan folk, thematic transformation.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife Danijela Zezelj-Gualdi, to whom I am grateful for her support, patience, and love.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Piedigrotta 1924* is the second and longest of his three rhapsodies for solo piano.¹ Written in 1924 during the composer's honeymoon in Naples, the piece carries the subtitle *Rapsodia Napoletana* (Neapolitan Rhapsody) and was inspired by hearing the sounds of "guitars and serenades" from the terrace of his hotel room.² The rhapsody was named after the collections of Neapolitan songs published each year following the Festival di Piedigrotta, a folk festival that has been taking place since the nineteenth century in a district of Naples. Resembling the eclecticism of such folk collections, the piece is divided in five stylistically-diverse movements, all carrying evocative titles borrowed from the names of works by Salvatore di Giacomo, a well-known Neapolitan poet and lyricist of many popular Neapolitan songs. Castelnuovo-Tedesco infuses a Neapolitan "flavor" to the composition by assimilating the style of the city's folk music into his own original musical material, as well as by using echoes of typical instruments, folk dances and, on one occasion, directly quoting a traditional song (the nineteenth-century "Fenesta che lucive," in the fourth movement). *Piedigrotta 1924* is a substantial work, about twenty minutes long. With its singable melodies, its general adherence to tonality and its debt to nineteenth-century piano character pieces, *Piedigrotta 1924* can be classified as neo-romantic with clear pianistic nods to impressionism.

¹ The other two rhapsodies are *Alt Wien* (1923) and *Le danze del Re David* (1925).

² Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica*, ed. James Westby (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005), 177.

Piedigrotta 1924 was the first piano piece by Castelnuovo-Tedesco I have ever heard.³ Its lyricism and evocative atmospheres immediately struck me. As an Italian myself, I was intrigued by Castelnuovo-Tedesco's creative portrayal of Neapolitan folk music and culture. The work's folk orientation is rare for an early twentieth-century Italian composition; such works generally avoid vernacular sources in favor of a rediscovery of forms and genres from the Renaissance and Baroque. *Piedigrotta 1924* is thus not only unique in Castelnuovo-Tedesco's piano output but, to my knowledge, as a lengthy solo work dedicated to the city of Naples, it stands alone in the entire piano repertoire.

Purpose of Study

This document provides a detailed study of *Piedigrotta 1924*, and represents the first in-depth academic study of a single piano work by Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Despite being a quite distinct work in the composer's output for the instrument, *Piedigrotta 1924* carries many of the general stylistic traits of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's writing. The investigation of this piece explores the composer's compositional language as well as his pianistic style. In addition, because of its unusual source of inspiration, this work constitutes an ideal starting point for a discussion on the composer's independent view on music and politics. *Piedigrotta 1924* will be examined within its historical and cultural context, both in terms of the composer's output as well as the cultural and political milieu in which he lived and worked. The paper will be limited to an investigation of the time period when *Piedigrotta 1924* was composed and will not cover Castelnuovo-Tedesco's compositional career after the 1920s.

³ I heard this piece for the first time at the University of Georgia in 2004 while attending a piano recital by Dr. Giuseppe Lupis.

This introduction features a brief overview of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's career and compositional output (with an emphasis on his piano works), followed by a survey of related literature, which will underline the paucity of scholarship on Castelnuovo-Tedesco's piano music generally, and the almost complete absence of writings directly linked to *Piedigrotta 1924*. The literature review will be followed by an outline for the rest of the document.

An Overview of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Career and Works

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968) was born in Florence, Italy, and studied piano and composition in his natal city. His works began to gain international recognition around 1915, and in the 1920s Castelnuovo-Tedesco also established himself as an active concert pianist and music critic. In the 1930s, thanks to the help of Arturo Toscanini, Castelnuovo-Tedesco's works were often performed in the United States, where he eventually immigrated with his family in 1939 to escape the anti-Semitism that erupted in Italy under Mussolini's fascist regime. After settling in Beverly Hills, California, Castelnuovo-Tedesco dedicated many years to composing film scores. He also taught at the Los Angeles conservatory, where his pupils included Henry Mancini, John Williams, and André Previn.

A prolific composer, Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote in a variety of genres, including choral music, oratorios, art songs, chamber music, ballet scores, and film music. He is primarily remembered for his large production of solo guitar works, most of which were a product of his collaboration with Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia, to whom the majority of these works are dedicated.⁴ Many of his almost 100 pieces for guitar have become part of the standard repertoire, including his popular *Concerto in D Major* Op. 99. His piano works, however, have

⁴ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica*, ed. James Westby (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005), 266.

not received similar attention. They are rarely performed, and have been largely overlooked in modern research.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco left a significant amount of compositions for solo piano. The most comprehensive list appears on the *Grove Music Online*, where forty-six piano works are chronologically catalogued.⁵ The general opinion among scholars is that Castelnuovo-Tedesco's compositional output demonstrates a certain degree of stylistic uniformity across time and the composer's solo piano pieces confirm this view. This is particularly exemplified by the *Sonatina zoologica* Op. 187 (1960) which for its third movement uses a small character piece entitled *Lucertolina*, originally composed in 1916, illustrating a consistent stylistic unity.

A distinction can be found in the composer's early piano works, which are stylistically influenced by the music of Debussy and Ravel. This influence is especially tangible in Castelnuovo-Tedesco's keenness for evoking extra-musical elements, a trait which characterizes the composer's output throughout his life but is most prominent in these early works. The majority of these early pieces carry suggestive titles and are often inspired particularly by his native city, Florence, and its surroundings. Some works describe natural elements, like his first published work, *Il Cielo di Settembre* (September Sky), which came to life as the composer walked through the hills of Florence. Another example is *Il Raggio Verde* (The Green Ray), which portrays the final moments of the sun setting over the sea near Castiglioncello, in Tuscany. Others were depictions of works of art, like *I Naviganti* (Sailors), which was based on frescos in the Duomo of Florence, and *Alghe* (Algae), inspired by a work by Florentine sculptor Romano Romanelli.⁶

⁵ James Westby, "Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Mario," in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/05128> (accessed December 13, 2008).

⁶ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica*, ed. James Westby (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005), 131.

A signature element of the entire compositional output by Castelnuovo-Tedesco is the emphasis on melody, a prominent feature even in his earliest works. This characteristic is observed by musicologist Nick Rossi in his article “Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Modern Master of Melody,” as well as that of American musicologist David Reeves, who observes how “[the composer’s] piano pieces display an easily recognizable, clearly defined melody,” describing such melodies as “lyrical and sometimes resembling folksongs.”⁷ Reeves also provides a few examples of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s use of thematic transformation and juxtaposition in *Cielo di Settembre* and *Cipressi* (cypresses), compositional devices that are heavily exploited in *Piedigrotta* 1924.

Although impressionistic elements can also be found in later piano works, in the 1920s Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s writing gradually turned more towards a neo-romantic style, which remained basically unchanged throughout his life.⁸ A predilection for extra-musical elements as sources of inspiration is still tangible in the larger works such as the three rhapsodies from the 1920s (which reflect Viennese, Neapolitan and Jewish elements, respectively) and the aforementioned *Sonatina Zoologica* (each movement being a depiction of an animal) from 1960.

Review of Literature

There has been no major study of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s piano music in recent scholarship, although a short overview of the composer’s piano output can be found in the articles “The Piano Works of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco” by David Reeves and “Mario

⁷ David Reeves, “The Piano Works of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco,” *Piano & Keyboard: the Bimonthly Piano Quarterly*, no. 176 (September/October 1995): 31.

⁸ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica*, ed. James Westby (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005), 76-77.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Modern Master of Melody” by Nick Rossi.⁹ Little work has been done to understand his compositional style through an examination of individual piano works. More specifically, there is only one academic document where a very limited amount of information about *Piedigrotta 1924* can be found. This is Karin Maria Di Bella’s D.M.A. dissertation, “Piano Music in Italy During the Fascist Era,” which explores a few examples from the piano repertoire in Italy between the two world wars. Di Bella includes a short chapter on Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s life and piano works, focusing on *Piedigrotta 1924* as “demonstrative of the finer of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s piano writing.”¹⁰ The dissertation dedicates approximately six pages of text to a brief formal and harmonic analysis of the first two movements of *Piedigrotta 1924*, with no analytical observations on the piece in its entirety.

Three reasons can be identified to explain the lack of scholarly attention to Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s piano music. First, the scores of most of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s piano works, including *Piedigrotta 1924*, are presently out of print. Secondly, few recordings of his piano music are currently available, among which only two include *Piedigrotta 1924*.¹¹ Finally, for English-language scholars, the fact that most of the primary academic sources dedicated to Castelnuovo-Tedesco are only available in Italian may pose an additional obstacle.

Two Italian texts have been extremely valuable for gathering detailed information about the composer’s life and works. Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s autobiography, *Una vita di musica*, published posthumously in 2005, includes information about the origin of *Piedigrotta 1924*, and also offers many insights into the composer’s perspective on music in his own words. His

⁹ David Reeves, “The Piano Works of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco,” *Piano & Keyboard: the Bimonthly Piano Quarterly*, no. 176 (September/October 1995): 29-33; Nick Rossi, “Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Modern Master of Melody,” *The American Music Teacher* 25, no.4 (February/March 1976): 13-16.

¹⁰ Karin Maria Di Bella, “Piano Music in Italy During the Fascist Era” (D.M.A. diss., University of British Columbia, 2002), 215.

¹¹ The most recent one is by English pianist Mark Bebbington, recorded in 2003 for New Horizon. The other, recorded between 1996 and 1998, is by Franco-Italian pianist Aldo Ciccolini for Phoenix Classics.

observations may shed some light on his selection of Neapolitan music as inspiration for this piece.¹² Another significant resource is *Censure di un musicista. La vicenda artistica e umana di Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* by Cosimo Malorgio.¹³ This book integrates information found in the composer's autobiography with a detailed examination of the composer's relationship with Pizzetti, Casella and other members of his generation, as well as remarks on Castelnuovo-Tedesco's aesthetic.¹⁴

The writings of Guido M. Gatti are especially valuable for investigating the composer's style and influences during the years when *Piedigrotta 1924* was composed. An Italian musicologist who founded the journal *Il Pianoforte* in 1920 (for which Castelnuovo-Tedesco himself wrote on a few occasions) and an avid promoter of Italian modern music, Gatti was one of the most devoted followers and admirers of Castelnuovo-Tedesco. The admiration was reciprocal; Castelnuovo-Tedesco considered Gatti the most respected Italian critic of his time.¹⁵ In particular, two of Gatti's articles from the early 1920s, "Four Composers of Present-Day Italy" and "Some Italian Composers of To-Day: I. Mario Castelnuovo Tedesco," constitute a

¹² Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica*, ed. James Westby (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005). A text that includes parts of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's autobiography translated in English (either quoted or paraphrased) is Corazon Otero's *Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco: His Life and Works for the Guitar* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Ashley Mark, 1999). The manuscript of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's autobiography was available to scholars before its publication in 2005.

¹³ Cosimo Malorgio, *Censure di un musicista. La vicenda artistica e umana di Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* (Torino: Paravia, 2001).

¹⁴ Other additional sources from which I could gather broader information on the composer and his time include the following dissertations: David S. Asbury, "20th Century Romantic Serialism: The Opus 170 Greeting Cards of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco" (D.M.A. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2005); Eric Robles, "An Analysis of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Vogelweide: Song Cycle for Baritone and Guitar" (D.M.A. diss., Florida State University, 2004); David Lee Alt, "An Analysis of Five Shakespearean Settings by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco" (D.M.A. diss., University of Iowa, 1980).

¹⁵ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica*, ed. James Westby (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005), 130.

significant reference for understanding how Castelnuovo-Tedesco's music was viewed at the time.¹⁶

Two sources were especially important for researching the impact of historic and political events on the Italian musical scene during Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Italian years. Harvey Sachs' *Music in Fascist Italy* is a comprehensive examination of fascism's impact on Italian music making. It contains remarks on all of the leading Italian composers, including Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Richard Taruskin's "Music and Totalitarian Society" offers helpful observations about the musical aesthetic of the time, not only in Italy but also in other European countries.¹⁷

An overview of Neapolitan folk culture will aid in exploring *Piedigrotta 1924*. A vast number of writings are dedicated to the study of popular music and traditions from Naples. Among these, most valuable to my research are *Canti e musiche popolari* by Roberto Leydi, *Storia della canzone napoletana: i primi canti popolari, le antiche villanelle, le melodie celebri in tutto il mondo* by Vittorio Paliotti, *La canzone napoletana* by Maurizio Becker, and *Canti e tradizioni popolari in Campania* by Roberto De Simone.¹⁸

For an Italian composer in the early twentieth century, the folk music of Naples represented an exotic resource. In incorporating this material, Castelnuovo-Tedesco participated in a larger compositional trend that drew from foreign and folk elements. In order to investigate the influence of folk and other "exotic" musics on musical tastes in Italy and Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, four sources are especially useful: Jonathan Bellman's *The*

¹⁶ Guido M. Gatti, "Four Composers of Present-Day Italy," *The Musical Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (July 1926): 449-471; Guido M. Gatti, "Some Italian Composers To-Day: Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco," *The Musical Times* 62, no. 936 (February 1921): 93-97.

¹⁷ Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1988); Richard Taruskin, "Music and Totalitarian Society," in *The Oxford History of Western Music* (New York: Oxford Press, 2005).

¹⁸ Roberto Leydi, ed., *Canti e musiche popolari* (Milano: Electa, 1991); Vittorio Paliotti, *Storia della canzone napoletana: i primi canti popolari, le antiche villanelle, le melodie celebri in tutto il mondo* (Roma: Newton Compton editori, 1992); Maurizio Becker, *La canzone napoletana* (Firenze: Octavo, 1999); Roberto De Simone, *Canti e tradizioni popolari in Campania* (Roma: Lato side, 1979).

Exotic in Western Music, Timothy Taylor's *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World*, Ralph P. Locke's "Exoticism," and D. C. Parker's "Exoticism in Music in Retrospect."¹⁹

Organization

The subsequent chapters will be structured in the following way: chapter II focuses on the composer's first thirty years of life, with a discussion of his position in the musical and political scene in Italy at the time. It also explores Castelnuovo-Tedesco's thoughts on music and composition, and considers the impact of the composer's inclusion of Neapolitan popular music in *Piedigrotta 1924*, which was in striking contrast with the general musical taste in Italy during the 1920s. Chapter III investigates the different Neapolitan elements that this work so clearly exploits, and explores how Castelnuovo-Tedesco incorporates such elements into the piece. Chapter IV consists of an analysis of the piece, focusing on elements of form, harmonic language, and, most prominently, thematic transformation and juxtaposition. Chapter V discusses stylistic influences, and also provides observations on Castelnuovo-Tedesco's piano writing in *Piedigrotta 1924*, with an examination of the expressive markings and conclusions.

¹⁹ Jonathan Bellman, ed., *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998); Timothy Dean Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Ralph P. Locke "Exoticism," in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/45644> (accessed December 17, 2008); D. C. Parker "Exoticism in Music in Retrospect," *The Musical Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (January 1917): 134-161.

CHAPTER II

CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO'S ITALIAN PERIOD: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND COMPOSER'S LIFE AND AESTHETICS

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's life can be divided in two periods: the Italian and the American years. The composer lived in Italy until 1939, when he fled the country because of the persecutions of the Jews by the Fascist regime. After 1939 he lived steadily in the US until his death in 1968. This chapter will focus on Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Italian period, providing the basis for an understanding of the composer's musical style and principles, and thereby offering an essential background for the origin of *Piedigrotta 1924*. To better illustrate the context within which Castelnuovo-Tedesco was active, this chapter will make some observations on musical tastes in Italy during the first thirty five years of the twentieth century. The influence of particular composers as well as that of fascist dictator Benito Mussolini will be explored. This examination will lead to a discussion on Castelnuovo-Tedesco's unique perspective on Italian musical aesthetics of the time, and his unusual choice of Neapolitan folk music as source of inspiration for the piece, a musical realm considered exotic by his contemporaries.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Early Years

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco was born in Florence, Italy, on April 3, 1895. His father, Amedeo, was a wealthy banker descended from the Spanish Jews who escaped to Italy during

the 1400s. At age nine, Mario began studying piano with his mother, Noemi Senigaglia, and in 1908 he gained admittance to the Istituto Musicale Luigi Cherubini in Florence.²⁰ It was here that he obtained his piano diploma in 1914. Castelnuovo-Tedesco had already shown interest for composition at an early stage of his music education, and in 1909 he began his formal studies of harmony and counterpoint under the guidance of Florentine composer Gino Modona.²¹ It was Modona who introduced him to the French impressionism of Debussy and Ravel. In his autobiography, Castelnuovo-Tedesco writes: “it was a whole world that was revealed to me, and it was exactly corresponding to my aspirations!”²² Modona’s teaching did not stress strict rules or rely on heavy discipline. On the contrary, he left Castelnuovo-Tedesco to experiment freely, encouraging him to find his own voice. The composer deemed this period as extremely important for the development of his musical individuality, which “will fundamentally remain unchanged.”²³

One of the most influential musical personalities in Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s growth was the renowned Italian composer Ildebrando Pizzetti. In 1913, Castelnuovo-Tedesco joined his class at the Istituto Musicale Luigi Cherubini, where he would graduate with a degree in composition in 1918. Pizzetti approved of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s early compositions, but also emphasized the urgent need for a serious study of harmony, counterpoint, and fugue.²⁴ Pizzetti had a tremendous impact on Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s development as a musician, and this legacy was not limited to his role as a rigorous teacher of counterpoint. In fact, Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s

²⁰ Later to become the Conservatorio Luigi Cherubini.

²¹ Cosimo Malorgio, *Censure di un musicista. La vicenda artistica e umana di Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* (Torino: Paravia, 2001), 7-8.

²² Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica*, ed. James Westby (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005), 76. “Era tutto un mondo che mi si rivelava, e proprio quello che corrispondeva alle mie aspirazioni!” Note: all translations from Italian to English in this document are my own.

²³ Ibid., 76. “La mia personalità [...] che é rimasta, di poi, fondamentalmente immutata.”

²⁴ Cosimo Malorgio, *Censure di un musicista. La vicenda artistica e umana di Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* (Torino: Paravia, 2001), 54.

apprenticeship gave him the opportunity to view and study the drafts of several of Pizzetti's masterworks of the 1910's and early 1920s, as well as witness their premieres. In addition, through Pizzetti's support, during his early years Castelnuovo-Tedesco was able to benefit from the exposure to the academic scene of Florence, a factor that would be extremely important to his intellectual growth.

Another fundamental figure in the composer's life was Alfredo Casella (1883-1947), who moved back to Italy in 1915, having spent the previous nineteen years in Paris. Inspired by the musical "rebirth" he had witnessed in France,²⁵ Casella wanted to bring fresh life into the panorama of Italian contemporary music. He was among those who founded the *Società Italiana di Musica Moderna* in 1917, whose goal was to promote the production and performance of original, audacious new compositions.²⁶ The two musicians met in Florence in 1915, while Castelnuovo-Tedesco was still a student of Pizzetti.²⁷ Casella was intrigued by Castelnuovo-Tedesco's music and became one of the most passionate supporters of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's work. As a concert pianist, Casella programmed Castelnuovo-Tedesco's solo piano works in his own recitals, and he promoted his colleague's music through the activity of the *Società Italiana di Musica Moderna*. Although Casella's avid promotion had a major impact on Castelnuovo-Tedesco's career, he had little influence stylistically. While Castelnuovo-Tedesco approved of Casella's clarity and logic, he often criticized his mentor's almost "scientific" approach to music and his lack of melodic inventiveness.²⁸

²⁵ Especially after hearing the *Sacre du Printemps* by Stravinsky in Paris in 1913.

²⁶ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica*, ed. James Westby (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005), 19.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

Success During the Rise of Fascism

Towards the end of the 1910s, Castelnuovo-Tedesco began to gain national and international recognition. In 1919 he won the first prize in a competition organized by Guido M. Gatti for his journal *Il Pianoforte* with his piano work *Cantico, per una statuetta di S. Bernardino di Noccoló dell'Arca* (Canticle, for a statuette of Saint Bernardine by Niccoló dell'Arca). In the 1920s, through the support of Pizzetti, Casella, and Gatti, among others, his works began to find recognition through performance in prestigious events, such as the Festival of Modern Music in Salzburg, the *Biennale di Venezia*, and the *Maggio Musicale Fiorentino*. During that period Castelnuovo-Tedesco began to experiment with larger forms and genres new to him. In this decade he composed, among other works, his most famous opera, *La Mandrangola* (The Mandrake), as well as the *Concerto Italiano* for violin and orchestra, and the *Concerto in sol* for piano and orchestra. Later, in the early 1930s, he began his collaboration with Andrés Segovia, and his works were performed by the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Toscanini, as well as by soloists that included Jasha Heifetz and Gregor Piatigorsky. Despite Castelnuovo-Tedesco's growing popularity and recognition in Italy and Europe, historical events would set a series of changes in the political panorama that would tragically affect the composer's life and career.

On October 28th, 1922, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, leader of the *Partito Nazionale Fascista*, came into power with a coup known as the *Marcia su Roma* (March on Rome). For freedom of expression and democracy, fascism represented a huge step back. Italian Fascism supported the ideal of social hierarchies, and “could be [simplistically] described as the use of directed force and violence to maintain them.”²⁹ Mussolini did not forbid individual endeavors,

²⁹ Richard Taruskin, “Music and Totalitarian,” in *The Oxford History of Western Music* (New York: Oxford Press, 2005): vol. 4, 746.

but instead, wanted to regulate them through syndicates strictly controlled by the central power. During its first ten years of existence (before Mussolini's alliance with Hitler) the Italian Fascist movement was widely admired by several leading politicians throughout Western Europe and America. Among them was even Winston Churchill, United Kingdom's prime minister, whose country would eventually fight against Italy during World War II.

Mussolini was well-liked by many Italian artists, especially by "elite modernists who felt threatened by the empowerment of the uneducated working class."³⁰ Alfredo Casella and Ottorino Respighi were among this group, and they embraced a new current in the arts, which can generically be described as a return to Classicism. In music, this meant a rediscovery of the national traditions including Palestrina and Frescobaldi (a trend that can be compared in a way with the "back to Bach" movement in Germany), going back as far as Gregorian chant, and even back to the Classicism of Imperial Rome. Many leading Italian composers had to compromise their artistic views in order to gain the favors of the Fascist government and advance their status as professional musicians within the dictatorship. Casella offers the most striking example of this trend when, in the 1930s he began to criticize atonality after previously acting as a fervent promoter of Schoenberg and other atonal composers. During the 1930s Casella actively favored neo-classicism, which was a more fitting musical language for the artistic ideals of the Fascist movement.³¹

Castelnuovo-Tedesco was only mildly influenced by this return to the Italian traditions, and he never showed a strong interest in politics, keeping a very low profile in regard to the newly-formed Fascist government. Although he was a Jewish musician, for many years his artistic life was not affected by the new regime, as proven by its recognition of him as one of the

³⁰ Ibid., 747.

³¹ Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1988), 135.

most successful Italian composers of the time.³² In general, early Italian Fascism did not demonstrate strong anti-Semitism and, when it came to the arts, Mussolini was not as invasive as other dictators, such as Adolf Hitler. In 1934, Mussolini even chose Castelnuovo-Tedesco to compose incidental music to *Savonarola*, a theatrical work by Rino Alessi.

The alliance of Mussolini with Hitler in 1933 gradually shifted the regime's ideology towards explicit racist intolerance. By 1938, anti-Semitism was rising to new levels, and Castelnuovo-Tedesco's music began to face prohibition. Even worse, with the stipulation of the first "racial laws," the Fascist government declared that Jewish children were not allowed to attend public schools. It is during this period that the composer made the decision to move to Switzerland, from where he would make plans to emigrate with his family to the United States. In the summer of 1939 they moved to New York, and in 1940 to California, where Castelnuovo-Tedesco remained for the rest of his life. He died in Beverly Hills on March 16, 1968.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco and *la generazione dell'ottanta*

With the term *la generazione dell'ottanta* we identify a group of prominent Italian musicians that were born between 1875 and 1885, which included Alfredo Casella, Gian Francesco Malipiero, Ildebrando Pizzetti, Ottorino Respighi, and others.³³ As mentioned earlier, some of these composers had a major impact on Castelnuovo-Tedesco's life as mentors and promoters. In spite of this, Castelnuovo-Tedesco did not follow the group's broad views on the future of Italian music, choosing instead an independent path in his musical growth.

³² Cosimo Malorgio, *Censure di un musicista. La vicenda artistica e umana di Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* (Torino: Paravia, 2001), 3.

³³ Castelnuovo-Tedesco, who was born in 1895, is usually excluded from this group.

The composers of *la generazione dell'ottanta* shared the idea of finding “a new aesthetic in the theatre and a great stride forward in the production of ‘pure’ instrumental music.”³⁴ They criticized the current state of opera (especially *verismo*) and its monopoly on Italy’s musical panorama. In general, this search for a different national musical aesthetic originated from the desire of the composers of *la generazione dell'ottanta* to find a different, more “noble” voice that would represent the Italian spirit. They promoted the rediscovery of old symphonic, choral, and instrumental genres, together with a rejection of extreme harmonic experimentations (such as serialism) in favor of a broad appreciation for tonality.

Although these general thoughts were shared among all the composers of *la generazione dell'ottanta*, there were two opposing factions within the group that had contrasting views on how to achieve these innovations in Italian music. The more progressive side was led by Alfredo Casella, who was in favor of a closer connection between Italy and other European countries, and was a passionate promoter of new works, including serial and neo-classical music (the latter is a musical style we can often recognize in Casella’s own works).³⁵ The other side, led by Ildebrando Pizzetti, was more traditionalist and, as a way of preserving a purer Italian spirit, was against “foreign trends” such as modernism. Pizzetti and his followers were also against the complete rejection of the nineteenth-century Italian opera, which they viewed as possible starting point for a renewed Italian musical language. Although the two sides were divided since the early 1920s, it was in 1932 that they definitely diverged. In that year a *manifesto* consisting of harsh criticism against the ideals of Casella and his followers was published and signed by Pizzetti and Respighi among others in *Il Corriere della Sera* and *La Stampa*, two of the major Italian newspapers. This public disapproval may have been an attempt by Pizzetti and Respighi

³⁴ Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1988), 6-7.

³⁵ As previously mentioned, the authority of the Fascist regime will cause Casella to gradually restrain his progressive views in the 1930s.

to gain the favors of the Fascist administration, using the opportunity to reinforce their position in favor of the Italian tradition.³⁶

Trained by and composing alongside members of *la generazione dell'ottanta*, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco was influenced by the general detachment from the nineteenth-century Italian opera, as well as the newfound interest towards instrumental music. However, according to many critics, including his contemporaries such as Guido Gatti, Castelnuovo-Tedesco separated himself from the Italian music trends of his times by keeping an independent position and developing a very personal and autonomous view of music, as it will be discussed below. Castelnuovo-Tedesco was a close friend of both Casella and Pizzetti, the two leaders of the opposed factions within *la generazione dell'ottanta*. It is important to note that Castelnuovo-Tedesco never chose a side in that quarrel, ultimately refusing to sign Pizzetti's *manifesto* in 1932, a decision dictated not by his ties with Casella, but by his distaste towards any type of dogmatism.³⁷ This characteristic was already evident in Castelnuovo-Tedesco's early years, when he had the fortune of studying music under teachers that encouraged him to find his own voice, even at a very early stage of his musical growth.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Musical Style and Aesthetic

A short discussion on Castelnuovo-Tedesco's ties to Pizzetti, his most significant mentor, constitutes an ideal starting point for this investigation. Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects to evaluate is to what extent this relationship affected Castelnuovo-Tedesco's individuality. Italian musicologist Cosimo Malorgio points out that, even today, critics and scholars emphasize some compositional similarities between the music of Pizzetti and

³⁶ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica*, ed. James Westby (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005), 33.

³⁷ David Ewen, ed., *The New Book of Modern Composers* (New York: Knopf, 1961), 111.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Malorgio observes that Castelnuovo-Tedesco's masterful control of musical form can be related to his teacher's work, but that the classical solemnity of Pizzetti's music is greatly different from Castelnuovo-Tedesco's intimate, spontaneous language.³⁸ As stated earlier, Pizzetti had a great impact on the musical and personal life of Castelnuovo-Tedesco. On the other hand, while studying composition under Pizzetti, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was strongly encouraged by his teacher to find his individual compositional style, and was spared from any impositions by Pizzetti on the development of his own musical language. Perhaps the words of French music writer Georges Jean-Aubry can best illustrate the unobtrusiveness of Pizzetti's teaching:

Ildebrando Pizzetti has in no [way] tried to impose his own views upon the young man, whose first essays he guided. He has communicated to him an artistic conviction which was already deeply rooted in his own nature. He instilled into him, further, as it would appear, the virtue of expressing in the simplest possible manner his emotions and impressions.³⁹

What was Castelnuovo-Tedesco's "artistic conviction" that Jean-Aubry spoke of? In his memoirs, Castelnuovo-Tedesco writes that music should always be an expression of feelings, and in a style that should be personal and void of conformism; that music is "the art of associating sounds in a logical, harmonious, imaginative, and expressive way."⁴⁰ Even more revealing of the composer's aversion to conformity is Castelnuovo-Tedesco's own statement specifically written for *The New Book of Modern Composers*, edited by David Ewen: "As far as

³⁸ Cosimo Malorgio, *Censure di un musicista. La vicenda artistica e umana di Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* (Torino: Paravia, 2001), 11.

³⁹ Georges Jean-Aubry, "The New Italy," *The Musical Quarterly*, 6 (January 1920): 52.

⁴⁰ Cosimo Malorgio, *Censure di un musicista. La vicenda artistica e umana di Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* (Torino: Paravia, 2001), 46.

theories are concerned, I do not believe in theories. I have never believed in modernism, or in neoclassicism, or in any other isms.”⁴¹

Beside a general attachment to traditional harmony, another constant feature in Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s works is the presence of clear, singable melodies. He himself stated that love for melody found its ideal in the lyricism of Franz Schubert’s songs.⁴² This love of melody might explain why Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s favorite (and most prolific) form was the song for voice and piano, a form through which he combined his love for literature and melody with the predilection for his own instrument, the piano.⁴³

Castelnuovo-Tedesco also emphasized how especially important the inventive element of music is, saying that it is through this that the true personality of the composer is revealed.⁴⁴ Music critic James Westby writes: “Music for [Castelnuovo-Tedesco] was above all a means of expression, going as far as to claim that everything could be translated into musical terms.”⁴⁵

Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s interest in “translating” external elements into music is illustrated by the large number of descriptive works in the composer’s output, including the already mentioned character pieces for piano as well as works such as his String Quartet no. 3 (1964), which depicts the surrounding of Florence.⁴⁶ Main sources of inspiration were Tuscany, the Bible, and Shakespeare;⁴⁷ beside these, one can find a great variety of external elements that have aroused the composer’s imagination. In only one instance, however, did Castelnuovo-Tedesco turn to the realm of Neapolitan folk music, with its dances, festivities and its most

⁴¹ David Ewen, ed., *The New Book of Modern Composers* (New York: Knopf, 1961), 111.

⁴² Ibid., 111. “[...] if there is any composer I envy it is Franz Schubert for his *Lieder*.”

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 112.

⁴⁵ James Westby, “Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Mario,” in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/05128> (accessed August 12, 2008).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ David Ewen, ed., *The New Book of Modern Composers* (New York: Knopf, 1961), 111.

celebrated festival in Piedigrotta. This choice was an unconventional one for an Italian composer in the 1920s, as shall be shown below.

Exoticism and the Choice of Neapolitan Folk Music

As previously mentioned in the discussion on *la generazione dell'ottanta*, the general musical taste in Italy in the 1920s was characterized by a reaction against the *verismo* opera, particularly its subjects from everyday life. Vernacular material and especially references to Italian folk culture were fundamentally rejected and absent from the works of the foremost composers of the time. *La generazione dell'ottanta* represented the most important and influential musical reality during that period, and by standing against Italian folk music they contributed to the general perception of this genre as “foreign” to the Italian musical panorama of their time. Consequently, a work of folk inspiration such as *Piedigrotta 1924* can be seen as a form of exoticism, a term that can be defined as “the evocation of a place, people or social milieu that is (or is perceived to be) profoundly different from accepted local norms in its attitudes, customs and morals.”⁴⁸ In this case, the exotic location evoked was close to home.

During the nineteenth century, a general taste for exoticism among European composers became more and more popular. This trend was bolstered by increasing improvements in transportation, making traveling to farther destinations easier, and facilitating inter-cultural exchanges. From the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth, the most popular exotic sources were those from Spain and the “Orient,” a rather generalized construct which included countries ranging from the Middle-East to the Far-East. Other exotic resources popular among European composers included the music of African Americans, especially jazz,

⁴⁸ Ralph P. Locke, “Exoticism,” in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/45644> (accessed December 17, 2008).

as well as more local exotic elements, as exemplified by the Spanish composers' interest in their own musical ethnic heritage, in particular through the works and writings of Manuel De Falla.

In Italy, a tangible interest for exotic elements appeared during the second half of the nineteenth century, especially in the operatic repertoire. Examples of works shaped by exotic sources (in this case from the Middle and Far East) include operas such as Verdi's *Aida* (1871) and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904) and *Turandot* (1926). A more local set of exotic sources captured from the popular tradition are found in many operas of Italian *verismo*. Operas like Macagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890) and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (1892) are perfect examples of a trend that saw *verismo* composers abandoning the historic subjects dear to romantic opera in favor of the depiction of "everyday life."

Despite a wholehearted love for the "noble" national traditions, such as Palestrina's choral music, Frescobaldi's keyboard music and the heritage of Gregorian chants, the composers of *la generazione dell'ottanta* were not indifferent to external influences and styles from other countries. Particularly during the first three decades of the twentieth century, this group of Italian composers was fascinated with the music of Debussy, each of them reacting to this influence to a different degree. Even Pizzetti, notoriously more critical towards works of foreign composers, was not indifferent to Debussy's innovations.⁴⁹ However, from a few instances in Pizzetti's early works where an echo of the French master may be recognized, the Italian composer never fully embraced Debussy's techniques and style in his own works.⁵⁰ Those composers with an eye on the international scene were more profoundly affected. Casella, who lived in Paris from 1896 to 1915, was particularly influenced by Debussy's music, and while he

⁴⁹ John C. G. Waterhouse, "Portrait of Debussy. 9: Debussy and Italian Music," *The Musical Times* 109, no. 1503 (May, 1968): 415.

⁵⁰ Ibid. To exemplify Pizzetti's debt to Debussy, in his article Waterhouse points out a few similarities between the opera *Fedra* and the Frenchman's *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

criticized Debussy's inconsistency and lack of structure, he respected the Frenchman's technique and sonorities.⁵¹ A reflection of this admiration is perceptible in Casella's early piano works such as *Toccata* (1904) and *À la manière de Claude Debussy* (in the style of Claude Debussy, 1911). Malipiero was similarly fascinated with Debussy's compositional techniques, but also with his idea that sound was a primary element and generator of the musical composition. Examples of this influence can be found in Malipiero's early descriptive piano works, as well as in the evocative *A Claudio Debussy* (to Claude Debussy, 1920).⁵²

Castelnuovo-Tedesco also was a great admirer of Debussy's music and, as stated earlier, many of his early piano works were influenced by the Frenchman's style. What makes Castelnuovo-Tedesco's position unique in comparison with the composers of *la generazione dell'ottanta* was his interest in popular culture, which he had already shown even before writing *Piedigrotta 1924*. For example, in 1915 he composed two song cycles, *Coplas* and *Stelle Cadenti*, which were based respectively on popular lyrics from Spain and Tuscany, two geographical areas that would be among the composer's favorite sources of inspiration. On the other hand, *Piedigrotta 1924* is the first and only example of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's portrayal of the Neapolitan popular culture. As already mentioned, Neapolitan folk music, because of its humble origins and setting, was far from the artistic ideal promoted by Mussolini, which advocated that music should be inspired by the nobility and the classical symmetry. Therefore, the choice of Neapolitan folk as inspiration for this piece is not only in great contrast with *la generazione's* aim to rediscover the ideal "Italian voice" through Italy's ancient tradition of the Renaissance and Baroque, but also with their interest for exotic elements, which were most likely

⁵¹ Virgilio Bernardoni and Giorgio Pestelli, *Suono, parola, scena: studi e testi sulla musica italiana nel Novecento* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2003), 28.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 25-34.

to be found in foreign countries (such as France) instead of the more local exotic sources from the Italian folk tradition.

Piedigrotta 1924 illuminates Castelnuovo-Tedesco's independent view of music. He rejected conforming to anyone stylistic standard and depended heavily on the free expression of personal emotions. We might also presume that Castelnuovo-Tedesco's love for melody found its ideal grounds in Neapolitan popular songs, with their catchy and often lyrical melodies. By looking at *Piedigrotta 1924* we can see how the composer incorporates depictions of specific atmospheres, citations of old popular songs, and echoes of traditional instruments in an effective and artistic way. In order to have a better understanding of the piece, this document will present a survey of the elements from the Neapolitan culture which can be identified in *Piedigrotta 1924* and will investigate how Castelnuovo-Tedesco integrates them.

CHAPTER III

NEAPOLITAN ELEMENTS IN *PIEDIGROTTA 1924*

[...] one can define the Neapolitan song as a poetic musical composition, naturally of short length, with verses in the Neapolitan dialect and where the melody is recognizable as Neapolitan, belonging to a precise ethnicity, as it is with the *fado*, flamenco and other musical genres of the folk tradition.⁵³

The above quotation by Salvatore Palomba, a well-known contemporary Italian ethnomusicologist, describes some of the general characteristics of a musical genre that has a history spanning centuries, but that reached worldwide popularity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century thanks to songs like “Funicoli funicolà” and “O sole mio,” among others. These compositions gained their immense popularity thanks to their catchy, singable melodies, a prominent trait common to all Neapolitan songs.

A major concern regarding the definition of “Neapolitan song,” however, is the fact that the term can indicate a wide variety of musical forms and expressions. For this reason, it is extremely difficult to describe in detail the traits that characterize its style, and such a task has not yet been attempted in a systematic manner. However, a few common characteristics can certainly be identified, especially if focusing on those “classics” from the golden age of this genre that were composed during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁵⁴ As mentioned in

⁵³ Salvatore Palomba, *La canzone napoletana* (Napoli: L’ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001), 13. “[...]si possa definire canzone napoletana quel componimento poetico musicale, naturalmente di breve stesura, i cui versi siano in dialetto napoletano e la cui melodia sia riconoscibile come napoletana, appartenente cioè a una precisa etnia, così come avviene per il fado, per il flamenco e per altri generi musicali di tradizione popolare.”

⁵⁴ Earlier examples are not sufficiently documented, while later in the twentieth-century the Neapolitan song will gradually blend with a more “globalized” pop style.

Palomba's opening quote, one of the most defining characteristic is the use of Neapolitan dialect (instead of Italian) for the lyrics, a feature present in virtually all Neapolitan songs. Also, very often the rhythmic drive of these musical works is based on folk dances from Naples, two of which are also featured in *Piedigrotta 1924*: the *tarantella* (fast paced dance, usually in 6/8 meter) and the *tammurriata* (moderately fast dance, in simple duple meter). In addition, there are several instruments that are closely connected to the folk music of Naples and are widely considered a prominent component of the "signature" sound for this genre. These include the mandolin, the guitar and other stringed instruments like the *colascione*; the *zampogna* ("bagpipe"); as well as several percussion instruments such as the *putipù* (a kind of friction drum), the *triccaballacca* (a "clapper" made of three mallets), and a wide variety of tambourines. Harmonically, Neapolitan songs are usually diatonic and feature simple harmonies and chord progressions.

Melodically, songs with a slower pace often bear stepwise melodies, characterized by smooth, gradual motions and void of large leaps. Many scholars recognize a certain degree of similarity between a number of nineteenth-century Neapolitan songs and melodic content from Italian operas from the same period. A few examples, as suggested by Italian musicologist Maurizio Becker, include resemblances between "Santa Lucia" and the opera *Lucrezia Borgia* by Donizetti, "Te vojo bene assaje" and Bellini's *La sonnambula*, "Scetate, scé" and Donizetti's *La favorita*, and "Fenesta che lucive" (which will be explored more in details later in this chapter) and both Bellini's *La sonnambula* and Rossini's *Mosé*.⁵⁵ The question that immediately rises from these comparisons is in which direction the influence behind this resemblance flows: were Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini inspired by these folk songs, or did Neapolitan musicians of the

⁵⁵ Maurizio Becker, *La canzone napoletana* (Firenza: Octavo, 1999), 156.

time adapt these arias to their needs? The issue still remains unresolved, mostly for the lack of testimony, leaving a wide array of interpretations.

Piedigrotta 1924 assimilates folk musical elements in such a way that, to a listener with some familiarity with the tradition of Neapolitan songs, it may call to mind small musical gestures and echoes of famous melodies from this repertoire. Fortunately, the work also contains some elements that are more obvious than those gathered by an acculturated ear, and these offer a better understanding of the piece to a reader whose knowledge of the genre is limited.

This chapter attempts to objectively trace and discuss some tangible elements borrowed or inspired by the realm of Neapolitan folk music. An historical overview of the Neapolitan song and the Festival of Piedigrotta will offer a background on two chief elements behind the inspiration of *Piedigrotta 1924*. The discussion will continue with comments on related poems, dances, and traditional instruments. This investigation will reveal how Castelnuovo-Tedesco incorporated the folk tradition of Naples, including references to the subculture connected to the history of Neapolitan songs. The roots of this genre, according to some musicologists, go back to the Renaissance.

The Origins of the Neapolitan Song

The origins of the Neapolitan song are difficult to trace due to the genre's oral tradition. There are two dominant readings of its early history, the first recognizing the origins of the Neapolitan song in the realm of "serious" music, the second tracing back its source solely into the folk sphere.

One interpretation finds the roots of the Neapolitan song in the sixteenth century *villanella*, a polyphonic vocal composition with instrumental accompaniment and one of the

most popular secular forms of the Renaissance. The term is derived from the Latin word *villanus*, meaning peasant. The Neapolitan variant of *villanella* drew from the local folk tradition of the time, and the first printed musical compositions in Neapolitan dialect are found in a collection of *villanelle alla napolitana* printed in Naples by Giovanni da Colonia in 1537.⁵⁶ Musicologist Salvatore Palomba observes that many examples of *villanelle alla napolitana* carry stylistic features that are recognizable as Neapolitan, tracing a direct stylistic connection between such repertoire and the more recent Neapolitan folk songs.⁵⁷ The *villanella* would eventually lose popularity during the seventeenth century, but elements of this Neapolitan folk style will be perceptible in some example of eighteenth century *opera buffa*, as well as arias from the nineteenth-century bel canto opera.

Other scholars believe that the origins of the Neapolitan song lie in local folk traditions. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century a “parallel” Neapolitan folk repertoire, which was mostly based on oral tradition, was circulating through the performances of wandering singers and instrumentalists. Only a small number of texts from that period have survived, although many transcriptions and arrangements were made during the 1800s through the work of music publishers like Guglielmo and Teodoro Cottrau.⁵⁸ During the same period, Neapolitan folk music re-emerged from three centuries of anonymity and new works began to be documented and appreciated beyond their local confines. One of the most important events in the genre’s revival was the founding in 1835 of the Festival di Piedigrotta, a songwriting contest in Naples. Linked to the religious procession of the Madonna di Piedigrotta, the festival played a key role in the

⁵⁶ Donna G. Cardamone. "Villanella." In Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/29379> (accessed January 12, 2009).

⁵⁷ Salvatore Palomba, *La canzone napoletana* (Napoli: L'ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001), 20.

⁵⁸ In addition, a handful of compositions dating from before the nineteenth century were recently recorded in the field by ethnomusicologist Roberto De Simone, although these versions obviously constitute only modern reinterpretations of ancient themes.

ascent of popularity of the Neapolitan song, in particular between 1880 and 1920, considered by many to be the golden age of this genre.⁵⁹

The Festival di Piedigrotta

Behind the religious parade of the Madonna di Piedigrotta stands an old legend. On September 8th, 1353, the Virgin Mary spoke to a group of fishermen in a vision, instructing them on where to find a wooden statue representing her. The statue was uncovered at the base of a grotto in Naples, where the church of Santa Maria di Piedigrotta stands today. The location provides the name to this entire district; the name “Piedigrotta” is derived from the words “ai piedi della grotto,” which means “at the foot of the grotto.” For centuries, the religious celebration has taken place every year on the night between the seventh and the eighth of September and features a procession during which the statue of the Madonna is carried through the streets of Naples to the church of Piedigrotta. There are testimonies from as early as the fourteenth century, including those of Boccaccio and Petrarca, which account the wide popularity this celebration reached since its early days.⁶⁰ Throughout the centuries, the procession grew in popularity, as did the secular festivities associated with it. Such carousing became more and more spectacular and opulent, so much so that during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Borbone family, ruling royals of the Kingdom of Naples at the time, took it as an occasion to display their troops, adding a military parade to the celebrations.⁶¹

Songs and dances were always part of these secular celebrations, but in 1835 this aspect took a more organized form with the birth of the Festival di Piedigrotta. An especially important event linked to the first festival was the launch of the song “Te vojo bene assaie” (often

⁵⁹ Salvatore Palomba, *La canzone napoletana* (Napoli: L'ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001), 26.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 49.

⁶¹ Maurizio Becker, *La canzone napoletana* (Firenze: Octavo, 1999), 10.

attributed to Donizetti), which the majority of the critics identify as the first real example of Neapolitan song, as well as “the forerunner of all the hits of the Neapolitan songs.”⁶² But it is not until later, in occasion of the creation of another milestone, that the genre would reach worldwide popularity. In 1880, “Funicoli funicolà,” premiered during the year’s Festival di Piedigrotta, marking the beginning of the golden age of the Neapolitan song, which lasted approximately until the 1920s. This success is favored by the absence of a real competition, since the Italian popular song as genre still did not exist, and foreign songs were largely ignored.⁶³ Most importantly, during the 1880s the promotion of Neapolitan songs, especially through the Festival di Piedigrotta, became a huge business. The music industry began to print song collections and individual sheet music of the latest hits. The first of these collections was published in 1887 with the title *Album di Piedigrotta: “O munno ‘smerza”* (‘Album of Piedigrotta: “The World Upside Down”). This was the first of many collections to come that were published shortly before the festival, usually in mid-August, and that contained not only songs but also illustrations of places and characters from which the lyrics were inspired.

In his autobiography, Castelnuovo-Tedesco describes how he drew the idea for the title of his Neapolitan rhapsody from Piedigrotta’s famed song collections, which often carried the name “Piedigrotta” followed by the year of the edition. The composer conceived the rhapsody in separate movements, each with a contrasting mood, and with individual titles in Neapolitan dialect, similar to the songs found in the Piedigrotta song collections. In fact, in his autobiography the composer even refers to the movements of this rhapsody as *canzoni*, or ‘songs.’⁶⁴

⁶² Marcello Zangagna, *Napoli: parole e musica* (Napoli: Edizioni Vis Radio, 1960): 44. “[...] l’antesignana di tutti i successi della canzone napoletana.”

⁶³ Salvatore Palomba, *La canzone napoletana* (Napoli: L’ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001), 40.

⁶⁴ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica* (Fiesole: edizioni Cadmo, 2005), 177.

As mentioned earlier, the song festival was originally connected with the religious parade, but the secular festivities associated with it gradually became more celebrated than the sacred procession. The song festival even impacted religious practice. Around the turn of the twentieth century, the parade to the church of the Madonna di Piedigrotta was accompanied by a lively succession of colorful floats adorned with lights and flowers, each carrying singers and small musical groups performing the newly composed Neapolitan songs. The procession ended with a spectacular show of fireworks.⁶⁵ *Lariulá!*, the closing movement of *Piedigrotta 1924*, appears to be directly connected to the festival, most probably being a “cinematographic” portrayal of the festive atmosphere of the closing parade. The music in the opening measures of the movement, marked *pianissimo*, produces a general sense of distance and “blurred edges” that recalls impressionist sonorities. The instruction that Castelnuovo-Tedesco inserts here is especially descriptive: *con una sonorità fusa e ondeggiante...come uno scampanio lontano...alle prime luci dell'alba* (with a foggy and wavy sonority...like a far tolling of bells...at the first lights of dawn). The first theme is marked *Allegro e fischiettante – ma lontano* (happy and whistling – but distant), which may suggest the echoing of a peasant’s whistle. The theme makes a brief appearance but is soon overtaken by the opening vaporous writing. The dynamics becomes increasingly louder as the music becomes more “in-focus” and a potpourri of new melodies, combined with reminiscences of motives heard earlier in the rhapsody, are presented. A march (indicated in the score as *Alla marcia paesana*, “as a peasant march”), a folk-like tune (marked *cantando alla maniera popolaresca*, “singing in a folk-like manner”) and other musical elements are frantically alternated with mounting intensity, suggestive of the passage of the floats accompanied by the growing general excitement. This leads up to a climatic gesture (m. 215), a *fff* chord tremolo high in register marked *come una clamorosa risata* (like a clamorous

⁶⁵ Maurizio Becker, *La canzone napoletana* (Firenze: Octavo, 1999), 10.

laughter) which is followed by a short flashback of the dark tarantella from the first movement, which here serves as a brief coda, and ends the entire piece.

Aside from the possible reference to the suggestive atmosphere of the closing parade of the festival, a closer investigation of elements from the Neapolitan folk culture will reveal how poetry, music, dances, and instruments from this area have impacted the writing of *Piedigrotta 1924*.

Neapolitan Folk Poetry and the Quotation of “Fenesta che lucive”

The most visible evidence of the correlation between the Neapolitan folk poetry and *Piedigrotta 1924* is found in the titles of the movements which, as Castelnuovo-Tedesco himself states, are taken from poems by Salvatore Di Giacomo (1860-1934).⁶⁶ Di Giacomo is recognized by many as one of the finest Neapolitan poets. Writing exclusively in Neapolitan dialect, his fame did not travel outside of Italy, where he was largely appreciated by his contemporaries, including the famous Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce. Di Giacomo’s collaboration with renowned composers of the time, such as Mario Costa and Paolo Tosti, produced many classics of the Neapolitan repertoire, including “Era de maggio,” “Lariulá!,” and “A Marechiaro.” The poems chosen for *Piedigrotta 1924* by Castelnuovo-Tedesco are not always connected to the music of the corresponding movement. While in the *Tarantella scura*, *Notte ‘e luna*, and *Voce luntata* the poetry finds moods and atmospheres in common with the music, *Calasciunate* and *Lariulá!* seem to be simply inspired by a certain connotation of the word in the title, as it will be explained later in the chapter.

In *Tarantella scura* the relationship between the homonymous poem by Di Giacomo and the music seems limited to a general sense of negativity. It consists of a woman’s cry to her

⁶⁶ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica* (Fiesole: edizioni Cadmo, 2005), 177.

jealous lover and foretells an impending tragedy. In the refrain, for example, the female character dances the tarantella while saying “who knows how badly this story will end!”⁶⁷ These dark feelings are explored in the music through a fluctuation of the harmony between the major and minor modes, a chromatic second theme, and obsessive pedal points and ostinatos that are a constant presence throughout the entire movement.

The second movement is named after Di Giacomo’s poem “Notte ‘e luna,” which features a man under a moon-soaked night sky talking to the wind about his beloved and his love sickness. The parallel in the music is perceptible not only for its depiction of nocturnal atmospheres, but also for the way the closing bars reflect the last stanza of the poem:

But what silence!... The wind
leaves me and does not hear me...
The moon, slowly,
is back in the sky...⁶⁸

In the last page of the movement the melody ends (the melody possibly representing the dialogue with the wind), and a sixteenth-note figuration (used as an accompaniment for the main melody) accelerates and becomes lighter, turning into an almost inaudible arpeggio in the last three measures marked *perdendosi*, or “fading,” perhaps depicting the dying of the wind. All that is left in the last measure is an F-sharp octave in the bass, the pedal tone that opened the movement.

The title of the third movement, *Calasciunate*, is a Neapolitan term that has more than one connotation. As a musical form, it usually indicates a slow composition based on single

⁶⁷ Salvatore Di Giacomo, *Poesie* (Milano: Mondadori, 1977), 169. “E sta storia malamente chi sa come comme fenarra’!”

⁶⁸ Salvatore Di Giacomo, *Poesie* (Milano: Mondadori, 1977), 186. “Ma che silenzio!... ‘O viento mme lassa, e nun me sente... ‘A luna, lentamente, turnata ncielo e’ gia’...”

motive repeated obsessively, as in a lament.⁶⁹ “Calasciunate” by Di Giacomo is indeed a type of lament in that the male character weeps in his sleep because his love has ended. However, in this case the text of the poem seems to have no connections to the music, and a lively atmosphere throughout the movement reinforces this assumption. Instead, as it will be discussed later, *Calasciunate* appears to be a pun inspired by the sound of the *calascione*, a traditional Neapolitan stringed instrument.

Perhaps the most interesting references to the poetry and the music of the Neapolitan tradition are found in the fourth movement, *Voce luntana. Fenesta che lucive*. The title and subtitle of this movement are from two different poems, both inspired by the abrupt separation of two lovers. “Voce luntana” by Di Giacomo tells the story of a woman who runs off on a ship, leaving her beloved behind, never to see him again. The *voce luntana*, or “distant voice,” is that of the woman on the boat, slowly getting farther from the port and from her beloved. Although common atmospheres can be found in both poems, it is in “Fenesta che lucive,” by an anonymous author, that Castelnovo-Tedesco finds the true inspiration for this movement, both in its words and its most popular musical rendition from the mid-eighteenth century, which the composer quotes in its entirety, even though he veers from the original in his use of a more complex harmonization which includes instances of polytonality.

“Fenesta che lucive” is considered by many to be a classic of the Neapolitan song repertoire. The origins of the text can be found in a Sicilian poem of the sixteenth century, which was inspired by the true story of the Baroness of Carini, murdered by her father in 1583 for becoming the lover of a man who belonged to a family hostile to hers. The version in Neapolitan dialect, which modifies the story of its Sicilian counterpart, appeared for the first time in print in 1854 with the lyrics attributed to an unknown author. The Neapolitan adaptation tells

⁶⁹ Roberto De Simone, *Canti e tradizioni popolari in Campania* (Roma: Lato side, 1979), 41.

the story of a man who returns to the home of his beloved and finds her bedroom window, which was always shining with light, in complete darkness (*fenesta che lucive* means “window that used to shine”). Her sister informs him that his loved one is dead and buried in the cemetery near the church. The man, at the height of his desperation, declares that he will walk to the cemetery that same night where he will wait for death to unite him with his beloved again.

The music of this 1854 version was attributed to Vincenzo Bellini. This attribution is often doubted, although some critics have pointed out the similarities between this melody and the aria “Piú non reggo a tanto duolo” from Bellini’s opera *La sonnambula*.⁷⁰ The suspicion about the ascription to Bellini finds its logical justification in a common practice of the time, which saw editors (such as Franco Italian Guglielmo Cottrau, who originally published *Fenesta che lucive*) attributing songs to famous composers in order to catch the interest of a larger audience, and therefore making such works more marketable. Because of the lack of reliable records, establishing an exact origin for this melody is yet to be achieved by modern scholars.⁷¹

This fourth movement of *Piedigrotta 1924* seems to concentrate on the ending stanzas of the poem and is most probably a depiction of the night scene in which the man learns of the death of his beloved and walks towards the cemetery. The composer’s intention of portraying a starry night is especially evident in the recurring pianistic gesture marked *chiaro e stellato*, “clear and starry,” which appears on m. 3 in a high register above the quoted original melody (example 3.1). Also, in the opening measures a repeated F-sharp in the bass suggests a depiction of a bell tolling (the composers adds the instruction *come un lontano rintocco* in the score, which means “like a far toll”), this being a clear reference to the church next to the cemetery mentioned in the poem.

⁷⁰ Vincenzo Paliotti, *Storia della canzone napoletana: i primi canti popolari, le antiche villanelle, le melodie celebri in tutto il mondo* (Roma: Newton Compton, 1992), 30.

⁷¹ Salvatore Palomba, *La canzone napoletana* (Napoli: L’ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001), 228.



**Example 3.1: *Voce luntana* (*Fenesta che lucive...*), mm. 1-4;
(Notice: the octave D in the bass is a carried over from the previous movement)**

The last two pages of *Voce luntana* feature a fragmented version of the main melody; the movement closes with a coda that is possibly a depiction of the main character crying at the cemetery at night. The composer includes indications such as *grave e triste* (“grievous and sad”) and *singhiozzante* (“weeping”). The last musical gesture in the movement is a descending glissando on black keys marked with the evocative *come una stella cadente*, “like a falling star.”

Lariulá!, the title of the last movement, is a nonsensical word which appears in the refrain of the homonymous poem by Di Giacomo, as it does in the refrain of “Tarantella scura” and in many other texts associated with fast-paced dances. The song composed by Mario Costa

(1858-1933) on this text is a joyful tarantella in a major key, where the word is underscored by the typical rhythm of the dance. The last movement in *Piedigrotta 1924* seems to have no connections to the poem, which consists of a lively quarrel between two lovers, nor with the song by Costa. As already discussed, Castelnuovo-Tedesco most likely intended to depict the approaching parade in the Festival of Piedigrotta. The title here only brings its festive undertone because of its association with lively dances.

Two Neapolitan Folk Dances

The first and last movements of *Piedigrotta 1924* feature the presence of two traditional Neapolitan folk dances: the *tarantella* and the *tammurriata*. Castelnuovo-Tedesco used the *tarantella* on a few other occasions, like his Tarantella for guitar op. 87b and the last movements of his Clarinet Sonata op. 128. In the case of *Piedigrotta 1924* the composer chooses to open this long work with the most representative dance from the Neapolitan popular music (and perhaps the most popular Italian folk dance), offering the listener a recognizable feature that is universally linked to Naples.

The origins of the *tarantella* are controversial. Some critics identify its origins from the city of Taranto, in the Italian southern region of Puglia, where the dance was intended as a cure for the *tarantismo*, a phenomenon caused by the bite of the tarantula. The *tarantella* from Puglia is usually in a duple meter and is danced by the person who is supposedly affected by the spider's bite. This dance is often linked to popular superstition, and was still performed by "women possessed by the devil or prey to the spells of magicians" in the region of Puglia until recent years.⁷²

⁷² Marcello Zanfagna, *Napoli: parole e musica* (Napoli: Edizioni Vis Radio, 1960), 41. "[...] donne possedute dal demonio o in preda a sortilegi di maghi."

Italian ethnomusicologist Vincenzo Paliotti traces its origins to the fifteenth century as a result of the fusion between the Arabian dance *moresca* and the Spanish *fandango*.⁷³ The majority of the scholars recognize the anonymous “Lo guarracino,” from the end of the eighteenth century, as the first surviving example of Neapolitan tarantella. Aside from the common etymology and a fast paced, energetic rhythm, the Neapolitan tarantella (which ultimately represents the stereotyped Italian tarantella) carries very individual features that distinguish it from its counterpart from Puglia. It is usually in a 6/8 meter and features a great variety of rhythmic patterns, among which the most popular is the repetition of the rhythmic figuration quarter-note/eighth-note on each beat. It is frequently characterized by accents on strong beats produced by percussion instruments such as tambourines, castanets, and bass drums.⁷⁴ The tarantella is mostly intended as a couple dance, frequently carrying sexual connotations. Although mostly known as a joyful dance, at times the tarantella is permeated by darker atmospheres. Italian Musicologist Marcello Zarfagna describes it as “a dance in which happiness fuses with the diabolical,” hinting at its potential for expressing extreme contrasts.⁷⁵

During the nineteenth century the Neapolitan tarantella became extremely popular across Europe, a phenomenon witnessed in the memoirs of famous writers such as Goethe, Lamartine, and Ibsen, as well as by a number of paintings of tarantella dancers made by foreign artists traveling through southern Italy.⁷⁶ In addition, references to the tarantella can be heard in romantic compositions as in Chopin’s Tarantella op.43, Liszt’s third movement of *Venezia e Napoli*, and Rossini’s *La danza*, among others. In the same period, many Neapolitan dancers

⁷³ Vincenzo Paliotti, *Storia della canzone napoletana: i primi canti popolari, le antiche villanelle, le melodie celebri in tutto il mondo* (Roma: Newton Compton, 1992), 40.

⁷⁴ Roberto De Simone, *Canti e tradizioni popolari in Campania* (Roma: Lato side, 1979), 30.

⁷⁵ Marcello Zarfagna, *Napoli: parole e musica* (Napoli: Edizioni Vis Radio, 1960), 42. “E’ una danza in cui l’allegria si fonde al diabolico.”

⁷⁶ For example the French Léon Bazile Perrault and the English Thomas Uwins, among others.

and folk musicians were travelling and performing all over Europe, a factor that contributed to the popularity of this dance. Most of all, the wide recognition was reached thanks to the hundreds of songs that were written in a tarantella style such as “*Funicoli funicolá*.”⁷⁷

The title of *Piedigrotta* 1924’s first movement is *Tarantella scura* (dark tarantella) which, together with some indications in the scores such as *scuro e minaccioso* (dark and ominous) and *piangente* (weeping), underlines the composer’s intention to exploit the gloomier aspect of the dance. A sense of tension is also reflected in the rhythmic element, especially in the second half of the piece, where the opening 6/8 meter, typical of the Neapolitan tarantella, overlaps in a few instances with the 2/4 of the second theme (example 3.2). One can only hypothesize that this could symbolize the contrast between the Neapolitan tarantella in 6/8 and its Pugliese counterpart in duple meter.



Example 3.2: *Tarantella scura*, mm. 144-147; The left hand ostinato in 6/8, with the overlapping second theme in 2/4 in the right hand

Another traditional dance can be recognized in the last movement in the rhapsody, *Lariulá!* After the introduction, the dominating rhythm, indicated in the score as *Alla marcia paesana* (as a peasant march), echoes the *tammurriata*, a popular Neapolitan folk dance.

The name *tammurriata* derives from the phrase in Neapolitan dialect *ballo 'ncop o' tamburo*, or “dance over the drum.” The word *tamburo* (drum) is also found in Neapolitan

⁷⁷ Salvatore Palomba, *La canzone napoletana* (Napoli: L'ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001), 29.

dialect as *tammorra*, a term that identifies a specific kind of percussion instrument.⁷⁸ The *tammorra* is a large hand tambourine, with a circular frame of approximately thirteen to twenty-three inches in diameter. The frame hosts rectangular holes across its side, where circular pieces of old tin cans are mounted.⁷⁹ The most prominent instrument of the *tammurriata*, the *tammorra* is used to mark every downbeat of this moderately fast binary dance, its rhythm being directly connected to the syllabic singing that accompanies the steps and characterizes this form.⁸⁰ The music in *Lariulá!* reflects the strong “pulse” of the *tammurriata* by carrying, for the most part, rhythmic patterns that feature accents on the downbeat within a duple meter. Before the coda, this rhythmic pattern is only interrupted for three measures (mm. 127-129) with the sudden (and short) appearance of a tarantella. The verses used in the traditional *tammurriata* are usually composed of eleven syllables, and as a result of metric adjustments the melodic material usually features an anacrusis at the beginning of each line. It is interesting to notice how the two main melodic motives in *Lariulá!* are both beginning with a pickup note, like the typical rhythmic/melodic gesture of the *tammurriata*.⁸¹

The origins of the *tammurriata* are to be found in the dances of ancient Greece, especially those connected to the celebration of fertility and, more in general, as tribute to matriarchal figures. As a result of this legacy, the *tammurriata* is closely connected to rituals devoted to the Madonna, especially around Naples and the Vesuvius area, and the texts of its musical expression are often a direct tribute to her.⁸² The presence of *tammurriata* is still considered vital in any “respectable” religious festivity connected to the Virgin Mary.⁸³ This close tie

⁷⁸ Alba G. Naccari and others, *Le vie della danza* (Perugia: Morlacchi Editore, 2004), 59.

⁷⁹ Roberto De Simone, *Canti e tradizioni popolari in Campania* (Roma: Lato side, 1979), 15.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: 23.

⁸¹ The two motives will be discussed in chapter IV (see example 4.24).

⁸² Alba G. Naccari and others, *Le vie della danza* (Perugia: Morlacchi Editore, 2004), 59.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 62.

between the *tammurriata* and the cult of the Madonna gives an additional validation behind the use of this dance in the last movement of *Piedigrotta 1924*, being the one movement that more directly evokes the closing acts of the song festival that was in direct relation with the celebration of the Madonna di Piedigrotta.

Guitar and *calascione*

The guitar, one of the most important instruments in the Neapolitan song, is imitated at key moments in *Piedigrotta 1924*. One of the sections where this reference seems more prominent is in the second movement. Its title *Notte 'e luna* translates to “night of moon,” and it uses imagery that is dear to the French impressionist composers. Castelnuovo-Tedesco creates a suggestive, nocturne-like texture, where a heartbreaking melody “hangs” over an accompaniment composed of long sustained notes in the bass and a repeated sixteenth-note figuration in the middle range of the keyboard (example 3.3). This accompaniment figuration is most likely evoking an arpeggiated accompanying pattern on a guitar, an instrument dear to Neapolitan serenades.

However, it is in the third movement that the composer’s reference to the guitar and, even more so, to its close relative the *calascione*, stands out more notably. In fact, this movement



Example 3.3: *Notte 'e luna*, mm. 20-23

draws its inspiration from one of the connotations to which the term *calasciunate* is associated (two of which were discussed earlier): the playing of the *calascione* (or *colascione*), an old stringed instrument, now in disuse.

The instrument was introduced from Turkey to Naples during the fifteenth century and was mostly used as a bass voice for dance music. It was very similar to the lute but featured a much longer neck, a round body similar to the mandolin, and two or three strings.⁸⁴ The sound produced is very close to that of bass instruments of the lute family such as the *Theorbo* (also known as *chitarrone*), and could be roughly described as a low, rich guitar sound. During the seventeenth century the *calascione* became especially fashionable in Naples and was considered equal to the already popular guitar. In that period guitar and *calascione* players used to gather in the city's taverns to perform together. These "tavern musicians" were considered more than just wandering artists; in fact they had been acknowledged by the local authorities through the creation of a corporation in 1569 which protected their rights and gave recognition to their profession.⁸⁵

The compositional writing of this movement illustrates Castelnuovo-Tedesco's love for the guitar. Beside the title's reference to the *calascione*, the composer indicates the opening tempo as *Allegramente (quasi chitarrata)*, or "happily (almost guitar-like)," and in several instances instructs the performer to play *quasi pizzicato*, "almost plucked." In the pianistic adaptation, two separate entities can be hypothesized: a guitar on the right hand and a *calascione* (being lower in register) on the left. To support this interpretation one may observe that while the right hand plays up to four notes at a time, the left hand seems to follow the limitations of the

⁸⁴ Alexander Silbiger, "Imitations of the Colascione in 17th-Century Keyboard Music," *The Galpin Society Journal*, 33 (March, 1980): 93.

⁸⁵ Vincenzo Paliotti, *Storia della canzone napoletana* (Roma: Newton Compton editore, 1992), 156-7.

calascione's three strings, and for the most part is presented with no more than three notes simultaneously. By comparing two episodes in the movement that present similar musical elements, we can notice how the accompanying strumming is composed of four notes when in the right hand (example 3.4a) and three notes when in the left hand (3.4b).⁸⁶



Example 3.4a: *Calasciunate*, mm. 10-13



Example 3.4b: *Calasciunate*, mm. 65-68

The remarks in this chapter illustrate how certain elements of the Neapolitan folk culture may have inspired and, in some ways, shaped the composition of *Piedigrotta 1924*. Aside from the quotation of “Fenesta che lucive,” all the material in the piece is composed by Castelnuovo-Tedesco.⁸⁷ Although the listener can perceive reminiscences of traditional Neapolitan melodies, it would be a mistake to consider this rhapsody a simple arrangement of folk-like tunes. Instead,

⁸⁶ Other examples of guitar-like textures in the piece will be explored in chapter V.

⁸⁷ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica* (Fiesole: edizioni Cadmo, 2005), 177

it is through the lenses of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's compositional style and a more complex reinterpretation of the Neapolitan song (usually a simple alternation of verses and refrains) that one can find the true individuality of this piece.

CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF *PIEDIGROTTA 1924*

The great majority of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's works fall under the idiom of modern tonality emblematic of the early twentieth century. In his compositional output, Castelnuovo-Tedesco utilizes a harmonic vocabulary that stretches the diatonic system to include mode and chord alterations. *Piedigrotta 1924* embodies such compositional language and, as the discussion in this chapter will show, it contains several instances of scale modifications that often result in areas of tonal ambiguity, as well as passages using modal inflections, including the use of melodic major, Dorian, and Lydian modes. Throughout *Piedigrotta 1924*, actual cadences or traditional chord progressions are rare (exemplified by the complete absence of the dominant in the first movement), while parallel chords and juxtaposition of harmonies are used frequently. Chord progressions often feature tertian relations (as seen in the long pedals in the first movement) as well as chromatic and diatonic displacement of chord tones that consequently form other harmonies (see, for example, the opening section in the second movement).

The work's most interesting compositional features occur within its melodic content, which will constitute the major focus of this analysis. It is important to notice that a few specific contours recur more than once at different points in the piece. Two in particular seem more prominent: an arched contour that is mostly outlined by motives in the right hand in a high register of the piano, and the chromatically descending line that is found not only in a few melodies in the top voice but, in more than one occasion, in the motion of the bass. One of the

main objectives of this analysis is to show how many of the melodies (some using the aforementioned contours) undergo several transformations and combinations and are used in many occasions as unifying element across the movements. Throughout his work, Castelnuovo-Tedesco expressed a love for melody and counterpoint, especially through the combination of themes and other musical elements. These general traits are crystallized in *Piedigrotta 1924*, where thematic transformation is one of the most prominent compositional devices. *Piedigrotta 1924*'s combination of thematic transformation with folk inspiration offers a direct connection to a specific genre of nineteenth-century solo piano work, the rhapsody.

As previously mentioned, the subtitle of this piece is *Rapsodia napoletana*, or Neapolitan Rhapsody. While the Neapolitan elements have been discussed in the third chapter, the use of the term “rhapsody” should be clarified. A rhapsody is frequently defined as “an instrumental piece in one movement, often based on popular, national, or folk melodies,”⁸⁸ a genre explored particularly in the nineteenth century and exemplified by Liszt’s nineteen Hungarian Rhapsodies and Brahms’ three rhapsodies for piano. *Piedigrotta 1924* matches this description with its debt to Neapolitan folk music, but it is formally very different from the aforementioned Romantic works because of its five movement structure. The first movement, *Tarantella scura*, functions as an introduction to the remaining four movements, and it is separated from the second movement by a clear pause. The subsequent movements are connected by a pitch that overlaps from the end of the previous movement to the next, in one case even affecting the harmony. Despite this connection, each movement has a specific character that distinguishes it from its predecessor, making the movement division still very obvious. Aside from the differences in the formal architecture, some common elements can be found especially between *Piedigrotta 1924*

⁸⁸ Thompson, Wendy and Jane Bellingham. “Rhapsody.” In *The Oxford Companion to Music*, edited by Alison Latham. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e5627> (accessed April 5, 2009).

and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies: the presence of large sections in a quasi-improvised (or rhapsodic) style and, most importantly, a significant use of thematic transformations. In *Piedigrotta 1924*, where the melodic lines are always very clear and prominent, this technique is used extensively throughout the piece.

This analysis will consist of a “walk through” of the whole piece (movement by movement), with particular attention given to the thematic material in the piece, exploring the modifications, recurrences, and combinations of the melodies in *Piedigrotta 1924*. The thematic analysis and labeling will be based on the melodic element, while other musical layers will be examined in a different context. The discussion will also include observations on form, tonal centers, as well as some remarks on harmony.

*Tarantella scura*⁸⁹

The structure of this opening movement resembles traditional sonata form in many respects. For this reason, the labeling of significant musical elements in this piece will reflect the customary terminology associated with that form.

The movement opens with a four-bar introduction, followed by the first theme, which is preceded by an anacrusis ascending arpeggio. The first theme is composed of four short phrases (two measures each) which can be labeled a-a'-b-a, three of which are based on a motive and its transposition (example 4.1). After a motivically related bridge, the first theme is then restated in m. 21, slightly varied (a-a'-b-a").⁹⁰ The key center for this section is C, and it is established from the introductory measure by the bass, which opens the movement with an ostinato alternating C on strong beats and B-flats on weak beats, and also supported by the melody descending from

⁸⁹ I am indebted to Karin Di Bella's DMA dissertation "Piano Music in Fascist Italy" especially for some elements of the formal analysis for this movement, as well as the fourth.

⁹⁰ As mentioned, the labeling of thematic layers in this analysis is based on melodic criteria.

scale degree 5 to 1 (G-F-E-D-C, mm. 5-6). This figuration in the bass is heard through the first phrase of first theme (a-a'), in both instances (m. 5 and 21), while in the second phrase the bass stretches down chromatically to an A-flat (mm. 9-11 and mm. 25-28), a note that will constitute the contrasting tone-center to C in this movement. The opening gesture in the bass suggests a modal inflection by avoiding the leading-tone B-natural, the absence of which anticipates the complete suppression of the G major harmony, the dominant of C, in the whole movement. The use of tertian relationships seems prominent in this movement, a feature which is present not only locally in the intervals of a few melodic gestures (like in the four opening motives, characterized by spans and transpositions by third; see example 4.1) but also in the greater harmonic scheme as exemplified by the long sustained notes C and A-flat, which constitute the central keys of the tonal design of this movement. Although the key signature indicates three flats, the presence of several E-naturals in the melodic lines of the first theme area suggests that the tonality oscillates between C minor and C melodic major, the latter of which will be briefly used later in the rhapsody. The melody is harmonized in the right hand with parallel major/minor triads in various inversions, an aspect that does not seem to have an impact on the harmonic middleground; here it is intended as a timbral device, where the choice of a major/minor sonority can impact the color in a very effective way.⁹¹

The first appearance of the second theme (m. 37) is marked by a sudden drop of dynamics from *ff* to *p* and a shift in meter from the previous 6/8 to 2/4 (example 4.2). A chromatic motion anchored around the notes D and B-flat characterizes the melody of the second theme, which is based on the repetition of the same motive, which is slightly varied when it repeats (motives c-c'). The beginning of the second theme area is also characterized by the establishment of the A-flat pedal, which combined with the harmonization of the melody, a D

⁹¹ Such treatment is often found in French impressionistic music.



Example 4.1: *Tarantella scura*, mm. 5-12; The first theme's four phrases (a-a'-b-a)



Example 4.2: *Tarantella Scura*, mm. 37-41; Second theme (motive c only)

dominant seventh in third inversion without the fifth, results in an unresolved French augmented sixth chord.

After the second theme is presented in m. 45, the time signature goes back to 6/8 in concurrence with a transition similar to the bridges from the first theme area (m. 13 and m. 29). Throughout this passage, the A-flat pedal is still active in the left hand by means of a triplet ostinato that will be used extensively in the development (example 4.3).



Example 4.3: *Tarantella scura*, mm. 45-46; The triplet ostinato in the left hand

This passage leads into another occurrence of the second theme in m. 53, which is again presented in 2/4, like in m. 37 (see example 4.2). The theme is transposed and the melody's focal point is G instead of D, over a C in the bass. This pedal tone will be active until m. 115, throughout the development and until just a few measures before the recapitulation. The harmony shows an alternation of C minor and A-flat seventh in first inversion, with the C in the bass sustained throughout this passage.

As expected, the development (being by definition the section in which the themes and other musical elements are elaborated and modified) is the section in which Castelnuovo-Tedesco's use of thematic transformation and combination is more prominent. Similarly to the

exposition, this section begins with a four-bar introduction based on a repeated pattern, a variation of the pattern found in m. 45 (see left hand in example 4.3). The second phrase of the first theme appears in m. 71, harmonized here around a C-Lydian (compare examples 4.1 and 4.4), and is followed in m. 75 by a new guise of the bridge found in m. 13.

Example 4.4: *Tarantella scura*, mm. 68-77; Three of the four measures of introduction are shown, followed by new forms of the second phrase of the first theme (mm. 71-74) and the bridge (mm. 75-77)

Another example of a thematic modification is the transformation of the second theme in m. 83 (see example 4.5). Here the D major sonority over the C pedal is reminiscent of the harmony found in the right hand in m. 37 (see example 4.2) where the second theme was underscored by an A-flat pedal instead; the initial chromatic descent of that theme is now expanded over three-and-a-half measures. Notice that the ascending arpeggio is a gesture that was heard in the anacrusis at the beginning to both instances of the first theme, and is exploited in the development in m. 83, 87 and 91-94.



Example 4.5: *Tarantella scura*, mm. 83-86

In m. 95, elements from both the first and second theme are combined. The first six notes of the second theme are presented in the lower register (played here by the right hand), and for the first two measures are marked 2/4, contrasting with the 6/8 of the accompanying figure in triplets, played by the left hand. This is followed by a short ascending motive taken from the second phrase of the first theme, again in 6/8 (example 4.6).



Example 4.6: *Tarantella scura*, mm. 95-98

The chromatic descent of the second theme is then replicated in the motion that will bring the pedal point from a middle C down four octaves in the retransition (mm. 115-127). This is

contrasted by an ascent in the right hand starting in m. 120, which uses elements from the second phrase of the first theme (motive b, see example 4.1) and from the bridge. This diverging motion will lead to the recapitulation, where an ascending arpeggio in the upbeat again introduces the first theme.

Both themes are stated only once in the recapitulation, instead of twice like in the exposition. A notable difference is the reappearance of the second theme, which is set in the right hand as it was in m. 53 (its second appearance in the exposition, with the melody starting on G) but over a pedal of A-flat in the left hand (its pedal point in m. 37, the second theme's first appearance). This passage is followed by a coda that reestablishes the pedal on C, and which uses the version of the second phrase of the main theme found in the opening of the development (see example 4.4), prominently based around C-Lydian. One last occurrence of the ascending arpeggio in m. 167 (similar to the D seventh sonority heard on m. 83 in the development) appears in thirty-second notes, making it quicker than the previous examples and also the one covering the largest interval. The movement closes with three unharmonized Cs in the last two measures, retaining the ambiguity of major/minor mode found at the beginning of the movement.

Because of its debt to the sonata form, this tarantella shows an economy of thematic material. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's keenness for combining elements (whether it is motives, accompanying figures, or even meters) is especially tangible in the development, where such combinations are accompanied by actual transformations of themes and musical gestures, as we have seen the two themes, the ascending arpeggio and the ostinato triplet figure undergoing several metamorphoses. The predominant tone center is C, but areas where A-flat is present through prolonged pedal points are presented. Other tertian relations will be observed later in the piece, especially in the last movement.

Notte 'e luna

This movement shows a simpler architecture than *Tarantella scura*. The form of this movement can be roughly identified as A-B-A'-B'-A" where each instance of "A" features a different version of the opening theme. The movement begins and ends in F-sharp major, with a middle section that features very unstable harmonies, characterized by a succession of seventh chords and continuous modulations.

Notte 'e luna begins with two introductory measures that serve to set the atmosphere of the piece by establishing the home key of F-sharp major and setting in motion the sixteenth-note figuration in the middle range, which will be present throughout the entire A section (mm. 1-36). The A section can be subdivided in a-a'. The end of a (m. 18) overlaps with the first bar of a', which, similarly to the opening of this movement, begins with two measures of introduction before the melody appears again. Throughout the a section an F-sharp pedal in the bass is steadily sounded every two, four, or five measures. Over this pedal, the harmony in the sixteenth-note figuration constantly changes. The first four measures of the theme are particularly interesting because the melody outlines a descending scale that is similar to the one heard in some instances of *Tarantella scura*: a melodic major scale (here F-sharp melodic major). In the a' section the same scale will be used in the bass, in occasion of its first departure away from F-sharp on m. 27, at the end of the second phrase of the reappearance of the theme (between measures 27 and 37 the bass moves every two measures marking a descending line from F-sharp to G-sharp).

The next section (B) opens with a new motive in measure 37. Distinct from the opening theme, this short melody (three measures) is harmonized in triads in the right hand and accompanied with arpeggios in the left hand supported by octaves in the lower register, creating

a more “undulating,” pianistic texture. The harmony features a succession of seventh chords, changing every two measures between bar 37 and 46, creating a sense of instability that is brought to an end in mm. 47-48 where a cadence leads back to the first theme, and the F-sharp in the bass is reestablished. In the A’ section, m. 48 through 53, the harmony is solidly in F-sharp major without any modal alterations, and the texture and the melodic material are modified in comparison to the beginning.

The transformed occurrence of the opening theme in A’ is brusquely truncated by a B-flat dominant chord over a pedal of F-sharp in m. 54, which can be identified as the beginning of the B’ section. Similarly to B, this section is also marked by a harmonic instability, which ends in m. 66-68 with a perfect cadence in F-sharp major.

In m. 68, the beginning of A’’, the opening two measures of the movement are replicated exactly, but the first theme is once again varied and begins here on E-natural instead of C-sharp. The melody moves around the same F-sharp melodic major mode seen in the opening measures of the movement and it is truncated after eight measures, ending on a C-sharp which is held over an F-sharp in the bass for seven measures. The closing bar features an open fourth C-sharp/F-sharp in the right hand, with the F-sharp in the bass sounding one last time and carrying over into the next movement.

Although less prominently than in *Tarantella scura*, thematic transformations and combinations are also featured in this movement. For example, the new melody found at the beginning of the B section alternates with a motive derived from the first five notes of the opening theme (see brackets in example 4.7). Notice how the use of chords in third inversion in

the right hand (a typically guitaristic texture found in several occasions throughout the piece) combined with the presence of a turn in m. 39 infuses a Spanish flavor to the passage.⁹²

Example 4.7: *Notte 'e luna*, mm. 36-42

A particularly interesting aspect of this movement is the use of a small gesture heard in the first measure of the piece that is taken and modified into larger passages or modified accompanying figurations. For example, the end of the A section is connected with the following section by two measures (m. 35-36) that present an arpeggiation derived from the opening accompanying figures in sixteenth-notes. This new gesture originates from the

⁹² See chapter V for a more detailed discussion on the influence of Spanish music in this piece.

alternation of the F-sharp major chord and the D-natural heard in measures 1-5 and 18-22. The D-natural is here accompanied by a G, both notes used in a chromatic alternation/undulation with F-sharp major (see brackets in example 4.8a and 4.8b).

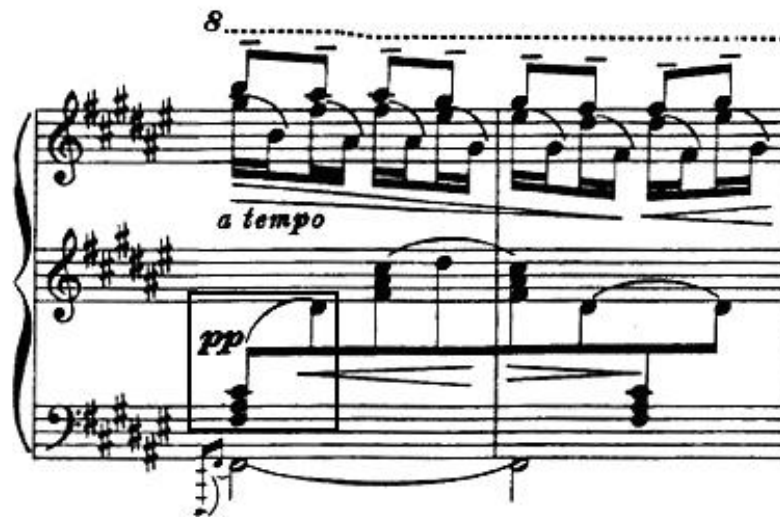


Example 4.8a: *Notte 'e luna*, mm. 1-2



Example 4.8b: *Notte 'e luna*, mm. 35-36

Later in the piece, the same gesture found on m. 1 (example 4.8a) is used as accompanying figuration under the restatement of the theme in section A'. The varied accompaniment (here played by the left hand alone) is derived from such gesture, transformed into eight notes, and with a D-sharp instead of D-natural to match the F-sharp major harmony void of modal inflections that characterizes the passage (example 4.9).

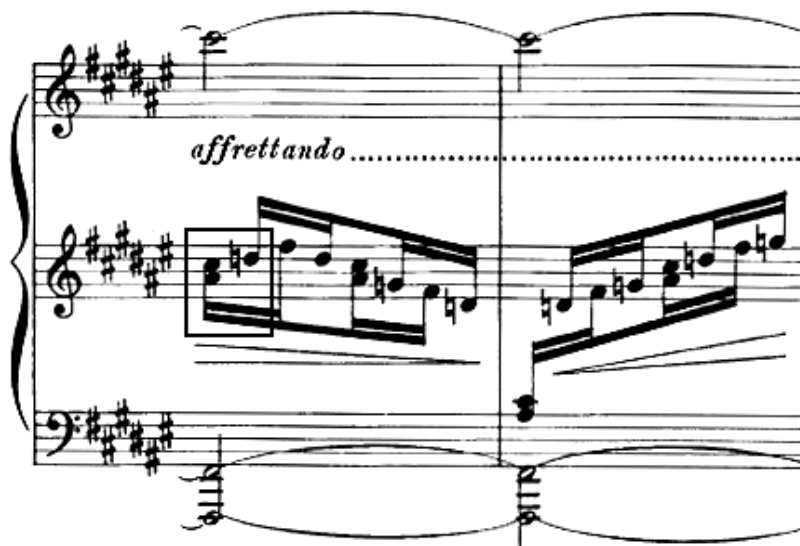


Example 4.9: *Notte 'e luna*, mm. 48-49

The sixteenth-note figuration that opened the movement ultimately turns into a new guise of the gesture previously heard on mm. 35-36 (see example 4.8.b), which in mm. 77-82 is expanded into a much larger motion that covers that span of three octaves (example 4.10).

Calasciunate

In contrast with *Tarantella scura* and *Notte 'e luna*, *Calasciunate* seems to have a much less defined form. Although the previous two movements feature alternations, combinations and



Example 4.10: *Notte 'e luna* mm. 78-79

transformations of a few motives, *Calasciunate* exploits these devices even more extensively, sacrificing a clear architecture in favor of a writing that moves in a quasi-improvised manner.

The beginning measures reveals that the freer formal architecture is also accompanied by a less stable harmonic structure in this movement. The opening harmony features a D dominant seventh with an added ninth, which includes the F-sharp carried from the previous movement as the bass (therefore creating a first inversion of the chord for the first three measures). The key signature bears one sharp, suggesting that this D-seventh sonority in the opening section might be a long cadential gesture that will eventually resolve to G major. Instead, the whole movement shows an alternation of short episodes, most of which are quickly modulating, and neither the key of G major nor E minor is ever established throughout the piece.

The opening theme (a) is presented for the first time in mm. 2-9, where it is harmonized with the aforementioned D major seventh added ninth sonority. This melody is sounded exactly in mm. 65-72, but over a C-Lydian harmony, “coloring” the theme with a more stable C. The

first four notes of theme a are also originating a small motive (*a*) used in several instances, as in mm. 17, 19, and 21. In the closing bars of the movement (mm. 142-148), this motive is presented with sixteenth rests instead of dotted eighth-notes, repeated twice, and followed by another five instances, turning into a longer gesture after which a series of arpeggiated chords over a D in the bass are sounded closing the movement. Notice that such arpeggiated chords originate from those in mm. 9-17 (the last of which is sounded on the downbeat of m. 17 in example 4.11a).



Example 4.11a: *Calasciunate*, mm. 17; First instance of motive *a* (in bracket)

Example 4.11b: *Calasciunate*, mm. 142-150; Last instances of motive *a* (in brackets)

In m. 24 a new theme (b) is sounded in the key of G minor, quickly modulating through several keys. One element of this melody is used extensively throughout the movements: the four sixteenth-notes followed by four eighth-notes in m. 27 (motive *b*). Particularly interesting is the transformation that this gesture (originally in 3/4 meter) undergoes in m. 82-84, where the tempo switches to 6/8 and the accompanying eighth-notes underline the grouping in two beats instead of the original three.



Example 4.12: *Calasciunate*; instances of motive *b* in m. 27 (in 3/4, example on the left) and in m. 82 (in 6/8, example on the right)

A third theme (c), in B dorian, arrives in m. 38. In later instances the theme is either repeated exactly or transformed (see example 4.13a and 4.13b).



Example 4.13a: *Calasciunate*, m. 38-39; Theme *c*



Example 4.13b: *Calasciunate*, mm. 48-49; A different guise of theme c

The second measure of theme c (example 4.13a, m. 39), which borrows its rhythmic structure from the opening theme a, is modified and used extensively throughout the piece. For example, it is transformed into a chromatic fall of descending minor thirds in mm. 42-43 (example 4.14a), and it is similarly exploited at the end of the movement in mm. 138-141 (example 4.14b).



Example 4.14a: *Calasciunate*, mm. 42-43



Example 4.14b: *Calasciunate*, mm. 138-141

A short tarantella-episode is presented in mm. 56-64. The left hand accompaniment is clearly taken from the ostinato in the opening of *Tarantella scura*, the bass note here transposed on D and C (two octaves higher than the original C) and modified in its texture. The new theme (d) shows a resemblance to the contour of the second phrase of theme a (mm. 6-8), and it is harmonized here with parallel fourths instead of thirds (example 4.15). Theme d and the tarantella-episode will reappear again in mm. 90-98, transposed a fourth lower and with variations to the accompanying figure.

As mentioned before, the harmonic structure of the piece is much more complex than the previous two movements. The tonalities of G major or E minor, suggested by the key signature, are never established. The only “steady” harmonic element is an extended pedal tone on D appearing on mm. 99-114. Another instance of this pedal is present in the closing bars, although for a much shorter span, in mm.132-138. *Calasciunate* closes with a low D octave, which is carried into the next movement, and six arpeggiated chords that suggest a closing harmony in D major with an added sixth.



Example 4.15: *Calasciunate*; Comparing melodic contours between theme a (mm. 6-8, top line, right hand only) and theme d (mm. 56-59, bottom line)

Voce luntana (Fenesta che lucive...)

Voce luntana brings with it a return to a clear architectural structure; in this case, ABA' with a short coda. The A section, as well as A', contains the quotation of the traditional Neapolitan song "Fenesta che lucive," while the middle section B, the largest in the movement, contains original material and elaboration of previously heard elements.

In the first two measures of the piece, the octave D carried in the bass from the previous movement functions as a momentary harmonic deception. The accompanying figure in eighth-notes (with the lower F-sharp doubled with a dotted half-note to emphasize the bell effect described in chapter two) combined with the D in the bass creates a D dominant seventh with added ninth, perhaps an echo of the beginning harmony of *Calasciunate*. Once the low D ceases to sound in m. 2, the harmony becomes ambiguous; the key signature indicates no sharps or flats, the melody clearly draws from the A-minor scale, but after a few bars it becomes more obvious

that the F-sharp in the bass is a “stranger” to the key and to the original harmonization of the traditional melody. This gives an instance of polytonality for the entirety of the first appearance of the first phrase of the theme, throughout which the F-sharp continually sounds as a pedal. In m. 10 the beginning of the second phrase is marked by the bass, which leaves the F-sharp to descend to an F-natural, then diatonically all the way down a ninth to an E in m. 18, the cadential point that introduces the B section. Throughout the A section, starting in m. 3, a short motive marked *chiaro e stellato* (clear and starry) is repeated exactly, mostly every other measure, in the high register over the quoted melody.

The B section is introduced by a clear V-i cadence (mm. 18-19) that establishes the key of A minor, this time rooted in the bass with a sustained A. The short “starry” melody from m. 3, which was at first a commentary to the folk tune, takes a life on its own in mm. 19-22 and is expanded by means of a second motivic element, originating from a musical gesture briefly heard in *Calasciunate* (compare brackets in example 4.16a and 4.16b).



Example 4.16a: *Calasciunate*, mm. 87-89

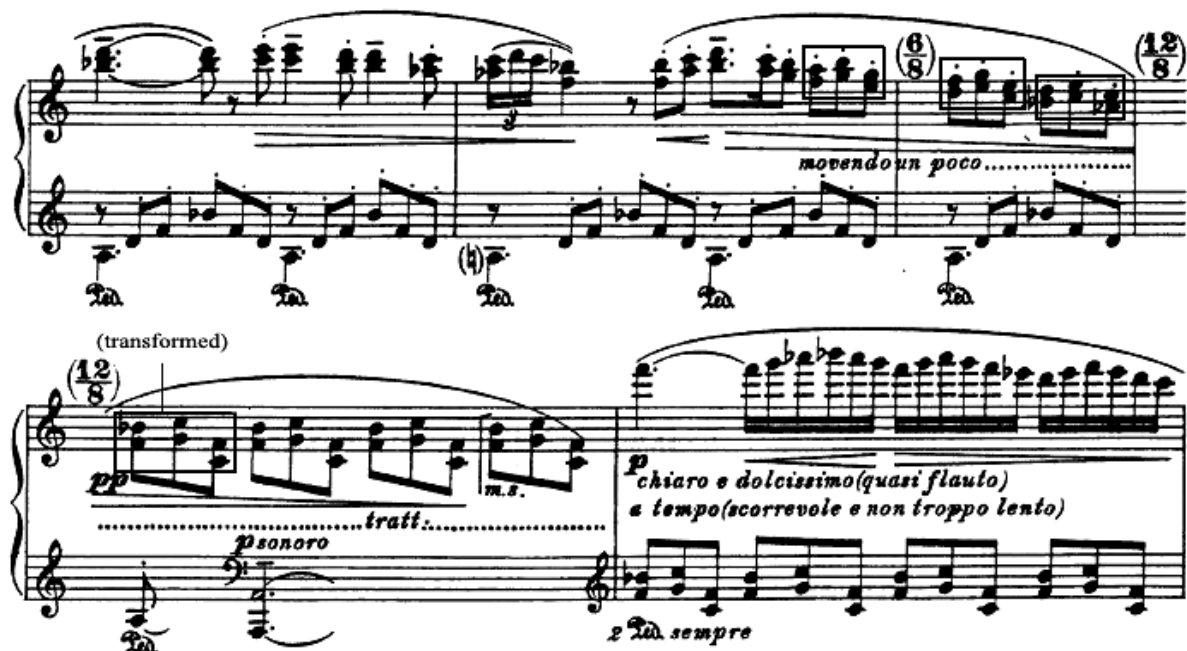


Example 4.16b: *Voce Luntana*, mm. 19-20

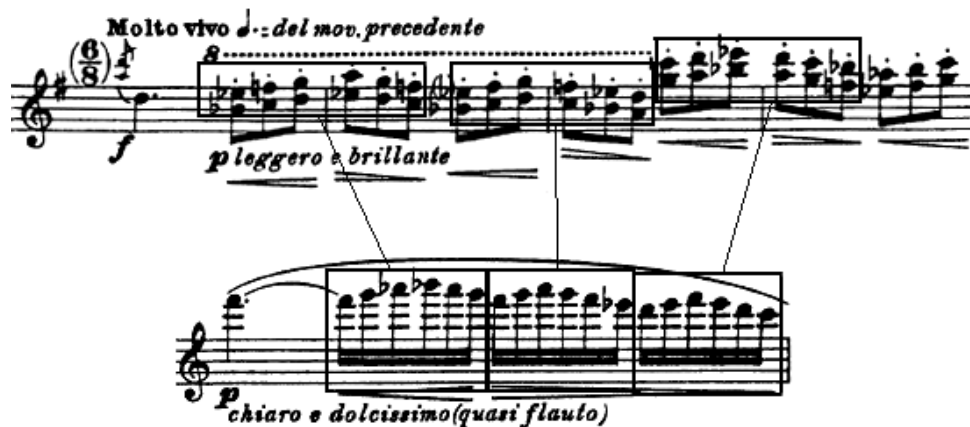
The melody in mm. 19-22 is presented three times throughout the B section, the first being, as mentioned, in A minor, then in A major (mm. 41-44) and C major (mm. 57-60). These three instances alternate with sections where several elements from this movement, as well as previous movements, are transformed and echoed. The B section could be roughly subdivided as a-b-a'-c-a", where each instance of a features the expanded "starry" theme from mm. 19-22.

Among the elements that are transformed throughout the B section, the last three notes of the melody from mm. 19-22, isolated and repeated twice descending by major third in m. 23 (in brackets, example 4.17), are the origin of the accompanying figure that dominates the first half of b in mm. 24-31. The writing in thirds turns into open fourths (m. 24) and the descending interval between the second and third eighth-notes stretches from a minor third to a perfect fifth.

The first measure of a new subject (m. 25) borrows its contour from the theme of the tarantella-episode in *Calasciunate*, which was also shaped after another melody in mm. 6-8 of the same movement (see example 4.15). This new melody in *Voce luntana* is repeated in different guises in mm. 28 and 30-31.



Example 4.17: *Voce luntana*, mm. 21-25



Example 4.18: Comparing melodic contours in *Calasciunate*, mm. 56-59 (top line, right hand only) and *Voce Luntana*, m. 25 (bottom line, right hand only).

The second part of this new subject contains a motive (mm. 26-28) from which two gestures will originate and will become new, independent elements later in the movement. The first is represented by the two grace notes followed by three eighth-notes (m. 26) that will later

become the “weeping” motive (marked *singhiozzante*, or “sobbing”) heard in mm. 39-40 and 75 (example 4.19, in brackets).



Example 4.19: *Voce Luntanta*, m. 26 (left) and m. 39 (right)

The second gesture consists of the last eight notes of the subject from mm. 26-28, which are isolated and presented transposed and within different textures in mm. 33-34, 37-38, 54, 56, and 73-74 (example 3.20, in brackets).

Notice that the accompanying figuration in sixteenth-note octaves at the end of m. 33 is derived from a similar figuration heard m. 101 of *Calasciunate*, and seen here on the exact same note (E) but in a different rhythm (sixteenth-note value instead of eight-note triplets in *Calasciunate*). This gesture will be repeated with each occurrence of this motive derived from mm. 27-28 (like in example 4.20, bottom) and also in a varied form on mm. 57-59, where the “starry” theme from mm. 19-22 is sounded in C major.



Example 4.20: *Voce Luntana*, mm. 27-28 (top) and m. 33 (bottom)

After a sustained E in the bass (mm. 30-40) in section b, the music cadences in A major in m. 41, the key in which a' is presented (mm. 41-44). The episode that follows, previously indicated as c, is characterized by the presence of two elements from *Tarantella scura*, here transformed: the chromatic second theme and the accompanying figure found for the first time in m. 53 in the first movement. In example 4.21, the bottom musical example shows the first appearance of these two elements in *Voce luntana*, where the second theme is heard in the left hand as an unharmonized melodic line (and with a focal point on G-sharp), and the accompanying element is heard only twice before each bass is sounded.

second theme (*Tarantella scura*)

$\frac{2-6}{4-8}$

ffviolento

Più mosso - ma senza rigor di tempo
 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ del mov. precedente

second theme from *Tarantella scura*

$\frac{4}{4}$

m.s.
p morbido

m.d.
inflanguido o appassionato

Throughout section c the chromatic motion in the melodic material is matched by a long chromatic ascent in the bass, which moves from the A in m. 45 to the G in m. 57, where a'' is presented in the key of C major. The G remains active for four bars (mm. 57-60) after which the music cadences to C major on m. 61, where the quoted melody returns and the A' section begins.

confirming a harmonization in C major. The closing measures of the movement feature a sustained G in the bass, over which a truncated statement of the main theme, this time in C minor, is presented (mm. 70-71). The sustained G will be active until m. 75, when a sudden switch to G-flat major on m. 76 underscores a descending *glissando* on black keys in the right hand (the “falling star”). Notice the parallel between the opening pedal of F-sharp and this final G-flat major chord (enharmonically F-sharp major). The descending *glissando* ends on a low C octave in the bass, which closes *Voce luntata* and is held over into the next movement.

Lariulá!

The last movement of *Piedigrotta 1924* is the longest of the whole rhapsody (232 bars). The movement is characterized by a rapid alternation of a few themes, some of which are borrowed from previous movements, presented either in their entirety or in a fragmented version and at times even combined together. The key center in *Lariulá!* is C major, with a few episodes in A-flat major, sometimes with chromatic alterations; in a way this “echoes” the C/A-flat duality found in the opening *Tarantella scura*, with the substantial difference that in *Lariulá* these two harmonies are not prolonged through extended pedal points.

The movement can be roughly divided into four sections: an introduction (mm. 1-25), two larger sections (A in mm. 26-129 and A' in 130-204), and a coda (mm. 205-232). The introduction is characterized by “blurred,” quasi-impressionistic writing. It features a quick figuration in eighth-notes (the tempo marking being *Assai mosso*, or “very fast,” while the time signature is in cut time) made of parallel fourth in alternation between both hands in the key of C minor, all underlined by long sustaining pedals, with the presence of two short fragmented themes. From the opening *pp*, the dynamics are increasingly growing, and the indications in the

score suggests to gradual closeness to the “action” (for example the marking “*avvicinandosi*,” which translates into “approaching”). A sudden three-measure hint at the tarantella in mm. 23-25, marked *ff*, signals the arrival of the A sections. The same exact tarantella will appear in mm. 127-129, where similarly it will precede the beginning of the other large section A’, which begins with the same material of the A section (compare mm. 26-32 with mm.130-136), sounding almost like a false reprise. The coda is preceded by a short “breath” marked in the score, and characterized by an *accelerando* (marked in the score “*Sempre piú vivo e tumultuoso*,” or “increasingly more lively and tumultuous”) that will lead to the climatic *tremolo* in mm. 215-217, followed by the closing *Presto*.

Once again, the transformation of a few basic motives and the return of elements heard in previous movements are perhaps the most identifiable compositional elements in the piece. The first recognizable motive (a) appears in m. 6. Motive a is presented three times in different guises throughout the introduction. It will then reappear in the coda in a fragmented version, after which the triad underlined by motive *a* as it was originally heard is sounded simultaneously in inversions of the A flat-C-E triad (examples 4.22a and 4.22b, in brackets).

The melody in the short tarantella-episodes in mm. 23-25 and mm. 127-129 carries a resemblance to the thematic contour of the similar passages in mm. 56-64 and mm. 90-97 of *Calasciunate* (see comparison in example 4.23), and consequently to mm. 6-8 of the same movement (see example 4.15) and mm. 25, 28 and 31 of *Voce luntana* (see example 4.18).

A second motive is presented at the beginning of section A in m. 29-36. The first five notes of this motive (b) will originate several other gestures. For example, rhythmically it will match the beginning of the subsequent motive (c), which appears for the first time on m. 39. Motive b and c will be the two most frequently heard melodies in this movement.

(Ab-E-C)

un po' meno mosso

pp

p

Allegro e fischiettante - ma lontano

pp

assai mosso

p

Example 4.22a: *Lariulá!*, mm. 4-7; First appearance of motive a

Sempre più vivo e tumultuoso

mp in rilievo

p

Motive a (fragmented)

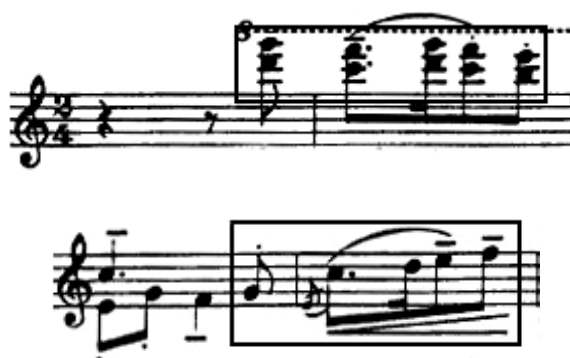
mf

f

Example 4.22b: *Lariulá!*, mm. 205-213; Transformations of motive a in the coda



Example 4.23: similarities in the melodic contours of the tarantella-episodes in *Calasciunate* (mm. 56-59, top, right hand only) and *Lariulá!* (mm. 24-25, bottom)



Example 4.24: rhythmic similarities in motive b (mm. 28-29, top, right hand only) and motive c (mm. 38-39, bottom, right hand only)

Motive b will then be transformed in the episode in mm. 76-91, appearing at first in the left hand (mm. 76-79) and then played harmonized with chords and octaves in the right hand (mm. 84-87). The same episode features two elements that were heard previously in the piece. The first five notes of the second theme of *Tarantella scura* are present in the accompanying figuration of the right hand, which is repeated three times in mm. 76-81. The melodic motions in

the bass in mm. 80-83 and in the top voice in mm. 88-90 are borrowed from the gesture found first on m. 33 of *Voce luntana* (see example 4.20).

Among other elements which are transformed throughout the movement, notice for example the accompanying figuration in sixteenth-notes heard in mm. 92-110 and mm. 170-184. This accompaniment is also the result of a transformation of a previously heard element, another accompanying figuration originated from the alternated fourth in the opening measures of the movement.

The closing *Presto* in m. 219 carries the last recurrence of the piece by presenting a modified version of the final bars of *Tarantella scura*. A tremolo on F-sharp is sounded in the bass (mm. 219-224) from which a modified version of the first theme from *Tarantella scura* as heard in the closing bars of that same movement emerges. On a larger scale, this reflects, in reverse order, the relation between the closing dominating harmony of *Tarantella scura*, which utilized an altered C major mode with raised fourth degree, and the F-sharp major of the next movement, *Notte 'e luna*. As mentioned, the relation between F-sharp and C was also exploited at the end of the previous movement (with a G-flat major chord, instead of F-sharp, preceding the final C octave), while F-sharp was a prominent pitch at the beginning of *Voce luntana*, where it represented the tolling of the bell.

Conclusions

As in many of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's works, the formal organization of *Piedigrotta 1924* is clear and structured, although the third and fifth movements present a much more fragmented architecture than in the other movements. As a whole, the piece never sounds divided into "compartments." Despite the marked individuality of each movement, the second

f

p quasi pizz.

mf in rilievo

(senza ped.)

second theme (*Tarantella scura*)

burlesco

marcato

motive b

motive from *Voce luntana*

ff

a piena voce-sfacciato

Rea.

motive from *Voce luntana*

f

Rea.

** Rea.*

** Rea.*

Example 4.25: *Lariulă!*, mm. 72-91



**Example 4.26: *Lariulá!*, m. 60 (top, left hand only)
and mm. 95-96 (bottom, left hand only)**

through the fifth are connected to each other, and the entire piece is unified through the extensive use of thematic transformations. As a result, large sections of this rhapsody are so fragmented and heavily based on continuous variation and alternation of a few musical elements that the music sounds improvisational in nature (as in, for example, the third movement). This characteristic is found in many nineteenth-century rhapsodies for the instrument, in particular those by Franz Liszt.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco's use of thematic transformation in *Piedigrotta 1924* is found both on a local level as well as on a large-scale, where themes reappear across movements combined and varied. The accompanying figurations are never obfuscating the predominance of the melodic material, although on occasion the overlapping of several musical layers at the same time creates a rather thick texture, making those instances quite difficult to perform on the piano. Being a pianist himself, in this piece Castelnuovo-Tedesco exploits the possibilities of the instrument in a masterful way. Although conceptually the debt to Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies is significant, there are other musical realms that more directly might have had an impact on the style of *Piedigrotta 1924*, a discussion that will constitute the starting point of the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

PIEDIGROTTA 1924:

STYLISTIC INFLUENCES AND ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE

This chapter speaks directly to pianists as well as to scholars interested in Castelnuovo-Tedesco's work. It aims to "place" this piece in the standard piano literature, both in regards of its overall style and its pianistic difficulties. Considering the scarce amount of literature dedicated to *Piedigrotta 1924*, the fact that this piece is still largely ignored by modern performers, and the existence of only two recordings today, finding a stylistically accurate way of interpreting this piece might prove especially difficult. While the impact of Neapolitan folk music on the piece has already been discussed, there are several passages in *Piedigrotta 1924* that call to mind other musical spheres, specifically the Spanish folk music (particularly in the ornaments and the guitaristic textures) and the French Impressionist music (mainly for the use of long sustain pedals and ostinatos). These connections are crucial for an understanding of the complete range of stylistic influences present in the piece. The complexities of the pianistic writing in *Piedigrotta 1924* are a direct product of these two stylistic influences, translating into a number of non-idiomatic, at times almost orchestral passages throughout the piece. The presence of a large amount of expressive markings in the score indicating extra musical elements, specific instruments, atmospheres, etc., reveals a general inclination of Castelnuovo-Tedesco to transcend the piano. In fact, these markings constitute perhaps the most valuable

resource for the interpretation of this piece, coming directly from the composer himself and being the only available set of detailed instructions on the performance of this neglected piece. The translation of these expressive markings (which are all in Italian) will constitute an essential reference for English-speaking performers.

This investigation will begin by looking at how the Spanish and French musical worlds might have influenced the writing of *Piedigrotta 1924*, and will trace a few tangible stylistic elements in the piece. After that, a discussion on the complexity of the piano writing in the piece will be accompanied by an examination of the markings by the composer in the score.

Spanish Influence

While Neapolitan folk music was an unusual source of inspiration,⁹³ one of the most popular exotic resources at the time *Piedigrotta 1924* was composed was the Spanish folk tradition. Such interest was common among French impressionist composers, and this keenness was also shared by Castelnuovo-Tedesco. However, the composer's interest in the Spanish musical tradition is not merely a result of a stylistic trend of his times, but it has a more personal basis.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco's ancestors were Jews of Spanish origin (known as Sephardic Jews) who immigrated to Italy in the fifteenth century. Interested in this family legacy, the composer himself researched his ancestor's roots and even discovered that the name "Castelnuovo" was derived from Castilla Nueva, the Spanish region where the family originated.⁹⁴ Aside from the remarks on his family's lineage, Castelnuovo-Tedesco's autobiography contains several passages that witness the composer's ties to Spain. For example,

⁹³ As we have seen, Neapolitan folk music can be considered an exotic source in Italy during the early twentieth century, a general perception which was in close connection to the ideals of *la generazione dell'ottanta*.

⁹⁴ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica*, ed. James Westby (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005), 49.

in a few passages the composer narrates about his travels to Spain and his fascination for the beauty and the charming atmospheres of that land. Also, Castelnuovo-Tedesco describes how much he valued his friendship with Andrés Segovia and Manuel de Falla, two of the most prominent Spanish musical figures of the twentieth century. Especially influential in regards to Castelnuovo-Tedesco's interest in this music realm was De Falla's interest for the Spanish folk culture, and the way he valued the Spanish ethnic heritage in some of his works while keeping a very personal and progressive style.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco had been devoted to Spanish music and poetry throughout his life. Several of his works are a testimony to this passion, including the song cycles *Romances Viejos* and *Coplas*, and his *24 Caprichos de Goya* for guitar. The composer's interest in Spanish music is also evident in a few tangible elements of *Piedigrotta 1924*. This unexpected "marriage" exposes a few stylistic similarities between the Spanish and Neapolitan folk styles that in a few sections of this rhapsody Castelnuovo-Tedesco decided to exploit more prominently. In a way, this connection offered the composer an ideal ground to utilize one of his most favorite musical spheres (the Spanish) within the realm of Neapolitan folk music, without being stylistically incoherent. Historically, this connection is most likely to be seen as a remainder from the Spanish ruling of Naples between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, a fact that has impacted several aspects of the Neapolitan culture, including the dialect.

A common feature in Spanish and Neapolitan folk music is the treatment of the melodic lines, which often feature embellishments with mordents and other ornaments. For example, this treatment is found in Flamenco songs (or *cante flamenco*) of southern Spain,⁹⁵ and is similarly featured in the performances of traditional Neapolitan songs, in that it was (and still is) a

⁹⁵ Israel J. Katz. "Flamenco." In Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/09780> (accessed February 19, 2010).

common practice of the Neapolitan folk singers to enrich the melody with improvised embellishments.⁹⁶ The most evident example of this trait is the first theme of *Notte 'e luna* (in all of its appearances throughout the movement), which feature the use of several mordents to mark some of the melodic motions. Close to this type of ornament, a specific musical gestures typical of the Spanish music is echoed in several passages of *Piedigrotta 1924*, a triplet figuration consisting in a rapid alternation of the main note with the upper auxiliary note (see example 5.1, downbeat of m. 57), a gesture that can also be found in many piano pieces of Spanish inspiration, including works by composers Enrique Granados and Isaac Albeniz.



Example 5.1: *Calasciunate*, mm. 56-57

Another common point between the Spanish and Neapolitan folk is the love for the guitar. We have seen how Castelnuovo-Tedesco was very interested in the guitar, and dedicated many works to the instrument, especially indebted to his collaboration with Andrés Segovia. The composer echoed the instrument's sonority in more than one occasion in *Piedigrotta 1924*, especially in the second and third movements, the latter being the one that most vividly evokes

⁹⁶ Roberto De Simone, *Canti e tradizioni popolari in Campania* (Roma: Lato side, 1979), 10.

the sound of the instrument. As discussed in chapter three, in the third movement several expressive markings confirm the composer's intention to evoke the instrument's sound. In the actual writing, we can find several instances where the guitar's strumming is replicated with arpeggiations of chords and passages characterized by extensive use of staccato articulation which are most likely intended to replicate the plucking of the instrument (confirmed by the indications in the score, like the "almost plucked" in m. 24). Also, the wide use of open fourths and fifths in the accompanying figurations is a feature that is often found in other pianistic adaptations of guitar-like textures. As a result of the writing mimicking the sound of the guitar combined with specific musical gestures such as the aforementioned triplet gesture, several passages in *Calasciunate* strongly call to mind piano works of Spanish inspiration. One fitting comparison, which could also serve to synthesize both the Spanish and the French impressionists' influence on Castelnuovo-Tedesco's music, is the opening section of *Alborada del Graçioso*, the fourth movement of Ravel's *Miroirs* (1905). The piece is one of the examples of the French composer's take on Spanish folk music and it carries compositional features that are very close to those found in *Calasciunate*, including the use of the triplet gesture and a writing that evokes the sound of the guitar through the musical elements discussed in this paragraph (open fifths, arpeggiated chords, etc.).

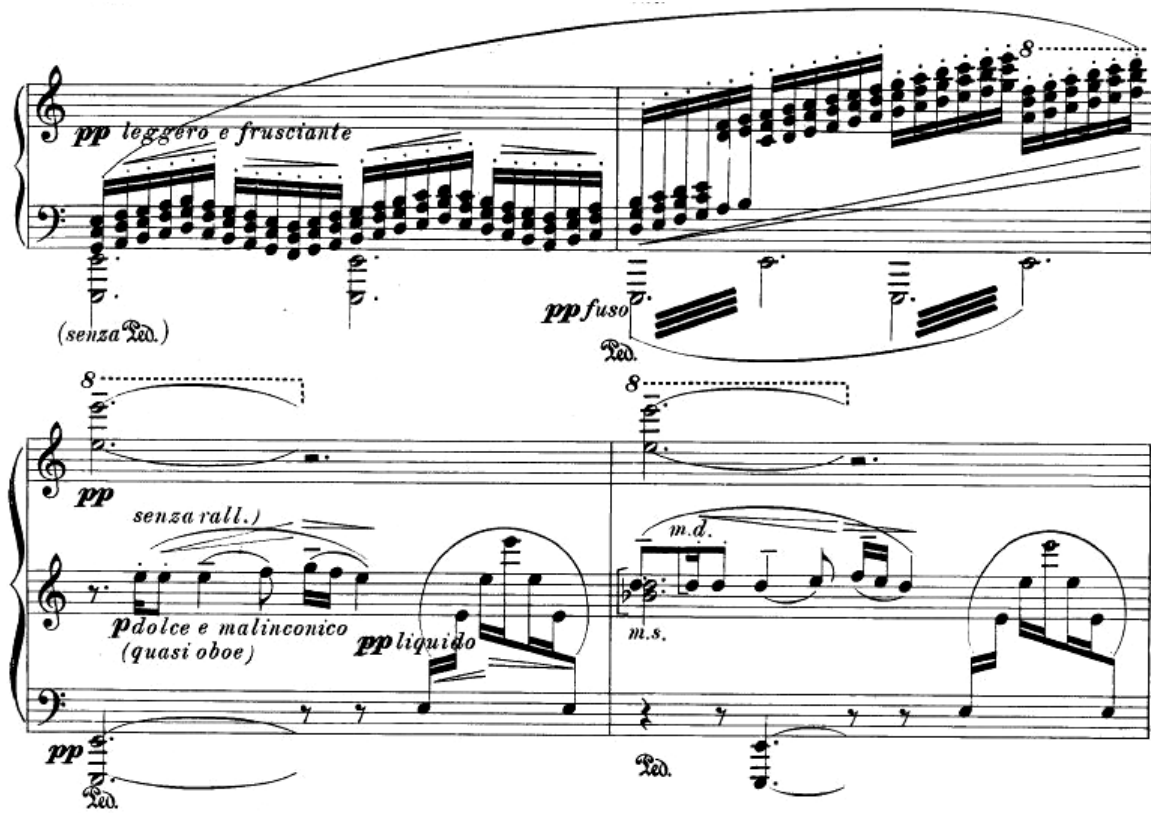
French Impressionism's Influence

Since his early years, Castelnuovo-Tedesco showed a strong admiration for Debussy and Ravel, a fascination that was also shared by his Italian contemporaries including Casella and Malipiero. This connection to French Impressionism can be seen in Castelnuovo-Tedesco's love for the descriptive element in music and the way in which this evocation did not only aim to

describe visual images, but also to reflect moods and emotions of the composer himself reacting to certain stimuli. Stylistically, this influence is particularly palpable in Castelnuovo-Tedesco's early piano works, although some traits can be found in later work such as *Piedigrotta 1924*.

In several passages in *Piedigrotta 1924* Castelnuovo-Tedesco uses specific textures and compositional devices that, more so than in other passages, remind the listener of colors and textures familiar to the French Impressionist composers. One of the devices present in the piece is the use of long sustaining pedals resulting in a blurred texture, which for example is used to evoke the arrival of the parade at the beginning of the last movement. Other devices include the widespread use of pedal-points as well as parallel chords and parallel open fourths. In a few instances the use of separate musical figures distributed in a very wide range in the piano, often characterized by long sustained notes in the bass (mostly pedal-points), also reminds the listener of impressionistic sonorities. For example, this is especially true in *Voce luntana* in mm. 33-40, where a pedal on E is active throughout in the bass and is also carried in the right hand both through a series of arpeggiated octaves (another device often used by Debussy and Ravel, and marked here with the evocative *liquido*, or "liquid") and by sustained octaves in the top range of the piano. This passage also uses parallel chords, and the sustained pedal often creates an amalgamation of sounds, as in m. 36 where the marking *fuso*, or "fused," is especially revealing (example 5.2).

More than once Castelnuovo-Tedesco uses ostinatos as accompanying figure to create a layer of color, another feature present in many works by Debussy and Ravel. In *Piedigrotta 1924* Castelnuovo-Tedesco always adds a very distinguishable melody, usually above such an accompanying figure. A very fitting comparison could be made, for example, between the



Example 5.2: *Voce luntana (Fenesta che lucive...)*, mm. 35-37

sonority produced by the eighth-note accompaniment in mm. 24-32 in *Voce luntana*, the fourth movement of *Piedigrotta 1924*, and the sixteenth-note accompaniment in the opening section of *La vallée des cloches*, the last movement of Ravel's *Miroirs*, with the latter two examples using the open fourth as a primary interval as well as extended sustain pedals. Another sonority comparable to Ravel's work is found in the sixteenth-note accompaniment in *Notte 'e luna*, closer to *La vallée des cloches* in its rhythmic, almost hypnotic drive.

As shown, for the most part in *Piedigrotta 1924* Castelnuovo-Tedesco uses timbral effects in conjunction with a very recognizable, singable melody, pretty much a "signature" element of the composer's style. As a result of the combination between Castelnuovo-Tedesco's keenness for melody (together with thematic juxtaposition) and for coloristic effects, the score

often presents an almost orchestral texture, with passages that are very difficult to perform. The next paragraphs will focus on elements directly related to the performance of the piece, discussing some of the complexities of the pianistic writing in *Piedigrotta 1924* as well as the extensive indications by the composer in the score, many of which accompany the presence of evocative elements in the piece. These markings, constituting a very important resource for capturing the composer's musical intention, will be also translated.

Performing *Piedigrotta 1924*

As a direct result of the composer's aim to experiment with the timbral possibilities of the instrument, the pianistic writing in *Piedigrotta 1924* can be considered challenging technically and, at times, not very idiomatic. We have already seen instances where musical figures are distributed in a very wide range in the piano, like in example 5.2, mm. 36-7, in which case an overall slow pace (marked *Lento e nostalgico*, or "Slow and nostalgic") voids the passage of particularly hard technical demands. But in instances where a quicker pace is featured, performing such "broad" textures becomes rather tasking. One fitting example comes right in the opening measures of *Tarantella scura*, which feature fast two-octave jumps in the left hand, a fairly awkward pianistic gesture which, together with the right hand, contributes in creating a full, orchestral sound through a texture that spans over four octaves.

The use of parallel fourths in one hand alone occurs in many passages throughout *Piedigrotta 1924*, a feature that is far from being idiomatic for the instrument but that is nevertheless found in many piano works by Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Although musically some of these passages are not specifically aiming to evoke the sound of the guitar, this kind of writing can be most likely considered a guitaristic gesture adapted to the piano. In *Calasciunate* we find

such writing applied to the thematic element in the two “tarantella episodes” (see example 4.15), played at a very fast pace (*Molto vivo*) by the right hand, then replicated almost exactly in the left. An even more difficult passage, also using consecutive fourths, is found at the beginning of *Lariulá!* Here each hand plays a series of parallel fourths in a quick, tremolo-like alternation (the tempo marking being *Assai mosso*), a texture that in this specific case aims to evoke a distant sound of bells through the use of long sustain pedals (see example 4.22a, mm. 6-7).

In other passages the writing aims to create different layers of texture through the overlapping of several themes and accompanying figurations, some of which were observed in the fourth chapter (see example 4.25). This means that the musical elements are often divided between the two hands or are played simultaneously by one hand, a writing that at times proves to be quite complex to perform. For example, the A section in *Notte ‘e luna*, (written out in three staves in order to graphically isolate the three different layers of music) features the left hand quickly sounding the octave in the bass (in grace notes) and immediately producing the first sixteenth-note of the accompaniment on the downbeat, a jump covering for the most part an interval of an octave or more. This sixteenth-note figuration in the middle of the register is divided between the two hands, where the right hand plays the 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th sixteenth-note of every measure in alternation with the main melody above it (example 5.3).

The composer’s intention to transcend the instrument is obvious not only through the technical difficulties created by the presence of several musical lines at one time or by the use of almost orchestral textures, but also by specific references to extra musical elements and sounds extraneous to the piano. The most valuable element that allows the performer to understand Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s musical intentions and extra-musical references in *Piedigrotta 1924* is



Example 5.3: *Notte 'e luna*, mm. 8-11

the extensive use of markings in the score, some of which have been already addressed in this document.

Piedigrotta 1924 often aims to imitate the sounds of instruments other than the piano. Several markings in the score confirm this intention, like *quasi flauto* (almost like a flute) and *quasi oboe* (almost like an oboe) in *Voce luntana (Fenesta che lucive...)*; *quasi ottavino* (almost like a piccolo) and *quasi timpani* (almost like timpani) in *Calasciunate* and *Lariulá*; *quasi fagotto* (almost like a bassoon) also in *Lariulá*; these in addition to the already mentioned guitars (*Calasciunate*), bells (*Voce luntana* and *Lariulá*), and whistles (*Lariulá*).

Aside from the indications hinting at the sound of instruments, the score of *Piedigrotta 1924* features a generous amount of expressive marking that provide extensive indications to the performer, most of which are very suggestive of the general spirit of the corresponding passage or movement. These in fact are not only composed of the common musical terms traditionally used in music (such as *Allegro*, *ritardando*, etc.) but include Italian terms that are not often found in music scores. For example, the dark opening tarantella features words like *stridente* (strident), *diperatamente* (desperately), *violento* (violent), *fremente* (shaking), and *piangente* (weeping), while in the next movement, with its contrasting serene mood, parts of the accompaniment are

marked *cristallino* (crystal clear) and the word *espressivo* (expressive) appears several times. The humorist side of Castelnuovo-Tedesco comes out in the playful *Calasciunate*, where several passages are marked with *burlesco* (burlesque), *grottesco* (grotesque), *allegramente* (happily), and *leggero e brillante* (light and brilliant). In the fourth movement, *Voce luntana* (*Fenesta che lucive...*), the sad atmosphere borrowed from the original poem and portrayed in the music are present through the marking *espress. e dolente il canto* (the melody is expressive and painful) which accompanies the quoted theme, in contrast with the short commentary that follows in the high register, marked *chiaro e stellato* (clear and starry). The different sections in this movement, somehow divergent in spirit and colors, see contrasting terms such as *chiaro* (clear) and *scuro* (dark), *sereno* (serene) and *un poco ansioso* (a little anxious), while the hopeless ending features marking such as *grave e triste* (grave and sad), *singhiozzante* (weeping) and *cupo* (gloomy). As previously mentioned, the beginning of the last movement is perhaps the most “cinematographic” in its use of indications. The entire opening section aims to gradually bring the action closer, and the first marking, *con una sonorità fusa e ondeggiante...come uno scampanio lontano...alle prime luci dell'alba* (“with a fused and waving sonority...like a far bell tolling...at the first light of dawn”), sets the blurred distant atmosphere. The first theme (the peasant’s whistle in m. 6) is indicated as *Allegro e fischiettante – ma lontano* (happy and whistling – but far); in m. 11 *più vicino* (closer) appears, and mm. 13 to 22 are marked *avvicinandosi...a poco...a poco* (getting closer...little by little). Once the music comes into focus, some indications hint at the folksy character of this movement. The words *paesana* (peasant), *popolaresca* (popular), *a piena voce-sfacciato* (in full, blatant voice) are far from the more intimate and sophisticated atmospheres of the previous movement. In the increasingly exciting ending we can find the markings *Sempre più vivo e tumultuoso* (more and more alive

and tumultuous) and the last appearance of the opening tarantella is marked *squillante* (blaring), *trionfale* (triumphant), and the very last two measures *strepitoso* (resounding).

Far from being a comprehensive listing of all the expression marking in the piece, these few examples can very well help one to understand the extent to which Castelnuovo-Tedesco's indications are important in realizing the musical "shades" and nuances of this piece. It would be a gross oversight for a pianist interested in learning and performing this piece to neglect these markings. In fact, with the exception of metronome markings, which are missing entirely in this piece, Castelnuovo-Tedesco's indications cover every aspect, including tempo changes, pedals, dynamics and even articulations, all with extreme clarity for what concerns his musical intentions. It is for that reason that the composer chooses to use a large array of terms in order to give suggestions to the interpreter, offering detailed indications but not too narrow in their definition, leaving room to the imagination of the interpreter.

Conclusions

Unfortunately, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's piano music has been greatly neglected. This is especially true for *Piedigrotta 1924*, which, aside from the few contemporary masters who include this piece in their repertoire such as Italian pianist Aldo Ciccolini, is rarely performed today. One of the plausible reasons behind this lack of attention might be the challenges of finding a score or even a recording of the majority of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's piano works. Due to Castelnuovo-Tedesco's lack of visibility today, it may surprise others to learn that works like his first rhapsody *Alt Wien* were widely popular in his time and that his piano works

were first performed by pianists of the caliber of Walter Giesecking, who premiered several of the composer's works, including the German debut of *Piedigrotta 1924*.⁹⁷

The uniqueness of *Piedigrotta 1924* within the piano repertoire is not the only valuable aspect of this piece. The unusual source of inspiration is a defining element, but the attractiveness of this piece also lies in the fact that it embodies all of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's stylistic qualities and compositional features. This includes his keenness for thematic transformation coupled with a use of catchy, singable melodies, his masterful ability of creating colors and suggestive atmospheres, and his personal take on harmony, often referred to as progressive by his contemporaries, but never too far from the realm of traditional tonality. The multifaceted nature of the Neapolitan folk music and its subculture are reflected in the five diverse movements, which embody contrasting moods of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's expressiveness, including atmospheres that range from the intimate and expressive to the dark and violent, passing through the ironic to humorous, folksy festiveness.

Having been a concert pianist himself, Castelnuovo-Tedesco exploits the possibilities of the piano to its thresh hold, often translating into quite challenging writing for the instrument. This is especially true in *Piedigrotta 1924*, a piece that can be considered a "crowd-pleaser" not only for its effective technical passages, as in its "pyrotechnical" ending in the last movement, but also for its appealing melodies.

It is my hope that modern scholars will soon acknowledge Castelnuovo-Tedesco's piano music by publishing other studies on the subject. Shedding some light on this neglected corpus of works will hopefully encourage pianists to rediscover the composer's masterworks for the instrument and include them in their future performances.

⁹⁷ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica* (Fiesole: edizioni Cadmo, 2005), 199.

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