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Introduction

The musical objects and music events featured in great expositions of arts and industry in late nineteenth-century Italy constituted a significant part of the lively and diverse cultural landscape of the country over a century ago. To understand them and the mark they impressed upon Italian culture and its reception abroad in the following decades requires their positioning in the appropriate intellectual, political, and socio-economical background. To do so, the starting point needs to be the specific context in which they were presented, that is the phantasmagoric expositions that spread all over the Europe and the world starting from the 1850s.[1] Defined as "mappe della percezione," expositions strived indeed to present a cartography of all human knowledge that was deemed relevant to date.[2]

Despite their initial effort to document the technical and consequently civil progress of a society based solely on what was current and of newest production, expositions established immediately which such a commanding and normalizing power that they were never reduced to snapshots of reality. Instead, every time an exposition was enacted, it summoned a precise, intricate stratification of political influences, historical memories, economic interests and cultural legacies that informed the many items it showcased. Such stratification needs to be explained before diving into the specific topic of the present study, since musical objects and events presented in Italian expositions from the late nineteenth century did absolutely not escape it. On the contrary, they were in some cases subject to it, while in others they interplayed with it. For this reason, before explaining the research questions and the sources motivating this dissertation and its structure, I would like to start this introduction by describ-

[1] Walter Benjamin, "Paris, die Hauptstadt des XIX. Jahrhunderts," in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminationen. Ausgewählte Schriften* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1974), 170–184.

[2] "Maps of perception." Mario Coglitore, "Mostrare il moderno: le Esposizioni universali tra fine Ottocento e gli inizi del Novecento," *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea* 18/2 (2014), <http://journals.openedition.org/diacronie/1159> (last checked 12 October 2019). See also: Luigi Tommassini, "Fantasmagorie, rispecchiamenti, battaglie di immagini. Alle origini dell'immaginario sociale delle Esposizioni Universali," *Ricerche Storiche* 45/1–2 (January-August 2015): 161–179.

ing such stratification and by showing some of its inner workings, referring to it as the exposition culture as a whole. To illustrate how exposition culture works, I will comment on a significant episode concerning the latest World Exposition taking place in Milan in 2015.

Exposition culture

When the *World Exposition Milan 2015, Italy* (Expo 2015) opened its gates on the first of May in Rho, in the outskirts of the city, much of the public attention was directed towards the towering landmark located at the north-eastern end of the Exposition grounds. The installation, placed at the center of a pool in what was called the Lake Arena, amused thousands of visitors every day with jets of water, light projections, and music, as well as fireworks at night. Due to its umbrella shape reminding the outline of a tree, it was called *Albero della vita* ('tree of life'), an image that could somehow connect to Expo 2015's motto: "food for the planet, energy for life," and at the same time evoke a common archetype in many cultures — thus appealing to the imagination of all the international visitors gathering around its stem, regardless of their provenance.

As for many of the other ephemeral architectures built for the Exposition, the *Albero della vita* sparked many debates even before the opening of Expo 2015. Given the amount of money spent for the construction of the Exposition site, the cases of corrupted administration and exploited labor exposed, and the impact of the event on the landscape and the environment, the media expressed concern about the destination of the facilities after the end of the celebrations.[3]

One month before the opening of Expo 2015, a proposal concerning the relocation of the *Albero della vita* came from a member of the city council, who suggested to move it to Piazzale Loreto, an important traffic junction just outside the gates of the city center. The idea, initially welcomed with enthusiasm by many commentators, met the harsh criticism of the president of ANPI, the National Association of Italy's Partisans. He rejected the idea, reminding that Piazzale Loreto already had its own monument honoring fifteen partisans executed on August 10, 1944 by fascist soldiers, who then forced the crowd to look at the battered bodies as an

[3] See Daniela Danna, "Expo 2015 in Milan: The Power of the Machine," *Journal of Political Ecology* 24 (2017): 910–920.

exemplary display of power and conduct.[4] The episode had shaken the public opinion, raising the hostility against the fascist and Nazi regimes and haunting the memory of Milanese citizens. In April of the following year, when Mussolini was executed near Como, the dictator's dead body was brought to Piazzale Loreto, together with those of his lover Clara Petacci and of other fascist officials. There, the corpses were left hanging to the public's view in the same spot where the partisans had been massacred.

Considering the tragic history connoting Piazzale Loreto in the history of Milan and of Italy in general, one wonders how the city council could suggest that the relocation of the Tree of Life, which eventually never happened, would help to "cancellare un momento storico controverso con un inno alla vita."[5] At the same time, the proposal seemed to be oblivious that the fate of the Albero della vita could not be decided by the municipality, for it belonged to an association of private investors from the nearby town of Brescia who promoted and funded its project. The city council member's blatant disconnect from the sensitivity and the memory of Milanese citizens, as well as from the inner workings of the Exposition, reveals some crucial issues that will be at the center of this dissertation. On the one hand, the diverse, sometimes oppositional actors at play in the organization of an exposition, such as private investors and public institutions. On the other, the all-encompassing, even blunt ideological apparatus enacted every time an exposition of arts and industry came into being.

All these are the elements characterizing expositions starting from their very beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. The first expositions, featuring the last and most innovative industrial and artistic products, were considered as outposts of modernity, with the potential to revolutionize the urban plan and the social tissue of the hosting cities, as well as their economy and their cultural scene. The rhetoric of progress and modernity was also accompanied from the very beginning by its reverse, described as the "exhibition fatigue," or the skepticism and lack of interest of segments of the commentators and the visitors.[6] in many cases, the relevance of the objects on display became very soon — if not immediately — less important

[4] "Per cancellare un momento storico controverso con un inno alla vita." Ilaria Carra, "Expo, l'Albero della vita in piazzale Loreto: un coro di sì. Ma l'Anpi: 'Offusca la memoria'," *Repubblica.it Milano*, 12 April 2015, <http://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/04/12/news/expo_l_albero_della_vita_in_piazzale_loreto_tutti_contenti_ma_l_anpi_offusca_la_memoria_-111768025/> (last checked 5 January 2018).

[5] "Erase a controversial historical moment with an ode to life." Ilaria Carra, "Expo, l'Albero della vita in piazzale Loreto." All English translations are mine.

[6] Alexander C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities. Imperial Expositions in* Fin-de-Siècle *Europe* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

than the way they were exhibited. Mobilizing agents and masses of visitors, expositions were characterized by a unique and ever-changing exhibition style, to the point that Italian semiologist Umberto Eco declared, on the occasion of the Exposition Universelle et Internationale de Montréal of 1967, "Oggi, l'Esposizione non esibisce articoli, o se lo fa li utilizza come mezzo, come un pretesto per mostrare qualcos'altro. E questo qualcos'altro è l'Esposizione stessa."[7]

It is specifically this ensemble of agents, public, aesthetics, discourses, and values that I refer to in the phrase giving this dissertation its title: exposition culture. "Exposition culture" comprises new ideas emerged in the nineteenth century with modern, public exhibition practices of any sort, such as the ideals of modernity, democratization, and accessibility of culture accompanying the opening of museums and the organization of fairs.[8] On the other hand, "exposition culture" refers also to the specific policies, the investments, and the intellectual and social efforts that were put into the organization of an exposition of industry and arts. Therefore, it roughly coincides with the phrase "exhibitionary culture," coined by historian Marta Filipová in an edited book presenting case studies of expositions taking place away from major imperialist capitals:

> [Exhibitionary] culture is understood here in its broadest sense as referring to the political, social and economic circumstances that shaped [an exhibition] and its aftermath, the visual, popular and material culture that was linked with exhibitions through display or representation, as well as the local and global principles of exhibiting that were followed by the organizers.[9]

This definition has the merit of including virtually every aspect that necessarily contributed to the realization of an exposition, but it does not stress adequately the byproduct that characterized expositions of arts and industry more than any other exhibitionary practice. My phrase "exposition culture," therefore, refers also to the ideology and power apparatus produced by expositions — not only the circumstances preceding them, but also the system of values reproducing itself exposition after exposition. To keep this system in mind is crucial in the examination of the Italian expositions presented in this dissertation, since it clashed very

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[7] "Today, the Exposition does not exhibit items, or if it does, it uses them as means, as a pretext to show something else. And this something else is the Exposition itself." Umberto Eco, "Una teoria delle esposizioni," in *Expo 1851–2015. Storie e immagini delle Grandi Esposizioni*, ed. Luca Massidda (Torino: UTET Grandi opere, 2015), 41–55: 45. The original, English version of this article, written in 1967 on the occasion of the World's Exposition of Montreal, was published on the periodical *Dot Zero* of the same year.

[8] Joe Kember, John Plunkett and Jill Sullivan, "What is an exhibition culture?," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 8/4: 347–350.

[9] Marta Filipová, "Introduction: The Margins of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies," in *Cultures of International Exhibitions 1840–1940. Great Exhibitions in the Margins*, ed. Marta Filipová (Farnham: Ashgate 2015), 1–22: 5.

often with the actual cultural, financial and urban substrate characterizing the hosting cities. In order to identify this system, it will be useful to turn to the concept of "exhibitionary complex," that is, the power dynamic enacted in expositions.

The "exhibitionary complex"

Expositions were born officially in 1851, with the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations held in the Crystal Palace in London's Hyde Park. Soon replicated in New York with the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations of 1853 and in Paris with the Exposition Universelle of 1855, this format grew to a large success, with events of the same kind organized in many European and world capitals, always proposing similar structures, fulfilling similar functions, and generating similar public discourses.[10] Great expositions Integrated the form of technical and agricultural exhibitions from the end of the eighteenth century and the methodologies of modern, public, museums. In doing so, they combined the former's ideals of progress and modernity with the latter's striving for accessibility of knowledge and vocation to organize and trace the evolution of disciplines.[11] At the same time, great expositions matched the didactical purposes technical and museum exhibitions with the entertaining atmosphere and leisure economy characterizing popular fairs.[12] Therefore, many different layers overlapped in great expositions from the start, all contributing to the definition and diffusion of a shared idea of modernity.

Generally, expositions were characterized by a multitude of thematic sections and were often divided into different pavilions, according to the discipline and industrial branch represented or, in the case of international expositions, according to the nationality of the exhibitors. This organization created hierarchies between the different objects on display. Such

[10] For a list of many of the most important nineteenth-century great expositions, completed with a preliminary bibliography, see Alexander C. T. Geppert, Jean Coffy and Tammy Lau, eds., *International Exhibitions, Expositions Universelles and World's Fairs, 1851-1951. A Bibliography* (Cottbus, Deutschland: Brandeburgische Technische Universität Cottbus, 2000); and the less recent volume edited by John E. Findling, *Historical Dictionary of World's Fairs and Expositions, 1851–1988* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990).

[11] For an introduction to exposition studies, see: Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral vistas: The "Expositions Universelles," Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Robert W. Rydell, *The World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993); Peter Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2001). For an introduction to museum culture and its intersection with expositions, see: Eva-Maria Seng, *Museum — Exhibition — Cultural Heritage. Changing Perspectives from China to Europe* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019).

[12] Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971).

hierarchies could concern the nature of the objects, presented in a teleological succession from the raw materials extracted to the machines necessary to work them, to the works of art made of such materials or inspired by them. In the case of international expositions, the hierarchy was articulated primarily according to the provenance of the objects. Different pavilions would be dedicated to the different participating states, each allocated a larger or smaller area and a specific spot, more or less visible, on the exposition grounds. In the case of imperial expositions, the hierarchy was also articulated internally, since the many nationalities compounding the empire would receive a distinct exhibition space aside from that of the mainland.

In addition to this first system of hierarchies concerning the objects on display and their distribution on the exposition grounds, a second, subtler, power dynamic was enacted in great expositions from the very first example of London 1851. Such dynamic concerned the role of visitors attending the events, and has been identified as the "exhibitionary complex" in an eponymous article published by Australian sociologist Tony Bennett in 1988.[13] Bennett's effort strives to refine Michel Foucault's depiction of mechanisms of societal disciplining as described in his groundbreaking *Surveiller et Punir*.[14] The French philosopher's study is based on the observation that the passage from the *ancien régime* to the contemporary era witnessed the abandonment of public, exemplary, practices of punishment such as the scaffold in favor of a secluded, individual, discipline imparted on the condemned in modern prisons. Bennett contests the implication that in the nineteenth century public displays of power were not used anymore to discipline the people. In his view, if the carceral system effectively removed practices of punishment from the public eye, expositions rising in the same decades came to ensure societal order with cultural means. They presented "a complex of disciplinary and power relations" thanks to the presence of the public.[15] Contrary to the secluding action of the prison,

> The institutions comprising 'the exhibitionary complex', by contrast, were involved in the transfer of objects and bodies from the enclosed and private domains [...] into progressively more open and public arenas where, through the representations to which they were subjected, they formed

[13] Tony Bennett, "The exhibitionary complex," *new formations* 4 (Spring 1988): 73-101.
[14] Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* (Paris, Gallimard: 2010).
[15] Bennett, "The exhibitionary complex," 73.

> vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power (but of a different type) throughout society.[16]

In other words, the availability of objects and people to the public eye was what made expositions effective in imparting discipline. This procedure was exemplified at best with the iconic architecture of the Crystal Palace, inaugurated in London 1851 and repeated in the New York Exposition of 1853 and in the Grand Palais of the Parisian Exposition Universelle of 1900. Unlike the Panopticon evoked by Foucault, designed so that every condemned could be seen, the Crystal Palace allows everybody to see the objects exhibited — and, in the case of imperial expositions, also 'other,' exoticized, people. At the same time, there were points in expositions from which the visitors could also see everybody else. This was the case of the *Tour Eiffel* overlooking the Exposition Universelle of Paris 1889, and the many panoramic lifts and towers characterizing almost every exposition.

The presence of an attraction from which the whole exposition could be observed constituted in fact a possibility to share the eye of power, hence making it possible for the crowd to internalize it, and therefore to discipline themselves:

> The peculiarity of the exhibitionary complex is not to be found in its reversal of the principles of the Panopticon. Rather, it consists in its incorporation of aspects of those principles together with those of the panorama, forming a technology of vision which served not to atomize and disperse the crowd but to regulate it, and to do so by rendering it visible to itself, by making the crowd itself the ultimate spectacle.[17]

Such technology of vision was present also in Italian expositions, and it was supposed to serve the objectives of the organizers, preoccupied as they were with the creation of a sense of belonging to an ideally modern city contributing to the life of the Italian nation-state. Yet, this pervasive power dynamic is particularly relevant in my study especially by means of contrast. The public attending musical events was always the object of careful scrutiny in the expositions' final reports (in terms of number of tickets sold) and in the newspapers, where the commentators reported about the actual behavior of the public. From these reports, it is clear that the public's unpredictable behavior could often disappoint the expectations of organizers

[16] Bennett, "The exhibitionary complex," 74.
[17] Bennett, "The exhibitionary complex," 81.

and commentators, therefore redefining the usual power dynamic of the exhibitionary complex, and sometimes completely discarding it, leading for example to the cancellation of entire concert series.

"A series of networks"

Educating the people and proving that they were an urbane community was, in fact, the objective of the organizers of expositions in Italy as much as in imperial capitals. The enactment of the "exhibitionary complex" served the purpose of spreading ideas of progress or technological and artistic modernity that were very similar in all the expositions, and therefore transnational in their essence. These transnational ideas connected all expositions with one another: "imperial expositions held in *fin-de-siècle* London, Paris and Berlin were knots in what together constituted a worldwide web," notes historian Richard Geppert in his monograph devoted to imperial expositions.[18] Such connection was visible in the repetition of iconic buildings such as the Crystal Palace and the picturesque Rue du Caire, but stemmed from the work of specific professional figures who conceived, funded, and carried out these events. Organizers, patrons, animators, and bureaucrats of expositions would communicate with one another, and in many cases even migrated from one exposition to the next. Expositions were then the result of the interactions brought by all the actors involved, which would influence the representations of progress, modernity, but also of national and regional identity proposed. From Geppert's historical perspective, the ensemble of power relations enacted in an exposition is better understood if we look at these actors: "though the exhibitionary complex was undeniably complex, it is more accurately described as an overlapping series of networks that evolved over time."[19]

Geppert reframes the power dynamics enacted in great expositions as a series of networks. As I will show in this dissertation, the operations of interconnected actors were determinant also in the case of great expositions in Italy, and also in such expositions did they generate similar power dynamics. Notably, one of the major actors who will always appear in the following chapters alongside the main patrons of each exposition is the music publisher

[18] Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 3.
[19] Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 4.

Ricordi and his entourage of composers, intellectuals and journalists. Ricordi certainly influenced, directly or indirectly, the organization and media exposition of the musical events that I will describe, and yet the way these events unfolded did not always correspond to what the publisher might have envisioned.

Terminology

Expositions in the nineteenth century were often referred to in many equivalent and overlapping ways, generating a terminological inhomogeneity still reflected in the specific scientific literature. The English phrases "World's fair" and "World exposition," corresponding to the German *Weltausstellung*, highlighted the participation of international exhibitors from all over the globe, whereas the phrases "great exhibition" or "great exposition" indicate the wide array and variety of arts, disciplines, and products on display. The fortunate French phrase *Exposition Universelle* condenses at best both meanings, where the adjective *universel* can refer to both the provenance of the exhibitors and the sum of ideally all human knowledge on display. In Italy, the events I am discussing in the present study were called equally *Esposizione* or simply *Mostra*, a term literally translating to "display," but used also in the context of the English "exhibition," for example in a museum.

Only for the sake of prose clarity, in this dissertation I opted for the general term "exposition" in the case of the events as a whole, and for the term "exhibition" in the case of single-themed displays of objects. According to my lexical choice, an exposition (for example, the Esposizione Emiliana held in Bologna in 1888) would therefore consist of a number of exhibitions, each dedicated to a specific topic (in the case of Bologna 1888, three exhibitions dedicated respectively to industry and agriculture, arts, and music). This choice has also the advantage of reflecting how these words are used today in broader contexts: if an exhibition identifies any practice of display, including that of a museum collection, "exposition" is the privileged term utilized by the official committee established in 1931, the Bureau International des Expositions, still coordinating Expos today.[20]

[20] Website of the Bureau International des Expositions: <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/> (last checked 11 October 2019).

Expositions in Italy

World's Fairs and arts and industry expositions are the direct, although hyperbolic, descendant of smaller arts and crafts expositions emerging in England and France in the late eighteenth century. More limited in their scope and their duration, these smaller expositions could gather nonetheless people from different fields such as industrials, artisans. Sometimes, they also featured art exhibitions. Soon these industrial expositions gained a more ceremonial status and became an important asset in the representation of power, starting from France and then spreading to many different European cities at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[21]

It is in this form that they established also in Italy, under the direct influence of Napoleon. On his way to his coronation as king of Italy in Milan's cathedral in 1805, Napoleon passed through the city of Turin, where the first industrial exposition on the Italian land was organized.[22] From that moment on, similar events were held regularly on the peninsula, starting with the annual arts and crafts expositions established in Milan and always opening on Napoleon's birthday (August 15) and carried on, although every three to five years, during the Restoration in the Austrian Lombardo-Veneto kingdom — therefore taking place in Milan, but also in Venice.[23] Rapidly, also other Italian states adopted the habit of organizing regular expositions, such as the Kingdom of Naples, with minor events of a similar kind in its capital starting from 1822.[24] More expositions were also featured in the Turin of the Kingdom of Sardinia starting from 1829, while in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany similar events started to be organized in its capital, Florence, in 1838.[25]

These events became so pervasive and relevant to assessing the state of the local economy and industrialization, that already in the 1840s proposals started to be made for a general Italian exposition which would facilitate economic relationships between the different states of the Peninsula and strengthen them in the face of the international market. The member of

[21] Pierluigi Bassignana, *Le feste popolari del capitalismo: esposizioni d'industria e coscienza nazionale in Europa, 1798-1911* (Torino: U. Allemandi, 1997).
[22] Sergio Onger, "Le esposizioni italiane prima dell'Unità," *Ricerche Storiche* 45/1–2 (January-August 2015): 280.
[23] Onger "Le esposizioni italiane prima dell'Unità:" 281. See also: Fernando Mazzocca: "Le esposizioni d'arte e industria a Milano e Venezia (1805-1848)," in *Istituzioni e strutture espositive in Italia. Secolo XIX: Milano, Torino*, ed. Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore, 1981).
[24] Giuseppe Moricola, "Tra velleità e progetto: le esposizioni industriali nel regno di Napoli," in *Arti, tecnologia, progetto. Le esposizioni d'industria in Italia prima dell'Unità*, ed. Sergio Onger and Giorgio Bigatti (Milano: FrancoAngeli 2007), 179–195.
[25] Onger, "Le esposizioni italiane prima dell'Unità:" 282–283.

a special commission convened in Genoa to rule about this project in 1846, Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, commented that the exposition was necessary so that "l'industria italiana riconosca se stessa, s'incoraggi da sé."[26] Even from the strict point of view of the industry, it is evident that such an exposition had as many identity implications as the commercial ones. It does not come to surprise that exactly in the year of Unification, 1861, the Kingdom of Italy, still weary in the wake of the independence wars, hurried to arrange an exposition to present the newborn nation-state to its citizens and to foreign observers. The first Italian exposition, including industrial but also art pavilions, took place in the city of Florence, particularly convenient for its central location. Although not comparable to the imperial expositions of Paris and London, Florence 1861 represented nonetheless "un passo per l'Italia verso la propria autodeterminazione."[27] More specifically, it was a crucial act in the creation of Italy's imagined community of citizens.[28]

From that moment on, a great number of expositions was held in liberal Italy, that is, the period of the Kingdom of Italy preceding the rise of the Fascist regime in 1922. All of them left a mark in the collective memory of their hosting city, as well as a profound, sometimes radical change in their urban plan.[29] A peculiarity of Italy is that these expositions never happened in Rome, Italy's capital after its annexation from the former Papal States in 1870 — with the exception of an international exhibition in 1883, which was still dedicated only to fine arts. In fact, Italian large expositions usually took place in Milan and in Turin, the most relevant industrial centers of the country, with close relations with Europe.[30] With the exception of the *Esposizione internazionale di belle arti* held in the newly built Palazzo delle Esposizioni in 1883,

[26] "Italian industry would recognize itself, would encourage itself." Quoted in Onger, "Le esposizioni italiane prima dell'Unità:" 284.
[27] "A step for Italy towards self-determination." Andrea Giuntini, "L'esposizione del 1861 a Firenze: gioie e dolori di un debultto," *Ricerche Storiche* 45/1–2 (January-August 2015): 291.
[28] The reference is of course to Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
[29] Stefania Aldini, Carla Benocci, Stefania Ricci, Ettore Sessa, eds., *Il segno delle Esposizioni nazionali e internazionali nella memoria storica delle città. Padiglioni alimentari e segni urbani permanenti. Storia dell'urbanistica* 6 (2014).
[30] Ilaria M. P. Barzaghi, "Milano 1881 – 1906: rappresentazione della modernità e modernizzazione popolare," *Ricerche Storiche* 45/1–2 (January – August 2015): 249–263; Augusto Sistri, "Immagini della modernità e cultura architettonica," in *Storia di Torino. VII: Da capitale politica a capitale industriale (1864–1915)*, ed. Umberto Levra (Torino: Einaudi, 2004), 849–865.

still an event of no commercial impact, Rome did not witness a single one of the major expositions held in the nineteenth century.[31] Only the Fascist regime conceived a project for an *Esposizione Universale Roma* in the 1930s, which never was realized due to the outburst of the WWII but led to the building of the EUR quartier in Rome. Before that, the main expositions taking place in liberal Italy were therefore scattered in different cities [TABLE 1].

TABLE 1. LIST OF THE MAIN EXPOSITIONS IN ITALY, 1861–1911.

1861, Florence	Esposizione Generale Italiana
1871, Milan	Esposizione Industriale Nazionale
1881, Milan	Esposizione Nazionale
1883, Rome	Esposizione Internazionale di Belle Arti
1884, Turin	Esposizione Generale Italiana
1888, Bologna	Esposizione Internazionale di Musica, Nazionale di Belle Arti, delle provincie dell'Emilia
1891–92, Palermo	Esposizione Nazionale Italiana
1892, Genoa	Esposizione Italo-Americana
1895 Venice	Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte (later: Biennale)
1898, Turin	Esposizione Generale Italiana
1902, Turin	Esposizione d'Arte Decorativa Moderna
1904, Brescia	Esposizione bresciana
1906, Milan	Esposizione Internazionale del Sempione
1911, Turin	Esposizione Internazionale delle Industrie e del Lavoro
Rome	Mostra Internazionale di Belle Arti, Risorgimento, Archeologica, Regionale Etnografica
Florence	Mostra del Ritratto Italiano, Esposizione Internazionale di Floricoltura.

As we see from the timeline, expositions increased in number until the occasion of the fifty-year anniversary of Unification, a major celebration spread across three cities. After that, the wars did not allow for any more events of the same kind for a few years. This list is nonetheless incomplete, highlighting only the major, more impactful events, and therefore not considering the many local and provincial expositions that were devoted to only one aspect of the industrial or cultural landscape of the hosting city.[32] In fact, the many small expositions

[31] Manuel Carrera, "L'antico e l'Esposizione Internazionale del 1883: il 'Frigidarium' di Alessandro Pigna e la 'Cleopatra' di Girolamo Masini," in *Artisti dell'800. Temi e riscoperte*, ed. Cinzia Virno (Roma: De Luca Editori d'Arte, 2015).

[32] Notable are the Mostra provinciale umbra of Perugia in 1879, the Esposizione nazionale d'igiene of Naples in 1900, and the Esposizione regionale marchigiana of Macerata in 1905. The many expositions in Brescia must be

not included in the list played the same role of the many provincial expositions in France: "les premières expositions provinciales," art historian Christelle Lozère states, "sont donc perçues non pas comme des concurrentes à la Capitale, mais comme de grandes manifestations de la vie active de la province et d'heureuses tentatives de décentralisation."[33] In the case of Italy, the main difference is that, unlike France, it had not undergone the same process of centralization, as the absence of Roman expositions proves. Instead, Italian expositions reflected the popular notion of a *paese delle cento città* [country of a hundred cities], a reality epitomized in the great celebrations occurring in 1911 for the fiftieth anniversary of Unification, where the main World Exposition in Turin was accompanied by side expositions in Florence and Rome.[34]

The fact that many cities and sometimes even small towns embarked in the endeavor of delivering an exposition to their inhabitants does not imply that their outcome was always equal to that of large imperial expositions. Quite the opposite: the history of expositions held in liberal Italy is punctuated by failures, both economically and in terms of impact on the community. Most of the expositions would end up with a large deficit burdening the investors that participated in their funding — starting with the state. Moreover, the number of visitors did often not meet the expectations of the organizers, and the public proved to be very selective in the type of events they would attend. Frequently, high-brow concerts were deserted, and the participation to a celebration could depend more on the presence of notable politicians than on the pompous ceremony organized to impress the audience. The struggle to match the splendor of imperial expositions clashed with the actual realization of local fairs, a clash that I tried to explain with the title "cosmopolitan provincialities:" attempts to imitate unrivaled models with alternating outcomes, at the same time cosmopolitan in their scope and diffusion, but provincial in their aspiration to reach an impracticable standard.

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counted in addition to that. See Sergio Onger, *Verso la modernità. I bresciani e le esposizioni industriali 1800–1915* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2010); Francesco Pirani, "Un'avanguardia in provincia. La 'Mostra degli Archivi' all'Esposizione regionale marchigiana di Macerata del 1905," *Il Capitale Culturale: Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage* 8 (2013): 69–104.

[33] "The first provincial expositions are therefore perceived not as rivals to the Capital, but rather as great manifestations of the active life of the province and as happy attempts at decentralization." Christelle Lozère, "Expositions provinciales et identités coloniales au XIX^{e} siècle," *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea* 18/2 (2014), <https://journals.openedition.org/diacronie/1207> (last checked 11 October 2019).

[34] See Annarita Gori, *Tra patria e campanile. Ritualità civili e culture politiche a Firenze in età giolittiana* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2014), 147–192.

Music and expositions: sources

The scholarly study of music and expositions has been focused mainly on the case of France, where expositions represented the typical occasion of exposure to new, "other" sound cultures. These events left a deep mark in the public imagination, and led to the formulation of everlasting anecdotes in reported in virtually every music history textbook, such as the case of the Exposition Universelle of Paris 1889, where Debussy listened for the first time to a Javanese *gamelan* ensemble, deriving from that experience a series of suggestions that would inspire his compositions. The most extensive study on the musical events of an exposition is in fact focused on this very Parisian exposition. It has been written by music historian Annegret Fauser, and represents a reference model for any musicological study of expositions.[35]

The case of late nineteenth-century France has proven particularly fruitful also for broader studies concerning the political use of music within and outside expositions, thanks to the extraordinary attention that the governments put in practicing their soft power through tunes, choirs, operas and fanfares.[36] On the other hand, the first Great Exhibition of London in 1851 has been studied by Flora Willson to question the ontology of music in the mid-nineteenth century. In her essay, Willson analyzes the disaggregated distribution of musical objects and the rare musical performances in the Crystal Palace, showing how music instruments, in the form of formidable technologies or luxurious pieces of furniture, and also musical works ultimately became a form of commodity.[37]

In the case of Italy, single case studies addressing how expositions could inform specific musical works are not lacking, especially in the realm of opera,[38] while analyses of entire musical programs of expositions tend to focus more on the detailed and lively recounting of their circumstances, usually more in the form of commemorative publications celebrating the glory of these events. Notable exceptions to this pattern are the collection of essays about the Exposition for the fiftieth anniversary of Unification curated by Bianca Maria Antolini, and the

[35] Annegret Fauser, *Musical encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005).
[36] The most representative of these studies being Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2009).
[37] Flora Willson, "Hearing things: musical objects at the 1851 Great Exhibition," in *Sound Knowledge. Music and Sound in London, 1789–1851*, ed. James Q. Davies and Ellen Lockhart (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 227–245.
[38] Francesca Vella "Milan, Simon Boccanegra and the late-nineteenth-century operatic museum," *Verdi Perspektiven* 1 (2016): 93–121; Alessandra Campana, *Opera and Modern Spectatorship in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

monograph by Alessandra Fiori on the Bologna 1888 Exposition.[39] Stemming from her PhD dissertation, Fiori's monograph succeeds in accurately describing the complex organization of the International Music Exposition in Bologna and its realization, while Antolini's edited book contextualizes musical events in the broader cultural scene of Turin and the nation. Yet, both volumes are not concerned with the comparison with other events of the same kind, nor with the critical discussion of how music interacted with the specific medium of an exposition.

Such a comparison and a critical discussion are precisely my objective, although I have based my research on the same kind of materials these scholars analyzed, a very heterogeneous collection of catalogues, articles in periodicals, occasional books, scores, librettos and song texts published alone, instrument collections, record books, bits of information gathered from payrolls as well as from epitaphs, but also iconography in the form of photographs, engravings, and other forms of illustrations. The research was made first of all adventurous by the nature of the musical objects analyzed, which could be items exhibitors put on display (for example scores, manuscripts, and music instruments) or purchasable articles to be consumed by the visitors (such as postcards and music leaflets). On the other hand, the state of today's Italian archives rendered the source retrieval sometimes difficult, partly because of the scarce and always varying document accessibility vexing today's researcher, partly as a reflection of the expositions' original conception: hardly the result of a duly orchestrated governmental plan, they were mostly the product of local entrepreneurial, aristocratic, and intellectual élites, animated by a strong will to prove themselves but often lacking a homogeneous and structured organization.

The focus of this work is not primarily the documentation and narration of events as they happened. Retrieving the dates when events took place and the names of the people involved, together with the objects displayed and the concert programming, was surely a necessary step in the research. However, all the sources must be taken with a pinch of salt, as they tended to exaggerate some aspects and hide others, whether intentionally or not. Expositions carried the burden of their organizers' and the public's expectations, who then reported on their success or failure according to their own aesthetic and political agenda. The fundamental premise of this study, therefore, is that not a single one of the documents analyzed can be

[39] Bianca Maria Antolini, ed., *Italia 1911*. *Musica e società alla fine della Belle Époque* (Milano: Angelo Guerini, 2014); Alessandra Fiori, *Musica in Mostra. Esposizione internazionale di musica (Bologna 1888)* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2004).

considered as an objective representation of what happened. Rather than constraining the scope of this work, this premise actually generates many of my research questions. This way of understanding and using sources was well articulated in a famous passage from a posthumous work by Marc Bloch, where he stated:

> [...] ce que le texte nous dit expressément a cessé aujourd'hui d'être l'objet préféré de notre attention. [...] Dans notre inévitable subordination envers le passé nous nous sommes donc affranchis du moins en ceci que, condamnés toujours à le connaître exclusivement par ses traces, nous parvenons toutefois à en savoir sur lui beaucoup plus long qu'il n'avait lui-même cru bon de nous en faire connaître.[40]

The traces offered by musical objects connected to Italian expositions speak of the personal and political investments and not rarely disappointments of their observers, as well as of their assumed hierarchy of values, of works, and of interests. These individual beliefs and bias come to constitute synergies or oppositions that will be at the center of my investigation.

Research questions

Three main research questions animate the present study, each of them hinged in their specific methodological premises. Attempts to tackle them can be found throughout the whole text, since the width of such questions and the inhomogeneity of the sources make it impossible to answer them separately and univocally. Therefore, they will be addressed multiple times and from different perspectives, according to the material analyzed and to the reflections it provokes.

The first research question concerns specifically the intertwining between the music practices described and the Italian social and political landscape. Italy, as we see it after Unification, is far from being a solid, monolithic nation-state. Italian national identity was rather fragmented as its politics, and founded on often negative ideas and stereotypes coming

[40] "What the text tells us expressly has today ceased to be the primary object of our attention. [..] In our inevitable subjugation to the past, we are therefore freed at least in that we, always condemned to know it exclusively through its traces, we sometimes get to know much more about it than what it thought it would let us know." Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire, ou, Métier d'historien* (Paris: A. Colin, 1949), 25. A further reflection on different degrees and articulations of the sources' reliability can be found in the introduction to Carlo Ginzburg, *Il filo e le tracce. Vero falso finto* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2006), 7–13.

from a longstanding literary tradition which influenced how Italians conceived of themselves.[41] How was music used to convey specific political messages? And what messages were they? In the case of vocal works, sometimes the messages in question were absolutely evident, explicit even from their title or their text. This was true for anthems, for example, or for programmatic operas, commissioned specifically on the occasion of the exposition. Sometimes, a political message could be conveyed in more subtle ways, without being blatantly expressed in the music's text or paratext. For instance, this was the case of Wagner's music, which famously became the epitome of modernity internationally, and was recognized as such first in Bologna, and then all over Italy, as his presence in other expositions will show.

Following the premise that the exhibitionary complex always operated towards disciplining the visitors, political messages proposed in the context of expositions concerned the building of a community. In Italy, the long history of separate smaller states on the peninsula and the complex and painful process of Unification made it particularly difficult to convey effectively a univocal sense of belonging to the new-born nation-state. Even in the case of national expositions, the interest of the local élites might prevail, and localism or regionalism could harvest the fruits of investments made at a national level with the participation of the Government. City protagonism would also positively contribute to Italian culture at large; after all, the relationship between the unified state and the city level was mutual and continuous, and it would not simply end up in a celebration of local production and national genius. As historian Axel Körner puts it, "national and municipal cultures were closely interlinked and the historian of nineteenth-century Italy cannot study one without considering the other,"[42] but "Italy articulated its experience of modernity and nation building through a transnational exchange of ideas and a generous reception of European culture."[43] Understanding how music was used at times to represent the pride of localism or to respond to the quest for internationality, will be one of the motives of the present study.

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[41] Silvana Patriarca, "National Identity or National Character? New Vocabularies and Old Paradigms," in *Making and Remaking Italy. The Cultivation of National Identity Around the Risorgimento*, ed. Albert Russel Ascoli and Krystyna von Henneberg (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 299–320; Silvana Patriarca, "Indolence and Regeneration: Tropes and Tensions of Risorgimento Patriotism," *The American Historical Review* 110/2 (April 2005): 380–408; Silvana Patriarca, *Italian Vices. Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[42] Axel Körner, "Music of the Future: Italian Theatres and the European Experience of Modernity between Unification and World War One," *European History Quarterly* 41/2 (2011): 189.

[43] Axel Körner, "Music of the Future," 191.

The second main research question concerns the interactions between music and expositions. In particular, what happened to music once it became part of the constellation of objects presented in an exposition? Geppert explains that:

> Expositions must be conceptualized as recurrent meta-media that, despite their transitional character, established both internal and external traditions, not only with regard to the specific composition of the medium itself, but also to the numerous urban legacies and metropolitan residuals they bequeathed.[44]

As meta-media, containing multiple media, expositions did not make their objects accessible in a neutral way. They shaped their own content, changing the context in which it was presented and covering it with new layers of meaning. First of all, the content presented was the product of a careful selection: only certain repertoires and certain objects were included in expositions, because they could be associated with values that resonated with, or served, the general purpose of the exposition. In addition to that, expositions transformed the nature of their selected content. In fact, their content went through a process of canonization, that is, the homogenization of the kind of musical objects presented and of the way they were presented. This function is condensed in what Geppert calls the establishment of "internal and external traditions," a development that "is not metaphysical in its origins, but rather is the result of multifarious inter-urban competition and the widespread, transnational entanglements among the main protagonists in this extensively internationalized field."[45] In other words, the reason why certain objects got canonized depended on the agents selecting and curating them, whose actions were often influenced by broader, transnational trends.

The canonization could go in two apparently diverging, but perfectly compatible, directions. On the one hand, the music content of an exposition could undergo a process of sacralization. Certain repertoires and items were worshipped by commentators writing about the exposition, and certain practices became rituals: symbols and celebrations of progress, one that was technical and cultural, but ultimately social and moral. On the other hand, musical objects and practices were commodified. This was true for the multitude of musical souvenirs, such music instruments, occasional scores, and special catalogues adding to the many other kinds of souvenirs massively produced, such as photographs, postcards, lottery prizes and so on. Yet, commodification happened also on the ideological level. For example, in the

[44] Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 5.
[45] Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 5.

context of aforementioned ritualized musical practices, it occurred that attendance to a concert or an opera was registered and used as a thermometer of the visitors' degree of civilization.

The third main research question is one that originates from the specific perspective of a music historian, one that cannot comprise expositions in their entirety. What can music tell us about the exposition culture that established in liberal Italy? In particular, the failing of many musical initiatives, which were initially envisioned but then never realized, leaves today's observers with the question of why certain programming decisions were made, considering that the lack of attendance to many of the musical events was very often predicted by the organizers and the commentators. If we consider this history of aborted musical plans through the lens of Geppert, Italian expositions cannot be considered but failing meta-media. Yet, they kept being repeated, and their insistent reproduction can be perhaps better understood, rather than with the category of a medium, in terms of performance.

Performance can be intended in agonistic terms, that is, the accomplishment of a certain result, quantifiable and comparable with others. This was certainly true in the case of expositions, where the collaboration of specialized organizers and the initiative of local entrepreneurs and élites would inevitably establish a sense of competition between different states, and, within a single state, between different cities. Every exposition aspired to be bigger, more modern, and more attended than the previous ones, or at least to replicate the impact of the first London and Paris expositions. In other words, it aspired to *perform* as well as, or even better than, the previous ones. On the other hand, I am convinced that this obsession to replicate and even surpass previous expositions can profit from a richer interpretation of the category of "performance," one that is engrained in performing art studies.

In her 2016 book *Performance*, Diana Taylor condenses some reflections about the concept coming from a theater and performing arts background. Borrowing from the theories of Richard Schechner, according to whom "performance means: never for the first time," but rather "from the second to the nth time,"[46] Taylor defines acts of performance as always referring to a history of actions, or gestures, of which they represent a repetition: "We can

[46] Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 36.

also think of performance as an ongoing repertoire of gestures and behaviors that get reenacted or reactivated again and again, often without us being aware of them."[47] Taylor's definition can be easily extended to many other cultural phenomena outside of theater studies. In fact, it is the author herself who encourages this approach:

> Schechner marks a distinction that is fundamental for understanding performance: the difference between something that **IS** performance (a dance, or a musical concert, or a theatrical production) versus something that can be studied or understood **AS** performance. Almost anything can be analyzed **AS** performance: The nation-state is not a performance, but one may analyze the "staging" of the national, say in a State of the Union address. An election is not a performance, but it can certainly be understood as one![48]

Such approach comes in handy when analyzing expositions, since it finally allows to historicize certain practices occurring during expositions and understanding them as a reference to previous, similar practices occurred in previous events of the same kind. The case of the Albero della Vita in Milan 2015 is a telling example in this respect. An installation with no purpose outside of the exposition grounds and after the exposition time, it is best described as a vestige of the electrical fountains decorating *fin-de-siècle* expositions. Far from being mere decorations, these fountains placed at the center of expositions epitomized the advent of electricity and therefore the technical progress of the city, illuminating the area and making it possible to visit the exposition for the first time during the night.

Despite its futuristic LED-light technology, the Albero della Vita could not have the same revolutionary impact on Milan that an electrical fountain would have over one century ago. In this sense, it can be understood as a performance, the meaning of which lies in the reference it does to the first electrical fountains and their original role within expositions and cities at large. On the other hand, that the function of the Albero della Vita can be understood only historically as a performance does not by any means imply that it is void of relevance today — quite the opposite. Its relevance resides precisely in the system of references to progress it triggers, even though its technology does not affect today's life as much as electricity in the nineteenth century. In the end, the association of private investors building it is the agent that profited most from it, having their logo associated with that of Expo 2015 and capitalizing on the visibility and sense of modernity it entails.

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[47] Diana Taylor, *Performance* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 10.
[48] Taylor, *Performance*, 27.

In the same way, many musical practices and exhibitions of musical objects can be understood as performances as intended by Taylor. Their value resided in the repetition of similar initiatives enacted in the great London and Paris expositions — for example, the celebrated series of historical concerts or of symphonic music, still experimental in nature at the end of the nineteenth century. In addition to that, musical events represent the ideal practice to expand the object of performance studies as preconized by Taylor:

> It depends on how we FRAME the event. We might say a theatrical production IS a performance, and limit ourselves on what happens onstage. But we might broaden the frame to include the audience—how do they dress, how much do they pay per ticket, what kind of neighborhood is the theatre located in, who has access to the theatre and who does not?[49]

As we will see, this is a key element in understanding one of the main type of sources concerning Italian expositions: the commentary about musical events published on periodicals of that time. In fact, concert and opera reviews often shifted the focus of their analysis onto the attending public. The attention to the presence and behavior of the audience will be a recurring theme in the following chapters, exposing the expectations and the system of values underlying the genesis of expositions, despite they being often disappointed.

Dissertation structure

This dissertation is divided into three chapters, each focusing on a different exposition, all taking place around 1890, that is, about midway between Unification (1861) and the advent of the fascist regime (1922). More specifically, this study examines the musical events and the musical objects presented at the *Esposizione emiliana* of Bologna in 1888, the *Esposizione Nazionale Italiana* of Parlermo in 1891–92, and the *Esposizione italo-americana* of Genoa in 1892.

Although making reference to other expositions in the course of my study, I decided to focus my attention on these expositions not only because they lie at the heart of the so-called *Belle Époque*, therefore representing an optimal viewpoint to analyze exposition culture a few decades after Unification, when expositions in Italy had already witnessed some major successes, such as the National Exposition of Milan in 1881. These expositions are an ideal

[49] Taylor, *Performance*, 29.

case study also because they present the opportunity to compare, in the span of only five years, three events of the same kind taking place in three very different cities and with a very different scope. They constitute a regional, a national, and an international exposition located in and a central, a Southern, and a Northern city. Therefore, this represents to my knowledge the first comparative musicological study ever conducted on expositions (certainly on the Italian ones), allowing to put each of the events described in the broader context not only of Italian political and cultural landscape of that time, but also of exposition culture at its acme.

The first chapter is devoted to the *Esposizione emiliana* of Bologna, and especially to the *Esposizione Internazionale di Musica* that was organized at the same time. It took place between Spring and Fall 1888, which also coincided with the celebrations for the eighth centennial of the city's university, one of the world's most ancient institutions of its kind. The music exhibition was curated by the prominent intellectual personality of Arrigo Boito, while concert programming was the task of another protagonist of Italy's musical life at the time, Giuseppe Martucci. Starting from the extensive work of Axel Körner on the role of Bologna in nineteenth-century Italian culture and from the previous study by Alessandra Fiori on the International Music Exhibition of 1888, this chapter consists of an overview of the project devised by the curators, highlighting particularly the mix of current, international music and the historical repertoires and ancient instruments — both showcased in the Exhibition and performed in historical concerts — that posited Bologna as a progressive cultural epicenter in Italy.[50]

The two following, more extensive chapters focus on two expositions happening almost at the same time, separated only by a few months from one another. They took place on the opposite ends of the *Mar Tirreno*, the portion of the Mediterranean running all along the Western Italian coast. Situated one in the South, on the coasts of Sicily, and one in the North, on the coasts of the Liguria region, these two expositions were ideally facing each other while projecting two very different pictures of their hosting cities and of the musical culture they had to offer.

More specifically, the second chapter focuses on the *Esposizione Nazionale* of Palermo, taking place in 1891–92. The first event of its kind to ever take place in Southern Italy, and the first to present an area dedicated to the Italian colony in Eritrea, this exposition was devoted to represent Italy in the critical *Mezzogiorno*. A macro-region corresponding to the old

[50] Axel Körner, *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy: From Unification to Fascism* (London: Routledge, 2009); Fiori, *Musica in mostra*.

Borbonic kingdom, the *Mezzogiorno* had been included in the new-born Italian state through a complex and never completely resolved process. Its annexing, in fact, had made immediately evident an unbalance in the economic and social systems of Northern and Southern Italy, one that became very soon framed as a cultural difference, with the formulation of the so-called *questione meridionale* ['Southern issue'].

In this chapter, I will show how the national vocation of the Exposition was mediated through the aspirations of the local élites with respect to this unbalance. In particular, I will show that this exposition served the purpose of legitimizing Sicily as part of Italy's not only economic, but especially cultural and social components. I will do so by focusing on three key musical elements presented in the exposition: the inaugural concert of the *grande sala delle feste*, where local aristocrats showcased themselves in front of the royal family; the opera season and the kind of discourse it provoked from specialized commentators; and the presence of folklore music, first exoticized as a product of an 'other' society, that of the poor and uneducated, and then commodified as a souvenir encapsulating the essence of Sicilian culture.

The third chapter is devoted to the *Esposizione italo-americana* held in Genoa in 1892, an exposition taking place on the fourth centennial of Christopher Columbus's arrival in America and the first international event of this kind ever to be organized in Italy. Based in a rather peripheral city if compared to Bologna and other Northern centers like Turin, Milan, and Venice, this exposition as the one in Bologna combined history (the adventure of Columbus and the celebration of Genoa's maritime prowess) with a projection towards the future (internationality and particularly the strengthening of relationships with Latin America).

The analysis of musical events presented in the context of this exposition will allow to understand how music was conceived as a mean to elaborate and convey a modern mythology of Genoa's progress based on the glory of its past. I will show that such mythology could fail to accomplish its aim, such as in the case of the canceled concert music series by director Luigi Mancinelli, or succeed, as with the case of the newly composed opera by Alberto Franchetti *Cristoforo Colombo* and the staging of *Otello*. Finally, in contrast with Palermo, the presence of choir and brass band competitions will show how progress in Genoa was marked by the integration of such practices in the construction of modern Italian citizenship, as reflected in the initiatives organized by the Società Ginnastica Ligure Cristoforo Colombo.

To conclude, all these expositions which did not take place in the traditional economic and industrial centers of Italy (Milan and Turin) demonstrate that in spite of the manifestation's denomination (regional, national or international), the scope of these events depended largely on the cultural specificity of the hosting city, and in all cases extended beyond what was originally intended. My research is based on the premise, explained once again by Körner, that in liberal Italy "municipal identity became the key to engaging with the nation as well as to European culture."[51] Hence, the direct comparison between three very different cities will render a composite picture of what it meant to be Italian and European in the span of few years at various latitudes in the country. Expositions in Italy bear witness of the diverse and lively, often contradictory cultural landscape of the country. Music presented in these events documents such diversity and exposes such contradictions, contributing to a better understanding of Italian cultural and social life at the end of the nineteenth century, and of the exposition culture that was adopted to showcase it.

[51] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 5.

1. Bologna 1888: "Sinfonia caotica del passato e del presente"

Bologna and its cultural politics of *fine secolo*

A convergence of celebrations

A research on Italian music and exposition culture and history finds in Bologna an ideal point of entry, as in 1888 the city hosted an International Music Exhibition (*Esposizione Internazionale di Musica*) in the context of larger celebrations which highlighted Bologna's contribution to the newly born Italian nation. The celebrations, and particularly the music section, expressed local pride strictly intertwined with cultural modernism and internationalism, an element characterizing also similar events in other Italian cities. In Bologna, the opportunity was provided by the inauguration in the city's main square — piazza Maggiore — of an equestrian statue dedicated to Vittorio Emanuele II [FIG. 1]. The last king of Sardinia and first king of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele II had been re-named "il re soldato," the king-soldier who had fought independence wars against the Austrians ruling over Lombardy and Veneto, against the Bourbons of former Kingdom of Two Sicilies, and who annexed the Papal Legations to his kingdom. By 1861, he was seen as the person who managed to finally bring together a people that had been divided for centuries, and in 1870 he completed Unification with the conquest of Rome. By entering the city, he took the last bastion of former Papal States and put an end to the Church's centuries-old temporal power, while giving to Italians the city that more than any other could be acknowledged as their ultimate capital.

This narrative represented an overt simplification of what the previous decades — roughly the previous century — had really meant for the political and cultural history in the peninsula now constituting the Italian nation-state. Napoleon's military campaigns at the very end of the eighteenth century had put Northern and central Italy under the direct influence of the French Empire, from which nineteenth-century Italy would later derive its cultural models. In the aftermath of the Congress of Vienna, as former monarchies were restored and the Savoy family in Turin established the most advanced of autonomous Italian kingdoms, Italian

FIG. 1: Statue of Vittorio Emanuele II inaugurated in Bologna in 1888, engraving by Giuseppe Barberis.

nationalist and independentist ideas started to circulate, followed by political action. The movement known as "Risorgimento" took shape and spread all along the Peninsula (and the islands), engaging intellectuals and militants from many different social classes and backgrounds.[52] Therefore, what was undoubtedly a shared sentiment of self-determination prevailing in a large portion of the population took the form of many different ideas and projects, all responding to a variety of motivations and following shifting principles. Indeed, the long and complex process that brought to Unification in Italy escalated in the few years prior to 1861, and saw three main, often times conflicting political actors as its main protagonists: Vittorio Emanuele II as the future king, Camillo Benso Count of Cavour as the main exponent of the liberal élite and the first Prime Minister of the newly-funded kingdom,[53] and Giuseppe Garibaldi as the unruly general of spectacularly — and unexpectedly — successful military campaigns. To this list, at least Giuseppe Mazzini should be added as the leading intellectual and ideologist of Italian nationalism.

[52] I will go back to Risorgimento and the making of political Italy in the following chapter, providing adequate literature references: see pp. 59–62 and 141, n. 297.

[53] Although he died at the beginning of June 1861, only few months after taking office.

The diverse provenance and worldviews of these protagonists represents only a tiny portion of the many voices of different actors involved in the intricate path to the constitution of modern political Italy. Unification was inspired by a nationalist afflatus and resulted in the creation of a centralized nation-state which nevertheless did not by any means extinguish localisms in the expression of its power and culture. The story of Bologna and its music exhibition is located at the center of such ostensible paradox. 1888 was the tenth anniversary of the former king's death, but the inauguration of the statue was made to coincide with the celebrations for the eighth centennial of the Bologna University foundation, estimated at shortly before 1000 A.D. Therefore, a national commemoration was conflated with the celebrations of a locally-based excellence which had served as a model in early-modern Europe and later the whole world — the *Alma Mater Studiorum*. It also became the occasion to organize a triple Exposition composed by a Regional Industrial Exhibition, the *Esposizione Emiliana*, an *Esposizione Nazionale di Belle Arti* [National Fine Arts Exhibition], and the International Music Exhibition at the center of this chapter.

The international vocation inspiring the music section was then paired not only with another section with a national scope (the Fine Arts Exhibition), but also with a much more locally based, technical section. Such juxtaposition of internationalism, nationalism, and localism articulated the institution of the Italian nation-state in the nineteenth century. The strive for internationalism and the local pride were not conflicting forces, but could rather reinforce each other in Bologna, as the Music Exhibition shows. Indeed, internationalism informed the music performances and the collections of musical objects presented at the Exhibition, and at the same time it was associated with modernity, a constitutive characteristic of Bologna's specific cultural identity as it was crafted after Unification. The city took pride in distinguishing itself when compared to other major Italian centers especially with regard to its refined and up-to-date musical taste and musical offering. The way in which this forwardness in musical taste was integral to the Music Exhibition and became even inscribed in the music historiography produced and published on the occasion of the 1888 celebrations will be part of my discussion in the present chapter.

Despite the apparently organic balance between local pride and international ambitions, the celebrations in Bologna fall also under the definition of "cosmopolitan provinciality" expressed in the title of this research. Provincialism was indeed lying at the basis of some of the shortcomings of this otherwise marvelous exhibition, and it was inherent in both the work

of some of the organizers and main commentators of the events, and in the participation of the public, sometimes deserting the events and making it a major economic loss for their investors. These characteristics were typical of many Italian expositions, and did not spare the other two cases composing the object of the present study. Yet, Bologna 1888 can be overall considered a radiant example of what could be accomplished in a city that had the necessary ambition and resources to engage preeminent personalities of the Italian musical panorama in the organization of an international, specifically musical exhibition — a unique case in liberal Italy and an almost unprecedented one also in the rest of Europe, few years prior to the large *Internationale Ausstellung für Musik- und Theaterwesen* coordinated by Guido Adler in 1892 in Vienna. A distinctive element of this accomplishment was the convergence of the triple celebrations — the inauguration of the equestrian statue, the University's eighth centennial, and the triple Exposition — and its combination with the lively and politically relevant cultural ferment of the city.[54] Thus, before describing the composition and characteristics of the Bologna Music Exhibition, and before illustrating how its structure and unraveling can illuminate the following two study cases, I will briefly summarize the cultural conditions of Bologna at the end of the nineteenth century and the role they played in relation to the organization of the 1888 celebrations.

Cosmopolitan modernity and local history

The political and cultural context in which musical life developed in Bologna from Unification to the rise of Fascism has been thoroughly studied by Axel Körner in his fundamental monograph: *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy*. The book explains the increasing power and relevance of cultural élites from the city's voluntary annexation to the kingdom of Vittorio Emanuele II in 1860 to the first decades of the twentieth century, putting it in the broader picture of municipal politics of that time. Körner's study retraces the composition of the city's cultural landscape, particularly the creation of museums and the musical offering, a tool that could be used, and was exploited indeed, to craft a specific history and an image of Bologna. Such image would distance Bologna from its former role as the second city of the Papal States and

[54] Alberto Franchetti, who will be discussed later (pp. 168–180), composed an anthem for the University celebrations: Alberto Franchetti and Enrico Panzacchi, *L'Ottavo Centenario dell'Università di Bologna. Inno per soprano, cori e grande orchestra. Riduzione per canto e pianoforte* (Milano: Ricordi, 1888).

push it to the front of musical vanguard in Italy. According to Körner's analysis, highlighting Bologna's glorious past especially in the pre-Roman civilizations and in the Middle Ages, and investing in the import and local consumption of international contemporary music repertoires, constituted two key elements with which the city claimed its spot in modern Italy and at the same time defended its identity in the face of the strongly centralist organization of the newborn nation-state.[55]

As part of the Papal States prior to Unification, Bologna used to fall under the direct influence of Rome, a condition that heavily affected its cultural offering. In particular, the center of attention was the Teatro Comunale, the work of scenographer and architect Antonio Galli Bibiena which had been inaugurated in 1763. Under the Roman rule established in the Restoration period, the theater enjoyed the privilege of being the only such institution in Bologna to have permission to stage plays and operas during certain periods of the year, a privilege that was canceled after the liberation of the Papal Legations.[56] The abrogation of such privilege allowed more theaters, most of which was private and worked on invitations sent from the notable owners to their circle of friends and business partners, to take part competitively in enriching the stage programming of the city. Not only privileges, though, were canceled after the liberation. Censorship, a staple principle of literary and opera productions in the Papal States, was also abolished with the new regime, which certainly contributed to increase flexibility in the programming, starting from the Comunale theater.

However, these major changes in the regulation of Bologna's cultural life should not be overestimated. The private theaters, for example, belonged to the richest personalities — usually aristocrats — who put forth the interest of conservatives, and their political affiliation was reflected in the choice of musical works proposed in their private concert or theater venues. Moreover, the system upon which Teatro Comunale was based still depended largely on the long-term renting of the boxes, which were payed once a year at a fixed price by the wealthy families who had been occupying them for generations.[57] A long debate was followed by a legal battle in order to establish who, between the *impresario* following the taste of box owners and the municipality wanting to assure an adequate offering to the population, should have the last say in the opera programming and the ticket prices of the Comunale. The dispute

[55] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 87–160 and 221–262.
[56] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 47–53.
[57] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 21–46.

was resolved only in 1884, with the definitive victory of the municipality, which took control of the Comunale. Finally, "not private box owners, but political representatives of the citizens and professional experts were to determine the fate of the theatre as the principal institution of the city's self-representation."[58]

Despite the lengthy process that led to the emancipation of the stage programming in the city, major changes had been happening in Bologna already in the second decade after Unification. A turning point had been the election of Camillo Casarini as mayor of the city in 1870, a representative of the Left who advocated for more progressive values also in music. Casarini had already been not by chance the president of Teatro Comunale (1863–1867), and occupied the same position also from 1869 to his death in 1874. As a mayor directly involved in the programming of the Comunale, Casarini and his *giunta* (the city council) promoted the engagement of intellectuals and professionals in the designing of Bologna's cultural landscape, with some major contribution spepcifically in the musical field. In fact, it was under Casarini's administration that a full opera by Wagner was ever staged in Italy: it was *Lohengrin*, directed by Angelo Mariani, presented of course at the Comunale.[59] As we will see, *Lohengrin* became an incredibly important opera also in the cultural modernization of Palermo in the National Exposition of 1891–92.[60]

Cosmopolitism and the offering of an international music repertoire was therefore one of the main inspirations of Casarini's administration, and it would inform Bologna's cultural identity in the following decades, associated as it was with a broader idea of musical modernity. Modernity could also be an attribute of Italian works, such as in the case of Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele*, enthusiastically received in Bologna in 1875 after the *fiasco* of its première in Milan's La Scala theater in 1868. However, the scarcity of influential Italian composers at that time resulted in a perceived overrepresentation of foreign works in concert programs and opera seasons. The academic and music critic Francesco Flores D'Arcais summarized this unbalance as an economic crisis: "Italy gives a little and imports a great deal."[61] This issue was of concern not only in Bologna, but in Italy at large, as I will discuss in the chapter devoted to

[58] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 64.
[59] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 230–239.
[60] See pp. 90–99.
[61] Quoted in John Rosselli, "Music and nationalism in Italy," in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800–1945*, ed. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 181–196: 192.

the Exposition of Genoa 1892.[62] For the moment, it is important to notice that modernism and cosmopolitism was at the heart of the International Music Exhibition organized in 1888, as the name of such event overtly signals.

Progress and internationalism were nonetheless only one aspect of the cultural project realized in Bologna in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The counterpart to this aspect, strictly connected to it, was the interest in the local past and the construction of a historical narration that also played a major role in the organization of the Music Exhibition. Archaeological excavations in the Bologna area and the scientific studies that followed them consolidated *bolognese* identity. On the one hand, the discovery of pre-roman cultures allowed for a racialized articulation of the concept of a *bolognese* people, one that was unique and separate from the rest of the region of Emilia-Romagna — namely, separate from the former Duchies of Modena and of Parma and Piacenza.[63] On the other hand, the glorification of Bologna's medieval past, preserved in the city's architecture, helped to reclaim the city's autonomy from the former Papal States.[64] This became then another relevant factor in the rewriting and popularization of music history that accompanied the Exhibition of 1888. All the knowledge accumulated about the ancient past of the city of Bologna, together with praises of its merits during Risorgimento, became then the object of a museum culture that established starting in 1881, only few years before the Music Exhibition, with the opening of a pioneering and internationally acknowledged *Museo civico* [Civic Museum].[65]

In conclusion, the complex picture presented by Körner is fundamental to understand the context in which the 1888 celebrations in Bologna took place. The city was presenting itself first to the royal family of Umberto I and Margherita: Bologna chose their son, Vittorio Emanuele Prince of Naples, as the honorary president of the Exposition, and commissioned a statue of Umberto's father Vittorio Emanuele II to sculptor Giulio Monteverde. Monteverde, on his part, was a veteran of expositions, having won the gold medal at the Fine Arts National Exhibition in Parma in 1870 and at the World's Exposition of Vienna in 1873, and having been the president of the Fine Arts Exhibition committee for the Exposition in Paris in 1878.[66] Moreover, the cultural politics that characterized Bologna at least in the two decades prior to

[62] See pp. 138–142.
[63] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 128–150.
[64] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 103–127.
[65] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 95.
[66] Monica Grasso, "MONTEVERDE, Giulio," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 76 (Roma: Treccani, 2012).

the International Music Exhibition had shaped it as a city proud of its glorious past and open to the progress of international music and culture at large. This was the same image that also other cities in Italy tried to convey with their expositions, including the cities considered for this dissertation. As we will see in the course of this study, the results were modulated differently from place to place, each with their own individual traits. Rather than undermining the pervasive nationalist and imperialist agenda animating all expositions from their birth in the mid-nineteenth century, these differences from town to town, so evident in the Italian articulation of exposition culture, constituted a distinctive characteristic of the Italian nation-state. In Italy, as Körner said, "localness can become 'a shaper of nationhood'" and "in the case of Italy we can speak about a 'nation of municipalities.' In this sense local identities become a metaphor for the nation."[67]

An exhibition to watch and to hear

The International Music Exhibition represented the largest and the most relevant event with which the city of Bologna presented itself to the nation in 1888. Given Körner's observation that municipal identity in nineteenth-century Italy was in a synecdochic relationship with the national one, the way in which Bologna shaped its own history and identity through music was precious in the definition of Italy as a progressive country. Bologna did so by crafting a specific image of its past and showing itself as open and receptive to international repertoires and concert-programming trends, something that was presented as a unique characteristic of the city and its population, as we will see in the next pages. Yet, this result could be accomplished only thanks to the financial investments of the Italian state and to the collaboration of an extended network of professionals from the international music environment. The Exhibition constituted a luminous and inspiring example for the music sections of all following expositions in Italy, as it will be shown in the other study cases presented in this dissertation. In order to fully appreciate how Bologna became a model of how to present music in the context of an exposition, I will start by assessing the impact of its organizers and the outcome of their collaboration.

[67] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 164.

Displaying music: a collective effort

The multiple Exposition of Bologna, including a regional agricultural and industrial exhibition (*Esposizione delle provincie dell'Emilia*), a National Fine Arts Exhibition, and an International Music Exhibition, was not conceived as such from the beginning. As it happened for many expositions in Italy, it started from the initiative of a single exhibition dedicated to a specific industry or discipline, and then it was joined by more institutions and organizers, creating an event of larger proportions and including more disciplines. The peculiarity of the *bolognese* Exposition, though, is that the project of a Music Exhibition was the first to be conceived by the organizers. The birth and detailed organization of the International Music Exhibition have been thoroughly reconstructed and described in a monograph by Alessandra Fiori, who in her study is concerned with both the origins and the reception of the musical events and *mostre* [exhibitions] that were presented in Bologna in 1888. From Fiori's research, we learn that a first attempt to organize an "esposizione internazionale dimostrativa, esecutiva della storia e sviluppo della musica" had been proposed already in 1878, on the occasion of the inauguration of another monument, the statue of physician and physicist Luigi Galvani.[68] The celebration of the innovator who carried out important experiments on biology and electricity in the eighteenth century seemed back then the perfect opportunity to exalt the progress not only in scientific knowledge, but also in music.

This initial proposal did not result in an actual event, and ten years had to pass by before the time was favorable again for such an endeavor, thanks to the combination of the Vittorio Emanuele II statue inauguration and the University's centennial. As the proposal for a music exhibition was relaunched, it retained two main characteristics inherited from the initial 1878 exhibition project. First of all, it was supposed to show not only the "sviluppo," the latest findings in music technology — that is, music instruments and tools for musicians and music teachers, and the accomplishments in new scores composed by contemporary composers — but also the history ("storia") of music, in a teleological conception that would present ancient music as rudimentary and progressing, along the century, to its modern state. Secondly, the exhibition was meant to be "esecutiva" [performative] as much as "dimostrativa" [displaying]. Therefore, the proper exhibition in 1888 was accompanied by the equally ambitious plan of a

[68] "International demonstrative and performative exhibition of music history and development." Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 15–23: 18.

series of concerts that would allow the visitors to experience recent works that made Bologna a culturally active and cosmopolitan city together with works from the past, a way to re-live and get a better understanding of the musical past that was displayed in the rooms of the music pavilion.[69]

Despite its informative and educational objectives, the Exhibition was far from being scientifically neutral, and was rather used as an occasion to celebrate the city's high status in Italian cultural panorama and at the same time to respond to the transnational trend of expositions circulating globally at that time. The *Guida illustrata* [illustrated guide] published to lead the visitors on an imaginary tour of the Exposition, stated that the event originated from the "naturale bisogno che queste provincie, e più di tutte la Bolognese, avevano di entrare anch'esse in queste pubbliche mostre omai bandite nei grandi centri italiani."[70] The comparison was first and foremost with Milan, the epicenter of much of the industrial and musical life in Italy and the site of National Expositions in 1871 and ten years later, in 1881, as it is also testified by the tiny engraving decorating a chapter of Bologna's *Guida illustrata* and representing Milan's cathedral [FIG. 2]. Comparison, or even competition, between cities was therefore always in place when it came to organize expositions, and Bologna 1888 was not an exception in this respect. As illustrated by Fiori, the success of the Music Exhibition in Bologna was repeatedly jeopardized by similar events that were being organized in the same years in Warsaw and Amsterdam. And while in the case of Warsaw this represented the

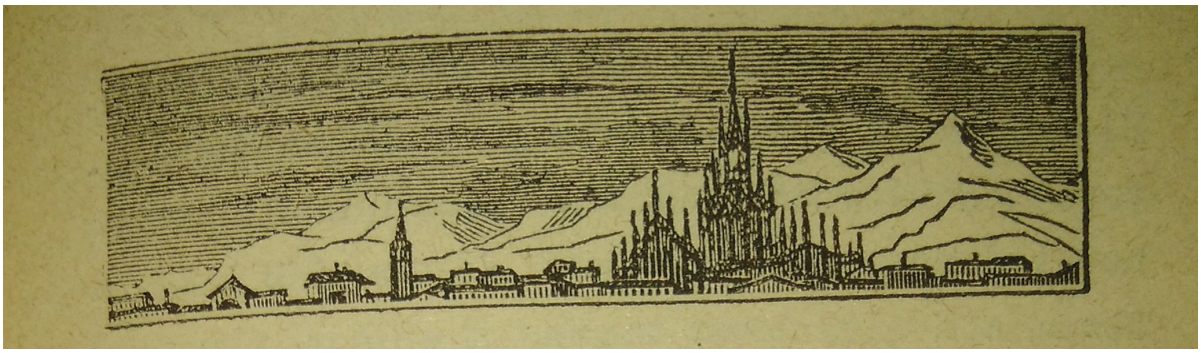

FIG. 2: Engraving with a view of Milan's cathedral and the Alps in a visitor's guide from Bologna 1888.

[69] This recuperation of the past was part of a larger trend which ideologies have been thoroughly investigated, in the case of France, in: Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[70] "Natural need that also these provinces, and most of all Bologna, had to access these public exhibitions that have been already announced in Italian great cities." *Guida illustrata della Esposizione Emiliana MDCCCLXXXVIII* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1888 [2a ed. con giunte e correzioni]), 55.

opportunity for a fruitful collaboration which favored Bologna, in Amsterdam the Exhibition was postponed, but not without a harsh diplomatic dispute.[71]

The ambition of the Music Exhibition project was unprecedented, and it depended largely on the caliber of the people involved: Giuseppe Verdi was nominated the honorary president, while the role of actual president was given to Arrigo Boito — therefore, two preeminent personalities of Italian music. Boito managed to bring together a team of correspondents from other Italian cities and from abroad (including many European countries along with Egypt, India, Australia, and the USA). Among them were many important figures from the musical world, such as Italian music historian Oscar Chilesotti, the Belgian Victor-Charles Mahillon, founder of the Musical Instrument Museum of the Conservatory in Brussels, and German musicologist Franz Xaver Haberl.[72] Boito urged the collaboration of many professionals by asking the conservatories in Italy and the owners of rich musical collections abroad to send their most valuable items to Bologna, and also arranged an agreement with the Italian state so that the transportation of objects to Bologna was discounted or free of charge for the exhibitors.[73]

The State infrastructural support should be added to the 500,000 Liras that the celebrations in Bologna were granted by the Government, while the King also participated individually to the expenses by donating 25,000 Liras. Private investors and the revenue from a lottery also became part of the Exposition's funding listed in the final *Relazione*.[74] On May 6 the Exposition opened its gates in the Giardini Margherita, on the Southern border of the city center, outside Porta Santo Stefano [FIG. 3]. It was inaugurated officially in the presence of the royal family, and the Music Exhibition pavilion represented its main attraction. It was located at bottom of a wide space at which center the visitors found a monumental fountain, and it consisted of three rectangular bodies on the front and a circular one on the back, dominated by a dome [Figs. 4–5]. Its majestic architectural style reflected the importance of the exhibition it contained, with two sculptures representing vocal and instrumental music

[71] Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 33–37.
[72] The complete list of people involved in the organization and the names of all correspondents can be found in Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 23–32.
[73] The letter is published in: *Esposizione Emiliana del 1888 in Bologna. Relazione pubblicata a cura del Comitato generale* (Bologna: Zamorani e Albertazzi, 1890), 33. A partial transcription is available in: Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 27.
[74] *Esposizione Emiliana del 1888*, from 152.

FIG. 4: View of the music pavilion of Bologna 1888.

FIG. 3: Detail of the Exposition map for Bologna 1888. 1. Entrance; 2. Fountain; 3. Agriculture pavilion; 4. Music Exhibition; 5. Industrial Exhibition.

on its sides. The Exhibition was laid out mostly in the rectangular bodies of the building, which were one-story tall, while the taller circular part constituted a concert hall, the *salone dei concerti*, with a fully equipped stage, stalls, one line of boxes and a gallery above. The base of the painted dome covering the *salone dei concerti* was decorated with large medallions representing the coats of arms of the participating nations, together with the portraits of composers such as Palestrina, Alessandro Scarlatti, Bach, Benedetto Marcello, the *bolognese* music teacher and collector Giovanni Battista Martini, Gluck, Haydn, Antonio Sacchini, Cimarosa, Mozart, Cherubini, Beethoven, Rossini, Bellini, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Wagner and finally "il glorioso vivente Giuseppe Verdi."[75] Therefore, from the very elements decorating the architecture it was clear that the Exhibition was meant to condensate in its

[75] "The glorious living Giuseppe Verdi." *Guida ufficiale del visitatore alla Esposizione Emiliana del 1888 in Bologna, sola pubblicazione [...] del comitato esecutivo* (Bologna: Sperati 1888), 115.

rooms the most influential international composers while at the same time exalting Italian music in particular.

In the front part of the building, the visitors could see the actual Music Exhibition. It was divided into different categories, including modern and ancient instruments, modern editions, rare editions and manuscripts, and literature and bibliographies about acoustics and the history of music. This rich selection, coming from more than six hundred exhibitors, had been put together taking elements from the collections of public Italian and foreign institutions, such as libraries, museums, and conservatoires. Boito and his team had also contacted private collectors and involved traders in order to display exotic rarities or the newest publications. This was the case of music publisher Giulio Ricordi, officially a correspondent for the music committee chaired by Boito, but also taking advantage of the visibility offered by the Exhibition to showcase his products.[76]

FIG. 5: Map of the music pavilion in Bologna 1888, with indications of the Exhibition's entrance ("Ingresso all'Esposizione"), the Music Exhibition ("Esposizione Musicale"), and the concert hall ("Salone pei Concerti").

[76] All the information about the exhibitors and their items can be found in: *Esposizione internazionale di musica in Bologna — 1888. Catalogo ufficiale* (Parma: Luigi Battei, 1888).

The Exhibition was extremely successful thanks to the many diverse items it gathered and to their varied provenance. It showed that it was the result of a collective effort that would benefit the city of Bologna but that also had an effect on the objects it presented. For example, it contributed to the musealization of some of its collections, such as the material concerning Rossini coming from Pesaro, which was catalogued especially for the occasion and sent to Bologna with the intention to create a dedicated museum after the Exhibition. Another lasting effect was the impression this exhibition left in the minds of the visitors. The material was organized organically, including the realization of four spaces called *tempietti* [little temples] dedicated to the objects for Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini and Wagner. The objects were sacralized like relics, as they also included wax reproductions of the composers, their personal clothing, and even decorations woven with their hair.[77] The collection was commented on the pages of the official Exposition's gazette as follows:

> Il visitatore si aggira e a momenti si smarrisce in mezzo a questa Orchestra innumerevole, silenziosa, ordinata a gruppi, a manipoli, a falangi, di pianoforti, d'istrumenti a corde, ad arco, a fiato [...]. In qualunque di questi salotti [the composers' little temples] si ponga il piede, si è presi come da un brivido di commozione. Il contatto così diretto, così intimo coll'esistenza reale di quegli arcangeli del pensiero musicale, impone all'anima un grande senso di riverenza e di trepidazione. È la parte altamente poetica di questa Mostra; il tempio di una religione professata col cuore da tutti, il culto della umanità verso il genio che l'ha onorata.[78]

A religion had therefore found its temple. Yet, the quantity of the objects and their juxtaposition created a saturating and overwhelming feeling in which resided precisely the phantasmagoria typical of Expositions:

> E la mente a poco a poco si esalta, viene rapita interamente nel regno dei suoni, non comprende più altro linguaggio possibile all'infuori della musica. Allora tutte le innumerevoli note scritte nei cimelii e nelle edizioni moderne, e tutte le miriadi racchiuse potenzialmente negli strumenti, sembrano liberarsi dalle pagine, sprigionarsi dalle corde, dai legni, dai metalli, dalle casse armoniche

[77] In the catalogue we even find a "viola del pensiero lavorata in capelli di Donizetti" ["*Tricolor Viola* woven in Donizetti's hair"]. *Esposizione internazionale di musica [...] Catalogo ufficiale*, 139.

[78] "The visitor wanders and at times gets lost in this innumerable Orchestra, silent, ordered in groups, in maniples, in phalanxes, of pianos, string instruments, bowed instruments, winds [...]. No matter which of these rooms one enters, one shivers almost with emotion. Such an intimate, direct contact with the real existence of these archangels of the musical thought imposes a great sense of deference and trepidation to the soul. It is the highly poetic part of this Exhibition: the temple of a religion followed by everybody in their hearts, the worship of mankind towards the genius that honored it." G., "A colpo d'occhio: la mostra musicale," *L'Esposizione illustrata delle provincie dell'Emilia in Bologna* 1888 (Bologna: Monti, 1888), 138–139: 138.

> e dai tubi sonori e si mettono a danzare nella testa una sarabanda furibonda vertiginosa. Il rapimento si converte in delirio: tutto l'essere umano comincia a vibrare all'unissono [*sic!*] cogli'istrumenti, in questa orchestra inverosimile, in questa sinfonia caotica del passato e del presente, della barbarie e della civiltà. Bisogna fuggire all'aria aperta, correre a calmarsi i nervi con una tazza schiumante di bionda cervogia del nord.[79]

This religiosity and this sense of phantasmagoria was the most effective result of the Exhibition, one that the music sections of Italian Expositions sought to replicate. As we will see, this was not always possible, as not all the expositions could take advantage of the team of well-connected experts what directed the *Esposizione Internazionale di Musica* under the supervision of Arrigo Boito, one of Italy's most influential figures in music at that time.

A history of musical revolutions

The *Esposizione Internazionale di Musica* was created in 1888 in a city that only seven years before had witnessed the opening of its first public museum, the *Museo civico*. An entire building dedicated to the exhibition of music objects must have appeared as a marvel for its visitors. That the items were displayed as relics in a temple — underlined by the presence of the four *tempietti* — certainly enhanced the feeling of entering a space literally consecrated to the art of sounds, presenting it as a religion for all mankind. Of course, more than being at the service of this "culto dell'umanità," the Music Exhibition and the universalist rhetoric attached to it benefited mostly the city of Bologna. In the Exposition grounds, visitors would experience a specific tale concerning the history of music which put Bologna at its center, and for two reasons. On the one hand, Bologna was the place where such tale could be told, thanks to the caliber of the professionals involved and to the investments made to complete the exhibition. On the other, the history of music as it was told at the Exhibition was modeled

[79] "And the mind is exalted little by little, it is taken entirely in the realm of sounds, it does not understand any language other than music anymore. Then all the countless notes written in the antiques and in modern editions, and all the myriads potentially held within the instruments, seem to be freed from the pages, to be released from the strings, from the wood, from the metal, from the sounding boxes and tubes, and start to dance in one's head a frenetic, furious sarabande. The rapture is converted into delirium: the whole human being starts to vibrate in unison with the instruments, in this absurd orchestra, in this chaotic symphony of the past and the present, of barbarity and civilization. One needs to run away to open air, run and calm one's nerves with a foaming cup of German Lager beer." G., "A colpo d'occhio: la mostra musicale," *L'Esposizione illustrata delle provincie*, 139.

on the aesthetic criteria characterizing Bologna's music scene at least from the 1870s, from mayor Casarini's administration.

The rich musical offering and especially the presence of Wagner, who appeared in the programming of the Comunale before anywhere else in Italy, made Bologna a progressive city open to novelties from abroad. Thanks to this characteristic, Bologna could take pride in its "fama musicale" [fame in music],[80] presenting itself as *arbitra elegantiae* for what concerned the musical matter. In the *Guida illustrata* to the Exposition this concept was repeated clearly:

> [...] a Bologna il primo posto conviene alla Musica in quanto di essa sia qui culto antico e affettuoso, ed educazione elevata nelle masse: tanto che questo fra i popoli italiani [...] portò sempre vanto di primato in ordine alla comprensione delle bellezze dell'arte musicale. Il Comunale di Bologna fu il grande areopago dove le opere e gli artisti furono solennemente giudicati: e gli artisti e le opere che uscirono con onore da quel teatro ebbero da questo fama e passarono trionfalmente per tutti i teatri del mondo.[81]

Bologna's renown as an educated city, sensitive to the most progressive musical taste, was therefore conveniently tied to the history of its own Teatro Comunale. In fact, the music collection displayed in the Exhibition became an opportunity to retell the history of music from a perspective that elevated Bologna as the place where not simply great musical works, but especially the innovative, disruptive, and revolutionary ones were appreciated and received due recognition. The *Guida ufficiale* of the Exposition offered an overview of such history for the benefit of the lay public visiting such temple of music. After presenting the figure of music theorists like Bartolomé Ramos de Pareja and Giovanni Spataro, who were active in Bologna and were the protagonists of strident debates in the Early Modern, the subsequent centuries were presented only with reference to the composers who dramatically changed the history of music:

> [Music] non solo in Bologna, ma ovunque rimase stazionaria per quasi tutto il secolo XVI. Non che le mancassero strenui cultori; ma si tennero così concordi nell'osservanza delle leggi dovunque adottate, che nessuno pensò di levarsi su gli altri e di affrontare, con le innovazioni, la taccia di

[80] *Guida illustrata*, 55.

[81] "In Bologna, the first place belongs to Music since its worship here is long-standing and affectionate, and its education is elevated in the masses of the population: to the extent that this among Italian peoples [...] took always pride as the leader of understanding the beauties of the musical art. The Comunale of Bologna was the great Areopagus where the works and the artists were solemnly judged: and the artists and works which came out with honor from that theater received their fame from it and passed triumphantly to all the theaters in the world." *Guida illustrata*, 139.

> eterodossia musicale. Ma quel secolo senza lotte né iniziative veniva preparando in silenzio i tempi nuovi; ed il riformatore aspettato si rivelò in Claudio Monteverde [...].[82]

The lack of any mention of Renaissance composers, and especially of possibly the most popular among them at the end of the nineteenth century, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, was a gesture that aimed at emancipating the evolution of music from the influence of Rome and the Church, and at the same time time it made it coincide with the birth of music drama. Certainly, it was a gesture motivated by the prevailing sentiment in the *bolognese* cultural élites, who wanted to distance themselves from the city's more recent past within the Papal Legations and position it as a major operatic center.

In the sixteenth century, the only innovation capable of triggering an evolution in music was a technological one, the invention of music printing, which had many representatives also in Bologna. The activity of music printers and publishers provided a stimulus:

> [...] a progredire e trasformarsi, seguendo le evoluzioni storiche che vivificano ogni attività dello spirito. E codesto impulso naturale non poteva non influire anche sul progresso della musica, che, ristretta fra gli angusti confini delle regole antiche, sarebbe divenuto esercizio monotono e insignificante.[83]

The progressive nature of musical appreciation is revealed clearly in these lines, and according to this narration, the constant desire for new works and modern music became a characteristic shared by the entire population of Bologna in the seventeenth century, thanks to the lively *accademie* where artists and intellectuals convened to debate aesthetic issues:

> Da ciò un'attrattiva ognora crescente nei bolognesi per la musica, e, ciò che più vale, un progressivo acquisto di squisitezza nel gusto di tutto ciò che ad essa si riferiva. Di che, quando altro mancasse, si ha prova in questo, che sorse in Firenze coll'*Euridice* di Ottavio Rinuccini il dramma musicale, fu in tutta Bologna una smania di udirlo: e fu dato infatti nel 1621 [...].[84]

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[82] "[Music] remained stationary for almost all of the sixteenth century everywhere, and not only in Bologna. Valorous musicians were not lacking; but they observed so strictly the laws adopted everywhere, that nobody thought of rising up and tackle, with innovations, the accusation of musical heterodoxy. But that century without struggles nor initiatives was quietly preparing the new era; and the unexpected reformator appeared to be Claudio Monteverde." *Guida ufficiale*, 29.

[83] "[...] to progress and transform, following the historical evolutions that animate every activity of the spirit. And this natural impulse could not but impact also the progress of music, that, if forced into the narrow boundaries of old rules, would have become a monotonous and insignificant exercise." *Guida ufficiale*, 33.

[84] "From that [came] an ever stronger attraction of the *bolognesi* for music, and, what is more important, a progressive gain in refinement of the taste in everything that concerns it. And we have proof of that, if anything, in that the music drama was born in Florence with Ottavio Rinuccini's *Euridice*, and in all of Bologna there was an urge to listen to it: and in fact it was performend in 1621 [...]." *Guida ufficiale*, 31.

Finally, the creation of a refined, cultivated, and curious public had been completed. The history of music had been written as a succession of innovations with reference to how they were received in Bologna, and to how they shaped the palate of the *bolognesi*. This quality in the composition of the public, a competent audience, was what placed Bologna above any other city in Italy when it came to music, and especially above Milan — where undoubtedly the most lucrative music industry was located. This view was revealed in a leaflet from the authoritative national daily newspaper *Corriere della Sera* especially printed for the Exposition:

> E la musica, signori? È qui che *Bononia docet*. Per l'Italia, Milano è la fiera dei cantanti e il mercato delle ballerine. La nostra Bologna invece ne è la capitale musicale, e non da jeri. Mi basta risalire al secolo passato. Il melodramma moderno fu creato da Glück (*sic!*) con una vera rivoluzione musicale, che mise in ruzzo tutti i teatri. L'*Alceste*, il suo capo lavoro, dato prima con cattivo esito, e poi applaudito a Vienna e a Parigi nel 1776, Bologna volle udirlo subito e giudicarlo; e ne ebbe la rappresentazione per la prima in Italia nel 1777. [...] Rossini, il Cigno di Pesaro, fece in musica un'altra rivoluzione, col melodramma melodico e popolare per eccellenza, e Rossini è Emiliano, e per lunga dimora e affetto è cittadino Bolognese: il bolognese era il suo dialetto preferito. Wagner determinò l'ultima rivoluzione musicale, e Bologna ne giudicò immediatamente l'importanza e l'alto valore, e diede quel *Lohengrin* che doveva essere fischiato poco dopo a Milano e più tardi esservi ricevuto, per amore o per forza morale, con buon esito e che a Bologna destò subito entusiasmo. In Bologna il Liceo Musicale, l'Accademia Filarmonica ed il gran teatro, ricchi di tradizioni gloriose, continuano a mantenerle un vero primato in Italia. Il suo gusto fine, diffuso, appassionato per la musica, le ha permesso in questi ultimi tempi [di dare?] il battesimo della celebrità ad Arrigo Boito, di decretare la grande natur[?] nell'arte di Riccardo Wagner. Sì, Bologna è centro e tribunale musicale autorevole [...].[85]

[85] "And what about music? Here it is where *Bononia docet*. In Italy, Milan is the singers' fair and the ballerinas' market. Our Bologna, instead, is its musical capital, and not since yesterday. I only have to go back to the last century. Modern opera was created by Gluck with a real musical revolution, which shook all the theaters. Bologna wanted to hear and judge immediately *Alceste*, his masterpiece, first received poorly, and then applauded in Vienna and Paris in 1776, and had its first Italian performance in 1777. [...] Rossini, the Swan of Pesaro, made another revolution in music, with the most melodic and popular operas, and Rossini is *emiliano*, and *bolognese* thanks to his long stay and his fondness: *bolognese* was his favorite dialect. Wagner established the last musical revolution, and Bologna judged immediately its importance and high value, and staged that *Lohengrin* which shortly after would be booed in Milan and then later well received there, because of real love or because morals imposed it, and which caused sudden enthusiasm in Bologna. In Bologna the Liceo Musicale, the Accademia Filarmonica and the great theater, rich with glorious traditions, keep its primacy in Italy. Its refined, widespread, passionate taste for music allowed it in these last years [to give?] Arrigo Boito his baptizing of celebrity, to establish the natur[?] in the art of Richard Wagner. Indeed, Bologna is an authoritative music center and tribunal." *Ricordo dell'Esposizione di Bologna del 1888. Dono del* Corriere della sera *ai suoi Abbonati* (Bologna: 1888), "Origini dell'Esposizione," [1]. The leaflet, preserved in the Biblioteca Sala Borsa in Bologna, is unfortunately deteriorated, which prevented me to fully transcribe the text.

A history of revolutions was what constituted the musical identity of Bologna, and especially the taste of its receptive public. Gluck's *Alceste*, which was staged during the Exposition as we will see, had been staged for the first time in Italy in Bologna, after its appearance in prestigious European capitals such as Vienna and Paris. The operas of Rossini, who studied in Bologna and therefore was appropriated as *emiliano*, were also presented as revolutionary.[86] All these lengthy quotations show that the enthusiastic reception from the people in Bologna of musical revolutions came to constitute a glorious tradition. Consequently, Bologna was recognized as the perfect environment for the glorification of the most recent innovations in music, such as the works by Arrigo Boito and Richard Wagner. Music therefore added a new element in the construction of the past characterizing Bologna: in addition to the pre-Roman populations that gave the *bolognesi* their specific, racialized identity, and in addition to the opulent medieval architecture, an era in which the city was independent and fully developing, music characterized Bologna as a cultivated and progressive city, far from the dull market dynamics characterizing the rival Milan. The history of music had been re-written to be functional to the International Music Exhibition and to its hosting city, but in order for the project to be complete, it also needed to be re-enacted with a series of music performances.

Sounding music history

The Music Exhibition was taken as an opportunity to interpret music history in the light of Bologna's musical progressiveness in 1888. In particular, the massive presence of Wagner, with many relics and scores on display in the music pavilion, testified the special connection of the city to the composer established at least at the beginning of the 1870s, a connection emblematic of Bologna's political orientations as much as of its musical taste.[87] In the light of the values of modernity associated with the music of Wagner, the history of music underwent a revisionism that highlighted only what were considered to be the disruptive, revolutionary works or events that had made musical art progress. In order for this revisionism to be entirely effective, nonetheless, it needed to be imparted onto the visitors of the Exposition, and by extension to the population of Bologna, also through concerts. In fact, what made Bologna a

[86] About the connections between Rossini and Bologna, see Marco Beghelli, "Bologna, nobile patria di aggressioni e di mortadelle," in *Rossini 1792–1992. Mostra storico-documentaria*, ed. Mauro Bucarelli (Perugia: Electa, 1992), 71-*98.*

[87] Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 234–249.

"centro e tribunale musicale autorevole" was its sensitive and competent audience, which needed to be educated with more than music history articles on the Exposition's gazettes.

Performances of the music presented at the Exhibition worked towards this goal, especially for the earliest repertories, where they would have served as reenactments of an otherwise unimaginable musical past. In the words of music critic Eugenio Sacerdoti — hidden under the pseudonym of T. O. Cesardi — usually exhibitions gave "l'effetto, grandioso ma triste, di necropoli dell'ingegno umano."[88] However, associating the Music Exhibition with musical performances could excite the audience:

> [...] fu savio intendimento congiungere alla Mostra un determinato numero di esecuzioni quanto più possibile grandiose e perfette. Se è vero che l'arte è immortale e che della sua vita senza fine vivono le opere eccelse in cui essa si concreta e si esplica, noi vogliamo a nostra volta entusiasmarci degli antichi entusiasmi, passionarci delle antiche passioni, rivivere la vita artistica del passato e rianimarla dinanzi alla nostra mente.[89]

[88] "The effect, majestic but sad, of cemeteries of human intelligence." T. O. Cesardi [Eugenio Sacerdoti], "L'esposizione musicale," *L'esposizione illustrata delle provincie*, 14.

[89] "It was a wise idea to combine the Exhibition to a certain number of performances as magnificent and perfect as possible. If it is true that art is immortal, and that the sublime works in which it is embodied and expressed do live endless life, we also want to get excited of ancient excitements, do be moved by the ancient passions, to live again the artistic life from the past and recreate it in our mind." T. O. Cesardi [Eugenio Sacerdoti], "L'esposizione musicale," *L'esposizione illustrata delle provincie*, 14.

TABLE 2. HIGHLIGHTS OF MUSIC EVENTS IN BOLOGNA DURING THE ESPOSIZIONE INTERNAZIONALE DI MUSICA, 1888.

The programming of concerts was always subjected to variations, making concert reviews the most reliable source of information about concert dates. I have found most dates listed in this table in periodicals of the time, but dates of the Mahillon concerts have been taken from Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 111–116.

	Teatro Comunale	**Salone dei concerti**	**Regia Accademia Filarmonica**
08/05		1st Mahillon concert	
11/05		2nd Mahillon concert	
12/05		3rd Mahillon concert	
27/05			Wilhelm Langhans's conference on Wagner
02/06	*Tristan und Isolde*		
16/06		1st Martucci symphonic concert	
18/06		2nd Martucci symphonic concert	
20/06		3rd Martucci symphonic concert	
22/06		1st Martucci sacred music concert	
24/06		2nd Martucci sacred music concert	
08/07		Last Martucci choir and orchestra concert	
21/07		*Elias*	
22/09	*Il matrimonio segreto*		
06/10	*Alceste*		
25/10	*Otello*		

The organizers of the *Esposizione Internazionale di Musica* did not hesitate to tackle this challenge, and arranged a series of concerts and operas with which to attract the public and educate them following the guiding principles of the Exhibition [TABLE 2].

As it was the case for the Exhibition in the music pavilion, also the concerts organized during the duration of the celebrations originated from an ambitious project which has been carefully reconstructed by Fiori in its initial conception, the subsequent discussions and negotiations, and their final results and reception in the press.[90] The protagonists of the concert programming were intellectuals and music critics such as Enrico Panzacchi and Gustavo Sangiorgi, together with the chief music conductor, Giuseppe Martucci, who since two years had been the director of the Conservatorio di Musica in Bologna and in 1884 had also been responsible for the symphonic concerts at the *Esposizione Generale Italiana* of Turin.[91] From the discussions of the committee in charge of the concerts in Bologna retraced by Fiori, it appears clear that experienced Martucci offered a necessarily pragmatic approach to the organization of the performances that sometimes clashed with the priorities of other committee members.

The performance committee was divided into three sub-commissions, each curating the presentation of a different repertoire: a commission for the operas, one for the symphonic music, and one for the sacred music. Particular attention was devoted in the programming to the fact that all these different commissions would present in their programming many ancient works, and possibly works that had never been performed in modern Italy before. Therefore, at the base of the proposals made by the commissions there was an accurate historical research. Particular relevance gained for example the proposal to stage Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, an idea that sparked intense discussions in the commission and that was abandoned on the base of several doubts about the realization. As explained by Fiori, the score was in fact considered too challenging for contemporary singers, and it also required the use of many music instruments which the commission deemed possible to be retrieved in Italy, but inadequate in terms of quality and precision to be used in a public performance — a detail that reveals that the performance was intended to be delivered on period instruments.[92] In the end, the commissions managed to arrange fewer concerts than originally

[90] Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 53–78, 111–151.
[91] Guido Salvetti, *La nascita del Novecento. Storia della musica. Vol. 10* (Torino: EDT, 1991), 241–242.
[92] Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 53–55.

imagined, concentrating their efforts on the production of two ancient operas: *Il matrimonio segreto* by Cimarosa and *L'Alceste* by Gluck, who had been celebrated as one of the great composers-innovators in the music history articles appearing during the time of the Exposition.

The ancient operas were performed at Teatro Comunale, and were therefore coordinated with the opera season of the same theater, which had its peak with two major events. The first one was the first Italian staging of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. As highlighted by Vincenzina Ottomano, this staging represented a turning point in the reception of Wagner's opera, being the first translation of the work ever presented and the first staging ever to take place outside of Germany. The original libretto was translated by Boito, who delved in the opera and rendered a translation that would suit the taste of an Italian audience — an operation that inevitably marked a turning point also in his own appreciation of the German composer.[93] *Tristano e Isotta* even appeared on the first page of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, although not without criticism against the excessive enthusiasm of the *bolognese* press for the event: "Gli italiani [...] qui fra noi non debbono più valere nulla e la più intricata e contorta progressione del Wagner vincere le più chiare e sublimi nostre melodie."[94] As we will see, Ricordi's official press organ will change dramatically its attitude toward Wagner's music and its enthusiastic reception in Italy by the time of the National Exposition in Palermo.[95]

The second main event in the opera season of Teatro Comunale, which also received good coverage in the press of that time, was the first Bologna staging of *Otello*. This masterpiece by Verdi will accompany the opera seasons of all three Expositions in the present study, as we will see, and its manuscript was exhibited in the music pavilion of the *Esposizione Internazionale di Musica*.[96] *Otello*, which premiered the previous year in Milan, was received with enthusiasm also in Bologna, although music critic Pierfrancesco Albicini reminded on the pages of the city cultural gazette *L'Arpa*: "Verdi non è mai stato un innovatore come lo fu appunto il Gluck."[97] For Albicini, the primacy of innovation was still held by Wagner, and Verdi,

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[93] Vincenzina Ottomano, "«Son fuor del mondo»: ammirazione e fuga nel *Tristan und Isolde* tradotto da Boito," to be published.
[94] Francesco Biagi, "*Tristano ed Isotta*," *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 24 June 1888, [1–2: 1].
[95] See pp. 94–96.
[96] See pp. 90–100 and pp. 156–162.
[97] "Verdi was never an innovator as indeed Gluck was." Here and after: Pierfrancesco Albicini, "L'*Otello* di G. Verdi al teatro comunale," *L'Arpa: giornale letterario, artistico, teatrale* 35/21 (28 October 1888), [1].

if anything, "nell'*Otello* ha certo approfittato delle riforme wagneriane."[98] By comparing the reviews of *Tristan* for Ricordi's gazette in Milan with those of *Otello* in Bologna's periodicals, the contrasting attitude is telling of the way the two cities identified with the Italian and the German composer respectively, an element that only enhanced their cultural opposition.

Finally, among the many other concerts directed by Martucci, it is worth to remember two oratorios: *Elias* by Mendelssohn, and once again Wagner with his *Das Liebesmahl der Apostel*. In addition to that, great resonance was given to the concerts organized by Victor-Charles Mahillon, the director of the Museum of Music Instruments in Brussels, who proposed a small series of concerts on period instruments in the *salone dei concerti* of the music pavilion.[99] All this made for a rich and diverse musical offering: the Mahillon's concert programs included Bach, but mostly Italian and French baroque music, while Martucci presented a series of symphonic concerts including typically ultramontane composers such as again Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven but also Italian Sammartini, Carissimi, Mercadante mixed with favorites such as Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini.[100] Finally, a folk music concert took also place in the *salone dei concerti*, although it was not planned as such: an orchestra from Hungary called the Zigeuner Kapelle was invited to perform in Bologna under the persuasion that it was in fact the official symphony orchestra form Budapest. After the first concert of completely unexpected popular tunes, the organizers realized the misunderstanding and decided to relocate the performances of the Zigeuner Kapelle in the restaurants of the Exposition, that were considered a more suitable venue for this kind of repertoire.[101]

A model for future Expositions

With the *Esposizione Internazionale di Musica*, the intellectuals and music professionals operating in Bologna accomplished an unprecedented task. To create a collaborative event of international relevance, proposing an international repertoire to present an image of Bologna as open and progressive. They did so also by rewriting music history in the city. Telling the story of a succession of innovations and revolutions, they articulated the city's identity around values that reflected its current political and social orientation — in favor of liberal bourgeois

[98] "In *Otello* has certainly profited from Wagnerian reforms."
[99] Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 111–116.
[100] Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 71–78.
[101] Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 116–119.

instead of conservative aristocracy. To strengthen this message, they also organized pioneering music performances, both by presenting a masterpiece by Wagner at Teatro Comunale and by offering historical concerts in the *salone dei concerti* of the Exposition.

Both these approaches were not entirely new in the city of Bologna: as we have seen, works by Wagner were a staple of the city's opera scene since the 1870s; at the same time, many of the early-music works presented in the historical concerts of the Exhibition came also from a tradition of recuperation of ancient repertoires that was ongoing in Bologna's music associations and private circles since decades.[102] Nonetheless, the presence of these kind of performances crystallized the practices connected to them: the organization in thematic concert series, the popularizing aim, the very repertoires presented. The density of the programming in the spring and summer months of the Exposition, together with the incredible amount of press reviews, catalogues, guides, and souvenirs produced along the celebrations, made it an impactful event for the Italian musical and cultural panorama at large.

The Exhibition therefore became a model for subsequent events of the same kind, and introduced many of the themes that will recur in the following chapters. The international vocation, the creation of a relationship between the royal family — and by extension the nation — and the hosting city, the concert programming trends which other expositions tried to imitate with different results, and the presentation of an immense collection of instruments, scores, and other musical objects that produced an overwhelming effect in the visitors. On the other hand, Bologna 1888 was also affected by inefficiencies: for example, the inauguration of the Music Exhibition did not include any music performance because of organizational malfunctioning.[103] Moreover, some of its concerts struggled with the lack of public. In the end, the final balance was also an irreparable loss for the city, with expenses skyrocketing against a limited profit from the sale of lottery and entrance tickets. The International Music Exhibition, therefore, anticipated the aspirations and struggles of the two next Expositions that I will illustrate in this study, and served as their — sometimes direct, sometimes indirect — reference to stimulate their sense of competition and to measure their success.

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[102] Alessandra Fiori, "Le esposizioni universali tra divulgazione e propaganda. La presenza della musica antica e della musica etnica nell'Esposizione di Bologna del 1888," *Musica e storia* 13/2 (2005), 361–383;
[103] Fiori, *Musica in mostra*, 34.

2. Palermo 1891–92: an exposition in the *Mezzogiorno*

The National Exposition in Palermo 1891–92 was the fourth Italian National Exposition, after those organized in Florence (1861), Milan (1881), and Turin (1884). The first event of its kind to take place in Southern Italy, Palermo 1891–92 was characterized by a strong focus on Sicily and the hosting city in particular, despite its declared national scope.[104] However, the Exposition took place in a critical moment for Italian economy, shortly after the introduction of the tariff of 1887. After more than a decade of increasingly protectionist policies, the tariff was the first deliberate customs duty aimed at favoring Italian industries — namely, wheat and sugar producers, and the iron and steel industry.[105] What was viewed as a drastic measure also coincided with the beginning of a ten-year custom war with France, Italy's main commercial partner until then.[106]

In such a tense climate, an exposition could represent a good occasion to evaluate the state of Italian industry, and to strengthen the relationships between Northern and Southern producers, therefore making Italy stronger and more independent from foreign imports. The choice of Palermo as the site for the Exposition had also a historical meaning for the city's role in the process of Unification. In fact, in May 1860 Giuseppe Garibaldi had led his glorious "spedizione dei Mille" ("Expedition of the Thousand) towards Sicily and then back to continental Southern Italy, where an increasing number of local soldiers had joined forces and contributed to the liberation from the Bourbon regime. In light of this memory, Palermo's deep

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[104] *Dall'artigianato all'industria. L'esposizione nazionale di Palermo del 1891-1892*. Palermo: Società di Storia Patria, 1994.

[105] For an introduction to the history of protectionism in the Kingdom of Italy, see: Lucio Villari, "Per la storia del protezionismo in Italia: I. Le prime polemiche sul libero-scambismo," *Studi storici* 6/3 (July – September 1965): 483–500, and Lucio Villari, "Per la storia del protezionismo in Italia: II. Verso nuove tariffe doganali," *Studi storici* 6/4 (October – December 1965): 651–663.

[106] See. James Foreman-Peck, "Il commercio estero e la crescita economica," in *L'economia europea 1750–1914. Un approccio tematico*, ed. Derek H. Aldcroft and Simon P. Ville, Italian edition by Mario Taccolini (Milano: Vita e pensiero 2003 [1994]), 201–32: 222–223.

historical value in the constitution of the Italian nation-state matched the strategic, commercial interest to encourage Southern industries to participate in a national exposition, since they had been generally underrepresented in previous events taking place in Northern Italy.

The Italian South was also particularly critical from a political point of view. If Garibaldi's expedition had been welcomed favorably, already in the course of the 1860s the former *Regno delle due Sicilie* [Kingdom of the Two Sicilies] witnessed numerous revolts animated by different social actors: the clergy opposing the newborn nation-state, reactionaries pushing for the restoration of the Bourbons regime, and peasants protesting for the missed land redistribution after Unification. These uprisings took the shape of an actual civil war that became known as *brigantaggio* [brigandage], and were soon repressed with a harsh military intervention.[107]

In the 1870s, after the end of the last episodes of brigandage, the original optimistic idea of Italians as a homogenous people — an idea that inspired the struggle for Unification — had been irreparably broken.[108] Appalling disparities between Northern and Southern Italian social tissues started to get noticed by the political and cultural élites of that time, who reflected upon them in their social and economic analyses. The backwardness of the industry and infrastructures in Southern Italy (even compared to Northern Italy, which in turn was generally less developed than its neighboring countries), and the persistence of a network of relationships between landowners and workers resembling the feudal system, were under the eyes of all observers.

Soon, Italian society became aware of the existence of a so-called *questione meridionale* [Southern issue], that is, the urgency to contrast underwhelming social and economic indicators in the *Mezzogiorno* [the South].[109] Starting from the writings of Neapolitan historian Pasquale Villari in the 1870s, followed by the work of intellectuals such as Leopoldo Franchetti,[110] Sidney Sonnino and Giustino Fortunato, the debate over the conditions of the South animated the public opinion and inspired governmental policies which culminated in 1904 with the the *leggi speciali per la Basilicata e per Napoli* [Specific Acts for Basilicata and for

[107] See Francesco Barbagallo, *La questione italiana. Il Nord e il Sud dal 1860 a oggi* (Bari: Laterza, 2013), 34–38.
[108] See Alessandro Capone, "Il brigantaggio meridionale: una rassegna storiografica," *Le carte e la storia* 2/2015 (December): 32–39.
[109] See Sabino Cassese, ed., *Lezioni sul meridionalismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2016).
[110] Composer Alberto's second cousin.

Naples], aimed at boosting development in said areas.[111] In addition to that, the backwardness of the South was essentialized in the public discourse as intrinsically characteristic of the people dwelling in the macro-region, and soon merged with long-standing stereotypes about Southern Europeans giving birth to forms of racism within the Italian population.[112] Finally, the unfavorable economic conditions in the South started a massive emigration towards Europe and especially the Americas which was not only traumatically damaging for the people, but was also seen as a threat to the nation's strength in an era of raging nationalism.[113]

An exposition in Palermo could therefore create momentum for the local economy and consequently also have an impact on the local society. It could represent a redeeming moment for Sicily and Southern Italy at large, in which to legitimize this macro-region's presence on the national panorama with a renewed, optimistic enthusiasm. Yet, skepticism in that sense was expressed in the Parliament already in 1889, when deputy Romualdo Bonfadini declared: "[the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce] pagava tanto di indennità e sussidi alle Esposizioni di Bologna e Palermo e di altri luoghi; Esposizioni le quali finiscono sempre lasciando il tempo che trovano; e lasciando in condizioni peggiori quelle regioni, che sostengono spese non lievi per farle."[114]

The clash between enthusiastic expectations for the event and skepticism, together with the overall negative evaluations of the Exposition, will be one of the recurring themes in this chapter. Musical events organized for the Exposition were profoundly affected by such discrepancy. At the same time, negative evaluations need to be understood as an expression of the point of view of specific commentators, with their personal interests and biases. Taking such biases into account, and analyzing the discourses appeared in the press of that time, I will explain how a national exposition and its musical events could help create a sense of belonging to the nation in such a critical place as Palermo.

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[111] See Piero Bevilacqua, "La questione meridionale nell'analisi dei meridionalisti", in *Lezioni sul meridionalismo*, ed. Sabino Cassese (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2016), 15–28; and Francesco Barbagallo, *La questione italiana*.

[112] Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius. Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002); John Dickie, *Darkest Italy. The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860–1900* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1999).

[113] Piero Bevilacqua, Andreina De Clementi and Emilio Franzina, eds., *Storia dell'emigrazione italiana. 2 vols.* (Roma: Donzelli, 2001–2002).

[114] "[The Ministrer of Agriculture and Commerce] paid allowances and subsidies to the Expositions of Bologna and Palermo and other places; Expositions that do not have any effect; and that leave in worse conditions those regions that spend not little money to make them." Archivio Storico della Camera dei Deputati, Atti parlamentari, Legislatura XVI, 3° sessione, discussioni, tornata 23 febbraio 1889, 653.

In particular, I will show how the major actors in this process of legitimization were the Palermo aristocracy and the entrepreneurs connected to it. This will be apparent from the description of the music pavilion of the Exposition and of the most representative event created for the Exposition, the inaugural concert of the great music hall — the *grande sala delle feste*. Then, I will comment on the opera season organized during the Exposition, to understand how musical theater contributed to the success of the celebrations and at the same time allowed for the people in Palermo to take part in ongoing transnational trends that ideally made them closer to modern, more developed Northern Italy and Europe. Finally, I will illustrate how specifically Sicilian folklore was commodified during the Exposition, where pioneering ethnographic studies were transformed into an object to be consumed by the visitors coming from the mainland and belonging to a mostly aristocratic or high bourgeois milieu.

Palermo 1891–92 and the legacy of National Expositions

In order to understand how and to what extent Palermo 1891–92 could participate in the making of Italy's modern nation-state, it will be useful to see how contemporary observers looked at this event, and how this event was inscribed in the legacy of former Italian national expositions. A commentary about the celebrations in Palermo found its place on the pages of the official gazette from the Exposition, *Palermo e l'Esposizione Nazionale del 1891–92. Cronaca illustrata*,[115] published by Treves brothers in Milan starting from February 1891. Long before the official opening of the Exposition, Treves's *Cronaca illustrata* started publishing articles concerning the building of the pavilions, giving insights about the genesis of the whole enterprise, and also providing explanations of the economic objectives and the larger purpose of the Exposition. Treves's *Cronaca illustrata* is therefore a precious source not only to document the activities organized in Palermo, but also to understand what contemporary observers thought were the aims of the Exposition, and how these were presented to the public.

A long article devoted to previous Italian national expositions, called "Le esposizioni tenute finora" and signed by Raffaello Barbiera, is particularly revealing in this sense.[116] This article

[115] *Palermo e l'Esposizione Nazionale del 1891–92. Cronaca illustrata* (Milano, Fratelli Treves, 1892).
[116] "The expositions up to now." Raffaello Barbiera, "Le esposizioni tenute finora," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 11, 14, 19, 35, 38, 46–47.

focuses especially on the first two Italian national expositions, Florence 1861 and Milan 1881, highlighting the various motivations and characteristics differentiating them from one another. The aim was not only to describe these expositions and the events and documents connected to them, but also to historicize the 1891–92 exposition, to build a narrative spanning over twenty years that would explain the role of, and the need for, such an event in Palermo — a city off the most relevant industrial and commercial paths, with connections to the mainland.

Florence 1861: "L'affermazione più precisa dell'unità d'Italia"

In the article "Le esposizioni tenute finora", the largest section was devoted to the first National Exposition, held in Florence in Fall 1861.[117] Starting on September 15, this exposition was originally meant to last less than two months, but its success was so impressive that its gates remained open one month longer, until December 8. During these extra weeks, tickets were sold at an increasingly reduced price — in order to allow larger portions of the population to visit the pavilions — until the very last weeks, when entrance to the Exposition grounds was granted free of charge. The tones with which Barbiera described this exposition are extremely enthusiastic, expressing an appreciation for the pioneering endeavor of the first event of its kind in the unified nation-state. At a first glance, Florence 1861 represented fundamentally the tangible, commercial consequence of the political Unification process. To validate this observation, Barbiera quoted intellectual and jurist Luigi Luzzatti, who commented:

> La prima esposizione di Firenze è stata il plebiscito economico della patria, [...] l'affermazione dell'unità materiale dopo la politica. Quella esposizione, primo e fedele riflesso delle nostre vocazioni economiche, riuscì bene non ostante le non lievi imperfezioni: imperocché fu una statistica in atto delle forze produttive del paese. [...] si respira un certo candore di entusiasmo giovanile, e vi palpita l'augurio della grandezza economica della patria.[118]

[117] The richest source of documentation for this exposition is: *La esposizione italiana del 1861. Giornale con 190 incisioni e con gli atti ufficiali della R. Commissione* (Firenze: Andrea Bettini, 1861–62).

[118] "The first exposition in Florence was Italy's financial plebiscite, [...] the affirmation of material unity after the political one. That exposition, first and faithful reflection of our economic vocations, turned out well despite not minor imperfections: for it was a statistic in action of the country's productive forces. [...] one breaths a certain candor of juvenile enthusiasm, and there quivers the wish of the homeland's economic greatness." Barbiera, "Le esposizioni," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 11.

In the words of Luzzatti, the Exposition had not been free of flaws, but it had had the virtue of providing an accurate portrait of Italian (sometimes limited) industrial development. This was actually the purpose imagined also by Quintino Sella, soon-to-become Minister of Finance of the newborn Kingdom of Italy, when in 1860 he encouraged the Government of Tuscany to undertake the necessary measures to give birth to the Exposition: "Verrà opportunissima una Esposizione generale del Regno nel 1861 — perché questo regno possa presentarsi convenientemente a quella universale di Londra già decretata per l'anno successivo."[119] Therefore, the Exposition would contribute to the assessment of the conditions of Italian industry on the verge of an extremely important date, the World Exposition in London. This evaluation, in view of an international event where Italian industries would be compared to other national ones, was considered equally as crucial as the promotion of agreements and sales between the companies participating in the Exposition. This implied that the Exposition had not only a commercial, materialistic value, but also a political one. The Italian industries gathered in Florence had to prove adequate for international standards, so that the newborn nation-state could gain legitimacy on the London platform and be appropriately represented along with other European and world powers.

The political value of Florence 1961 was relevant also for Italy's internal self-representation, to the point that Barbiera considered it a pivotal moment in the actual making of the new nation-state:

> Quella prima Esposizione nazionale, oltre allo scopo economico, ne aveva un altro: il politico. Essa era l'affermazione più precisa dell'unità d'Italia; affermazione con un *fatto*, per quel tempo grandioso, che provava come le forze italiane si fossero unite ormai in un fascio. La mancanza delle provincie italiane non redente ancora, era in quella Mostra più che mai sentita; e gli esuli di quelle provincie concorrendo al lavoro materiale dell'Esposizione volevano dire che Roma e Venezia dovevano al più presto far parte della novella vita italiana [...].[120]

[119] "A general Exposition of the Kingdom in 1861 will be most suitable — so that this kingdom could present itself appropriately to the universal one in London already programmed for the following year". Barbiera, "Le esposizioni," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 11.

[120] "That first national Exposition, beyond the economic objective, had another goal: a political one. It was the most precise affirmation of Italian unification; an affirmation through a fact, magnificent for that time, proving how Italian forces had at that point united together. The absence of Italian provinces not yet redeemed, was more than suffered in that Exposition; and the exiles from those provinces, collaborating to the material work of the Exposition, wanted to say that Rome and Venice should become part of Italian story as soon as possible." Barbiera, "Le esposizioni," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 11.

In other words, the Exposition was not just a symbol of political unity, but an event that tangibly contributed to constitute the nation-state. The Italian term "fatto", which I emphasized in the text, reinforces this interpretation, meaning both an occurrence ("a matter of fact"), but also the result of an action, as the past participle of the verb *fare*, to do. According to Barbiera, the first National Exposition was therefore intended as a political action, and not only on the part of the organizers, but carried out also with the help of the exiles coming from the cities not yet annexed to the kingdom — Venice and Rome.[121] In 1861, when Unification had not yet been completed, the participation of those exiles to the construction works for the Exposition's buildings signaled their will to participate in the making of political Italy. In fact, this was already the interpretation of the Florentine Exposition's most thorough commentator, economist Francesco Protonotari, who in 1867 published his *Relazione generale*, an all-encompassing review of the Exposition: "Così la ragion vera e sovrana [...] [dell'Esposizione] fu essenzialmente politica. Era un gran *fatto*, non pure dell'istoria industriale ed artistica, ma sì anche della civile d'Italia [...]."[122]

Milan 1881: "Il risorgimento industriale della patria"

The Exposition in Florence was praised mainly for its political significance, but twenty years later the conditions were favorable for Italian industry to really gather momentum from another national Exposition. In 1881, it was the turn of Milan, a city at the forefront of industrialization and productivity in the country. Unlike the exceptional case of Florence, where the Government had proposed to launch the Exposition, in Milan the Exposition was conceived by the initiative of local entrepreneurs and investors, who then asked for state support. The trust in Milan's capability was best expressed by king Umberto while of bestowing his patronage on the initiative, on December 11, 1880, as he allegedly stated: "Ho fiducia nell'esito, Milano riesce sempre."[123] In fact, the Exposition opened its gates on May 5, 1881, and, exceptionally, all the pavilions were completed by the time of the inauguration.

[121] Venice, Veneto provinces and Mantua where annexed to the Italian Kingdom only in 1866, whereas Rome only in 1870.
[122] "Therefore, the real and main reason [...] [for the Exposition] was essentially political. It was a great *fact*, not only in the industrial and artistic history, but also in the civil one [...]." The emphasis is mine. Francesco Protonotari, *Esposizione italiana tenuta in Firenze nel 1861. Relazione generale* (Firenze: G. Barbera, 1867), 9.
[123] "I have faith in the outcome, Milan always makes it." Barbiera, "Le esposizioni," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 38.

Furthermore, the original industrial exposition had been matched also by an artistic exposition, and finally by a musical one.

In his article for Treves's *Cronaca illustrata*, Barbiera noted: "La stampa italiana dapprima, e poi l'estera, intonano un coro di lodi per l'Esposizione in generale. Il risorgimento industriale della patria viene, per la prima volta affermato."[124] Once again, as denounced by the choice of the word "risorgimento," the Exposition was seen as the commercial and industrial component of the country's Unification after the political one — as "Risorgimento" was also the complex social and political movement that inspired Unification. And yet, from the perspective of Barbiera writing at the time of the Exposition in Palermo, the scarce participation of Southern enterprises cast a shadow over the undisputed success of Milan 1881: "[Milano 1881] ha uno scopo puramente industriale. [...] Eppure, non tutte le province risposero collo stesso slancio alla pacifica gara. Prima di tutto si osserva che il Mezzogiorno è poco rappresentato."[125] As the *questione meridionale* had highlighted the coexistence of two different "Italies" in the newborn nation-state on a political and social level, so did the lack of Southern exhibitors at Milan 1881 on the industrial one. In Barbiera's narration, it was therefore clear that an exposition in Palermo would finally compensate for the lack of Southern industries in the previous national Expositions.

Ten years after Milan 1881, the Palermo Exposition came in a moment in which Italian economy was marked by severe protectionism and a (losing) tariff war with France. As deputy Giuseppe Marcora reminded in his address to the Parliament, the approval of the Exposition project came: "alla vigilia della scadenza di trattati della Francia con la Germania e con gli altri maggiori Stati d'Europa, e dell'eventuale inizio di nuovi rapporti internazionali commerciali."[126] At the same time, Marcora mentioned also the necessity to create an occasion for Southern industries to showcase their production, and the need to create more agreements and collaboration between Northern and Southern industries. Yet, the choice of Palermo had also a symbolic meaning. As senator Alessandro Rossi suggested in an address to the Senate:

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[124] "The Italian press first, and then the foreign one, praise the Exposition in general. The industrial resurgence of the homeland is asserted for the first time." Barbiera, "Le esposizioni," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 47.

[125] "[Milan 1881] has a purely industrial scope. [...] And yet, not all the provinces responded with the same enthusiasm to the peaceable competition. First of all, we notice that the *Mezzogiorno* (the South) is little represented". Barbiera, "Le esposizioni," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 47.

[126] "On the eve of the expiry of treaties between France and Germany and other major European States, and of the possible begninning of new international commercial treaties." "L'esposizione di Palermo in parlamento," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 2–3: 3.

> Non sarà solamente il desiderio di esaminare la esposizione [...] quello che attirerà buon numero d'isolani e di continentali a Palermo. Le memorie storiche, i monumenti di quella illustre città, la parte gloriosa presa da essa nelle battaglie della nostra indipendenza, [...] le impressioni lasciatevi da Garibaldi e dai suoi Mille.[127]

In fact, the conspicuous presence of monuments and historical architectures in Palermo and Sicily, and the imagination of glorious past eras they produced in the modern visitor, was in the spotlight in the Exposition. The highlighting of local history was also part of a broader trend promoting the establishment of institutions promoting the study of local, regional history (the Società di Storia Patria).[128]

If National Expositions in Italy, starting from the first one in Florence, were meant as events that would not only represent, but contribute to creating the nation-state, one has to wonder what Palermo 1891–92 contributed to the making of Italy. From the governmental debates quoted above, it appears clear that the Exposition in Palermo was based on a triple need: to present the nation in view of an ever more challenging international market, to consolidate Southern industries and their relationship with the Northerners, and to celebrate Southern culture and its contribution to the national Unification. To understand how such goals were achieved, it is necessary to retrace the origins of this Exposition, while a brief discussion of its architecture and a detailed mapping of its musical objects and the events connected to it will help to define what articulation of the nation-state on the one hand, and of Southern culture on the other, was showcased at the Exposition.

[127] It will not be only the desire to visit the exposition [...] to attract a good number of islanders and continentals to Palermo. The historical memories, the monuments of that illustrious city, its glorious role in the battles for our independence, [...] the impressions left there by Garibaldi and his Thousand". "L'esposizione di Palermo al Senato," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 3–4, 6: 3.

[128] Agostino Bistarelli, ed., *La storia della storia patria. Società, deputazioni e istituti storici nazionali nella costruzione dell'Italia* (Roma: Viella, 2012).

Palermo 1892–92: origins, plan, and structure

Origins of the Exposition

Despite the relevant economic and political premises expressed in the Government, it is still not entirely clear how the idea of a National Exposition in Palermo came into being on a local level. Surprisingly enough, on Treves's *Cronaca illustrata* we read that the proposal was first introduced by an artist, and not an entrepreneur — although the same had happened in Bologna, where the International Music Exhibition had been conceived prior to the regional industrial one. In 1887, *palermitano* sculptor Ettore Ximenes was attending the National Art Exhibition in Venice, the first example of what would later become the renowned Biennale, and apparently it was him who proposed to organize a similar event in Palermo, suggesting that the art exhibition could be accompanied also by an industrial one.[129]

From the author of the Treves gazette, we learn that one year later Ignazio Sanfilippo — indeed the correspondent for the daily newspaper *Il Giornale di Sicilia* from the Exposition in Bologna — informed about the idea of a possible exposition to be organized in Palermo, proposed by "un'autorevole persona (che non nominò forse perché non esisteva)."[130] The news, published on May 13, 1888, resulted the following day in a list of patrons and subscribers enthusiastically offering to contribute to the endeavor. Whether the birth of the Exposition as an artistic one should be held true or not, the fact that the official gazette reported this anecdote is an equally telling hint to the predominant role of the artistic sections of Palermo 1891–92 if compared to the industrial ones.

In the following summer 1889, all the necessary steps for the organization of the Exposition had been undertaken. The proposal was formally voted at the local Circolo Artistico, a club which included the most notable men of Palermo among its members. A General Committee was constituted, and Paolo Beccadelli of Bologna, Prince of Camporeale, was elected as its president. A distinguished politician, soon-to-become a senator of the Kingdom, the Prince of Camporeale would also shortly serve as *sindaco* (mayor) of Palermo between 1900 and 1901. At the same time, an Executive Committee was constituted, and King Umberto guaranteed its patronage over the endeavor.

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[129] G. Ragusa Moleti, "Come nacque l'Esposizione," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 2.
[130] "A distinguished person (whose name [Sanfilippo] did not tell because they may not exist)." Ragusa Moleti, "Come nacque l'Esposizione", *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 2.

Through the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, the Government allocated one million liras to increase the initial budget of liras 1,350,000, collected among Sicilian municipalities and private patrons and investors in Sicily. The sum from the Government was significantly higher than the public funding for the National Exposition in Milan (500,000 liras, the same for Bologna 1888), and equal to that of the National Exposition of Turin 1884. Yet, this funding was not the only way in which Rome intervened to support the Exposition. Special fares on train and ship tickets with reductions up to 70% of the original price were granted for the visitors, who would be attracted to Palermo by the mild winter weather. In fact, unlike its national predecessors and generally all other great expositions, the Exposition in Palermo took place during winter- and springtime, between November 15, 1891 and June 5, 1892. And if tourism to the South, and especially to the sea, was becoming more and more popular during winter for medical reasons, the organizers of the Exposition did not consider the eventuality that the sea conditions during winter would also affect navigation, a detail partly responsible for the overall underwhelming attendance of the event.

When the Exposition opened its gates, nonetheless, the national newspaper *Il Fanfulla* exalted the flow of Sicilian and foreign visitors attending the events:

> La mostra è visitata giornalmente da migliaia di persone. [...] i visitatori, peraltro, sono quasi tutti siciliani. L'isola manda a Palermo un larghissimo contingente, mentre quello del resto d'Italia è relativamente scarso. Eppure in questa stagione Palermo è un vero incanto, specialmente per i continentali. [...] Pare che la voce di questo straordinario splendore di cielo e di tepore di clima si sia sparso al di là delle Alpi, poiché qui giungono ogni giorno numerosi Inglesi, Tedeschi e Americani. Non ne avevo mai veduti tanti come in quest'anno, e tutti trovano comodi alloggi negli alberghi [...].[131]

Apparently, the Exposition did not attract many visitors from continental Italy, and yet many foreigners took the chance offered by the special train and ship fares to enjoy a trip to the island. In particular, train tickets to Italy which were sold in all the major European stations acquired a longer duration validity if associated with tickets to Palermo.[132] However, the vast

[131] "The Exposition is visited daily by thousands of people. [...] almost all the visitors, furthermore, are Sicilians.The island is sending to Palermo a large contingent, while that of the rest of Italy is relatively scarce. And yet in this season Palermo is a real charm, especially for the continentals. [...] Apparently, the fame of the extraordinary brightness of the sky and of the mild climate reached beyond the Alps, since every day many English, Germans and Americans arrive here. I had never seen so many as this year, and all of them find a comfortable lodging in the hotels [...]."Quoted in "I giudizi della stampa," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 107.

[132] "I visitatori dell'Esposizione," *L'Esposizione Nazionale Illustrata di Palermo 1891–92* (Milano: Sonzogno, 1892), 40.

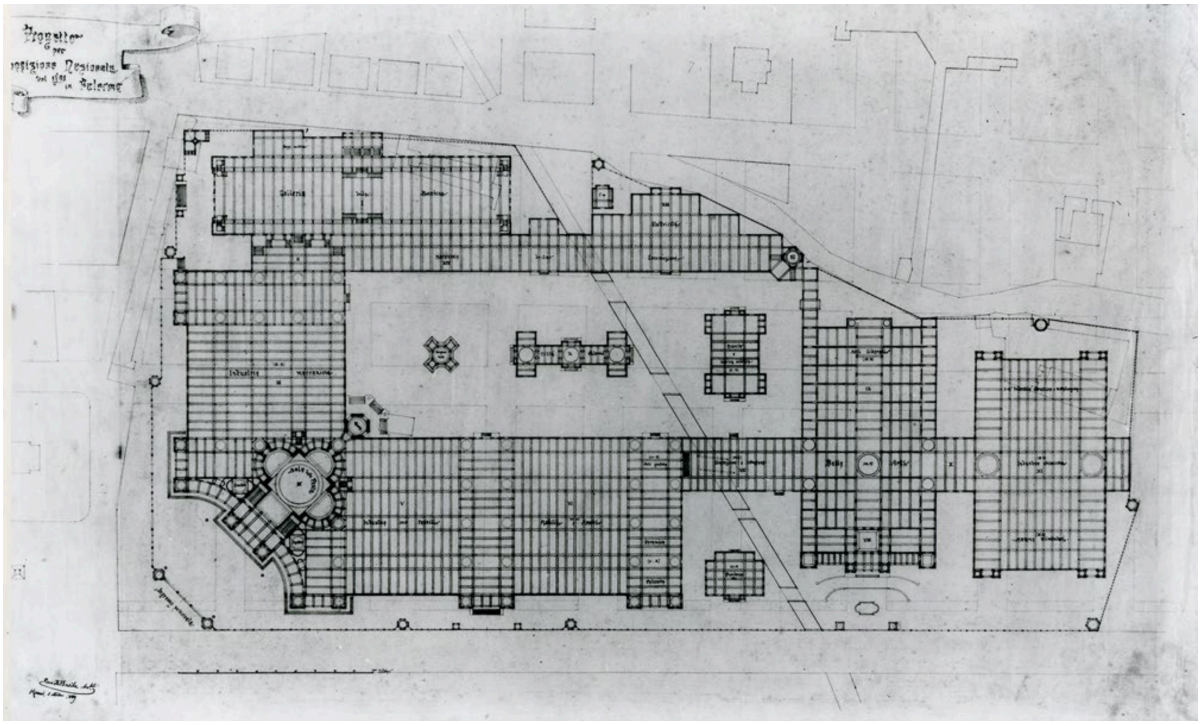

FIG. 6: Project of the National Exposition in Palermo 1891–92. On the bottom-left corner, piazza Castelnuovo with the main entrance and the *grande sala delle feste*; on the bottom side, the isolated building of the *Café chantant* and, to the right, a small fountain in front of the the Fine Arts pavilion containing the music exhibition.

majority of the visitors consisted actually of Sicilians, who, while experiencing all the wonders the Exposition had to offer, could also see Palermo under a new light.

The Exposition's plan and structure

The Exposition area had been prepared starting from the park annexed to an old private villa, a plot of land known as the "firriato di Villafranca". It was located north to the city center, outside of the old defense walls, in an area that in the second half of the nineteenth century had enjoyed a progressive development, with increasing residential blocks and the recent building of the Teatro Politeama. The Exposition's grounds started right from Piazza Castelnuovo, opposite to the theater, and extended up north along via Libertà until Piano delle Croci, today's Piazza Crispi. The Exposition extended also westbound along via Dante, up to today's via Villafranca.[133] The whole area was therefore at the center of Palermo's newest

[133] Rosario La Duca, "Dal Firriato di Villafranca alla Grande Esposizione," *Esposizione Nazionale del 1891/92 a Palermo*. *Kalós* 2 (1991): 3–9.

expansion. After the Exposition, it would be transformed in yet another reticulate of residential buildings that would change not only the appearance, but the very urbanistic structure and balance of the city.

The task of planning the Exposition was assigned to architect Ernesto Basile, the son of famous Giovan Battista Filippo, who had already impacted Palermo's architecture designing private wealthy villas and public parks in the city.[134] The structure conceived by Ernesto Basile for the Exposition was essentially a rectangular system of galleries meeting at the main pavilion, which was located on the corner of Piazza Castelnuovo [FIG. 6]. A railway crossed the exposition area, enabling the efficient transport of goods and material for the pavilions, and terminated in the garden of the Exposition, at which center the visitors found a great light fountain and a greenhouse with exotic plants. The facade of the main pavilion looked diagonally onto both via Libertà and via Dante, ideally welcoming the visitors coming from the city center [FIG. 7].

The style adopted by Basile has been described as an eclectic mixture of contemporary architecture taking elements from Sicilian monuments (especially from the Middle Ages), but also imitating the most famous pavilions of other International Expositions.[135] The main pavilion, which constituted the entrance to the Exposition, gave direct access to the great *sala delle feste* and to the panoramic tower, inaugurated in December 1891, and offering a view over the city, the gulf, and the surrounding mountains. The immediately accessible position of these leisure facilities was a unique case in Italian expositions: for example, in Florence 1861 the equivalent to the *sala delle feste*, the *sala del trono*, was located within in the Exposition garden, an area that remained at least at first secluded, despite its centrality in the Exposition's plan, while in Bologna 1888 the *salone dei concerti* was settled in a prominent location, but only at the back of the music exhibition, and serving only the function of a concert hall.

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[134] Giuseppe Di Benedetto, *Palermo tra Ottocento e Novecento. La città fuori le mura* (Palermo: Grafill, 2009) and Ettore Sessa, "Giovan Battista Filippo Basile" and "Ernesto Basile," in *Collezioni Basile e Ducrot. Mostra documentaria degli archivi*, ed. Eliana Mauro and Ettore Sessa (Bagheria: Plumelia, 2014), 9–28 and 29–74.

[135] Fabrizio Agnello and Mariangela Licari, "La ricostruzione della città perduta: l'Esposizione Nazionale di Palermo (1891-1892)," in *La ricostruzione congetturale dell'architettura. Storia, metodi, esperienze applicative*, ed. Nunzio Marsiglia (Palermo: Grafill, 2013), 145–164; Eliana Mauro, "Palermo 1891–1892. IV Esposizione Nazionale Italiana," in *Le città dei prodotti. Imprenditoria, architettura e arti nelle grandi esposizioni*, ed. Eliana Mauro and Ettore Sessa (Palermo: Grafill, 2009), 123–48; Nicola Giuliano Leone, "Gli ultimi acuti dell'Ottocento nell'architettura dell'Esposizione," *Esposizione Nazionale del 1891/92 a Palermo*. *Kalós* 2 (1991): 10–15.

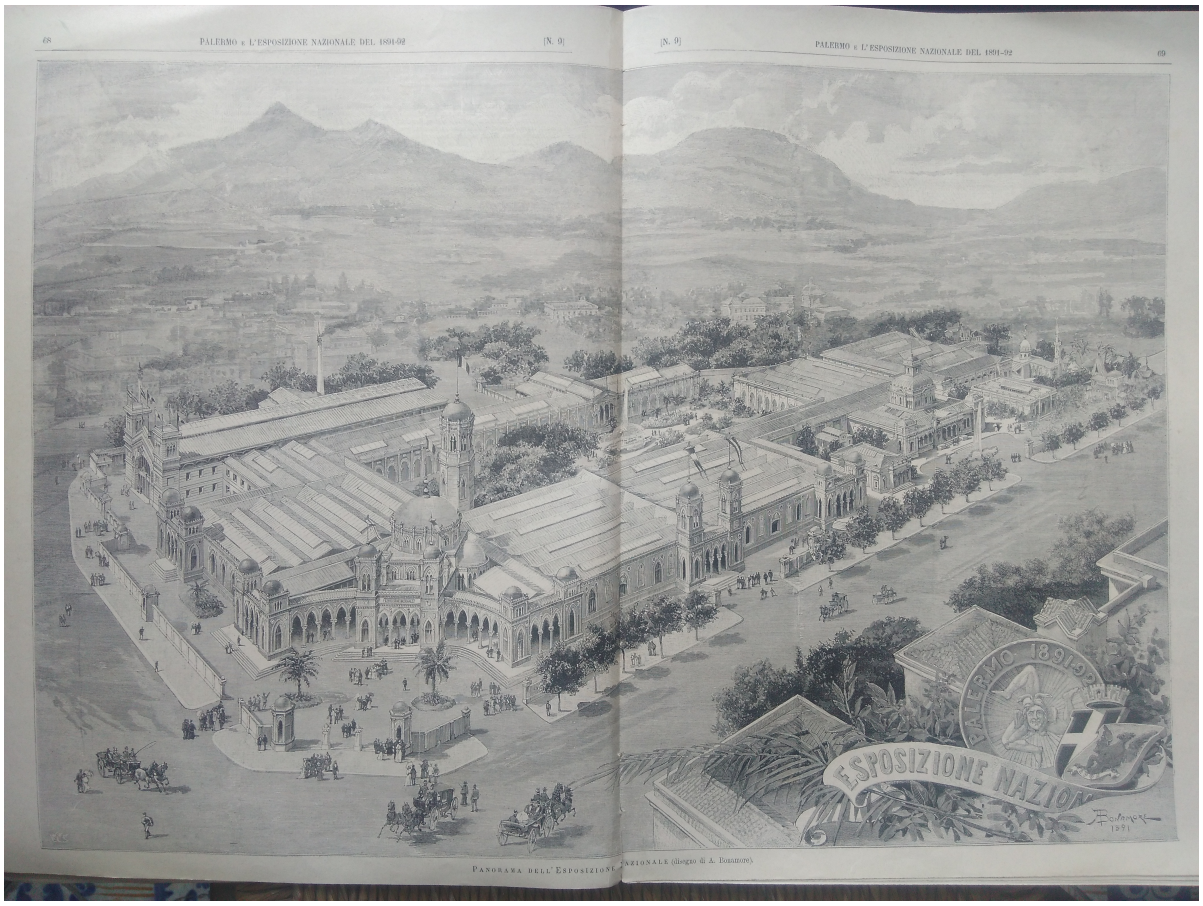

FIG. 7: View of the National Exposition in Palermo 1891–92. On the front, the main entrance, the dome of the *grande sala delle feste*, and the panoramic tower. In the center of the court, the large electric fountain. On the right, the Decorative Arts pavilion, the *Café chantant*, the Fine Arts pavilion with a smaller fountain in front of its entrance, and finally the *Caffè arabo* and the huts of the *Villaggio eritreo*.

Palermo's Exposition was also described as the most complete of all national Expositions in Italy up to that moment, with all the branches of the industry represented in the *galleria del lavoro*. The *galleria* featured mechanical industry, chemical industry, textiles, and many other, including specific industries characteristic of Sicilian economy. Some of these were Sicilian sumac (a local spice), the tuna-fishing industry, the sulfur extraction, and of course a pavilion for the Florio, Palermo's most influential family of entrepreneurs, active in many economic sectors including foundry, ships, and wine.

The liberal arts represented another equal component to this Exposition, with a specific and substantial section devoted to contemporary art, including painting, sculpture, architecture, and music. Another specificity of this exposition, emphasizing Sicilian culture despite the national scope of the event, was the exhibition devoted to Sicilian folklore, and the exhibition

devoted to monumental Sicily — that is, a collection of scale models and reproductions of the most renowned Sicilian monuments and architectures.

Finally, Palermo 1891–92 was the first Italian Exposition to ever showcase a pavilion dedicated to Eritrea, which had been declared Italy's first colony the previous year, after a gradual process of military occupation started in 1982.[136] In particular, this pavilion reenacted a typical Eritrean village, where dozens of Eritreans — both Christians and Muslims — had been moved from their country to the Exposition, in order to let the visitors observe their traditional dwellings, their garments, and their habits. The tragic conditions in which the Eritreans were forced, sharing the limited fenced area of their village and living in shelters that could not really protect from the relatively low temperatures of a Sicilian winter, caused the outburst of many polemics on the newspapers of the time. Despite the protests, the fictional Eritrean village was then replicated fifteen years later, at the International Exposition of Milan in 1906.

Leisure and tourism in Palermo

In contrast to these debates, a light atmosphere dominated over the Exposition, encouraged by the presence of a *café chantant*, an Arab bazar, and by the prominence given to the *sala delle feste* at the very entrance of the Exposition grounds. This was the atmosphere described in the columns of another press organ regularly commenting the Exposition, Sonzogno's *L'Esposizione Nazionale Illustrata di Palermo*, 1891–92:[137]

> L'Esposizione di Palermo, posta quasi in mezzo alla parte nuova della città, a due passi da via Macqueda, la strada più frequentata della città, raccolta in un locale unico, a guisa d'immenso e splendido *bazar*, creato dalla fata più ricca di fantasia e più generosa d'animo, è divenuto il ritrovo di quanto Palermo ha di più elegante, mondano, aristocratico.[138]

In fact, a whole leisure industry was developing around the Exposition, focusing on services provided to the visitors. As we have seen, tourists could enjoy the hospitality of newly-built hotels close to the Exposition grounds. Furthermore, the leisure attractions, including the electric lift climbing the panoramic tower, were one of the main reasons why visitors returned

[136] Regio decreto di legge 6592 (1 gennaio 1890).
[137] *L'Esposizione Nazionale Illustrata di Palermo 1891–92* (Milano: Sonzogno, 1892).
[138] "The Exposition in Palermo, located almost in the middle of the new part of the city, close to via Macqueda, the city's most attended street, gathered in a single room, similar to an immense and splendid *bazar* created by a fairy with the richest fantasy and the most generous spirit, became the gathering of what is most elegant, social, aristocratic in Palermo." "L'animazione e le feste nell'Esposizione," *L'Esposizione Nazionale Illustrata*, 64.

to the Exposition many times. As *Il Fanfulla* observed, the leisure opportunities were also the most profitable enterprises at the Exposition:

> Ormai anche i palermitani hanno preso l'abitudine di passare la giornata all'Esposizione: basta dire che il Romano, che tiene il *Restaurant*, incassa giornalmente 2000 lire, le Montagne russe dalle 7 alle 800, e così pure il Labirinto e il Carosello dànno cospicui introiti.[139]

Therefore, the Exposition was meant to foster not only the exchange of commodities between Sicily and continental Italy, but also the services that an emerging leisure and tourism industry provided to visitors of Palermo.

A playground for music amateurs

The music exhibition: "una pleiade di mandolini"

Entertainment was at the center of the Exposition in Palermo, and music constituted a good portion of the kinds of entertainment presented. The specific *commissione* curating the musical section of the Exposition, which belonged to the larger contemporary art section, was supported and funded by the Ministry of Public Education. The Ministry was helping with practical issues, for example inviting all the music conservatories in the kingdom to contribute with information and shipping of precious documents and old manuscripts to Palermo, clearly with the intent to replicate what had been made in previous expositions and especially in Bologna.

In the end, the musical section consisted of an exhibition of musical instruments and books, located in the larger gallery of the Fine Arts pavilion, overlooking via Libertà. The idea, in the case of music objects as in that of any other technology exhibited in the industrial pavilions, was to illustrate the newest discoveries and to showcase the most important brands from all around Italy. The collection consisted mainly of pianos, string and bow instruments, percussions, and scores and handbooks for the print industry. The anonymous commentator from Treves's *Cronaca Illustrata* exalted the developments in music instruments by playfully addressing Euterpe, the Greek muse of music:

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[139] "By now also the people from Palermo have got used to spend the day Exposition: it will suffice to say that the Roman, who runs the Restaurant, collects 2,000 liras daily, the Rollecoaster from 700 to 800, and the Labirynth and the Carousel provide much income as well." Quoted in "I giudizi della stampa," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 107.

> Entriamo nella galleria sacra a quella Dea, che [...] ha il diritto di presiedere alle cose della Musica. Euterpe mi guidi. Ma veramente io penso che quella Dea non ha competenza alcuna a parlare di violini, di mandole, di pianoforti. Ai tempi dei tempi, [...] lire, cetre, [...] sistri, cimbali [...] erano gli strumenti di cui quella gentile Musa poteva intendersi bene. Ma qui in questa galleria destinata alla musica moderna ci son tante e tante cose, di cui Euterpe non può avere notizia alcuna.[140]

The article continued with an informative list of brands and artisans' names which the author considered to be the best and most relevant. In this sense, Treves's *Cronaca Illustrata* served at best its function of official press organ of the Exposition. Yet, the same gallery was described in completely different tones when seen from the perspective of another, external commentator. Writing for music publisher Ricordi's *La Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* shortly after the inauguration, music critic and composer Pietro Floridia praised the architecture by Basile, but criticized the musical exhibition:

> Diamo invece un rapido sguardo all'architettura del Palazzo dell'Esposizione, lavoro meraviglioso, che di colpo vi trasporta in pieno Oriente [...]. Alla bellezza esterna dell'edificio, corrisponde pienamente l'eleganza, più che l'eleganza: il lusso dell'interno, qualche cosa di superiore a tutte le Esposizioni italiane da me finora visitate, qualche cosa di sorprendente addirittura. [...] Per la musica pochino. [...] Nel riparto pianoforti, l'Esposizione mi è sembrata finora piuttosto meschina, consistendo in una trentina di pianoforti, per la maggior parte verticali. Mi si assicura che questa parte dell'Esposizione sia ancora incompleta e che molti degli strumenti esposti non sono ancora rimessi a posto dopo il viaggio e l'umidità.[141]

The exhibition, therefore, appeared incomplete at its opening, as it had been for many pavilions of most expositions in Italy, including Florence 1861, Turin 1884, Bologna 1888 — and with the notable exception of Milan 1881, which opened its gates completely furnished. Yet,

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[140] "Let us enter in the gallery sacred to that Goddess, that [...] has the right to preside over the things of Music. Euterpe shall lead me. But actually, I think that that Goddess does not have any competence to talk about violins, mandolas, pianos. Way back in time, [...] liras, citharas, [...] sistra, cimbaloms [...] were the instruments in which that gentle Muse was competent. But here in this gallery devoted to modern music there are many and many things, of which Euterpe cannot have any knowledge." "La mostra musicale," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 178–179: 178.

[141] "Let us take a quick look to the architecture of the Exposition's palace, a wonderful work, that suddenly takes you to the East [...]. The outer beauty of the building is fully matched by the inner elegance, more than elegance: the luxury, something superior to all the Italian Expositions that I have visited so far, something even surprising. [...] There is little about music. [...] In the piano department, the Exposition seemed to me quite petty up until now, consisting in about thirty pianos, most of which upright ones. I have been assured that this part of the Exposition is still incomplete, and that many of the instruments exhibited have not been restored yet after the journey and the humidity." Pietro Floridia, "Corriere musicale dell'esposizione di Palermo," *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* [from now on: *GMM*] 1891, 751–752, 767, 783–784: 752.

what Floridia criticized was not just the delay in the realization of the exhibition. Rather, he complained about the selection of objects exhibited:

> [...] una pleiade di mandolini, liuti, mandóle [*sic*], ecc., ecc. [...] Gli armoniums sono appena una decina: non ho potuto esaminarli, urtato dal continuo suono di pianini ed organetti a cilindro, aristons, ecc., ecc., strumenti non di arte ma di tortura, ed i quali, secondo me, non sono una manifestazione artistica e quindi non dovrebbero aver posto in una Esposizione artistica.[142]

And if comments were negative for the instrument section of the exhibition, the correspondent of music publisher Ricordi did not spare his harsh criticism for the music prints and manuscripts either, with the inevitable exception of Ricordi's own collection, praised for its quality and winner of the special award of the exhibition:

> Di interessante all'Esposizione musicale abbiamo l'Esposizione speciale della vostra Casa Editrice, i cui prodotti sono molto ammirati per la bellezza e la nitidezza dei tipi, nonché per la straordinaria eleganza, e per lo *chic* delle artistiche copertine. [...] Non so nemmeno comprendere una certa Esposizione di pezzi, in gran parte ballabili o romanze da camera, per pianoforte, per pianoforte e canto, per Banda, partiture di opere vecchie ed incognite, opuscoli che si atteggiano a grandi metodi; tutta roba manoscritta in massima o stampata da sconosciute Case editrici; lavori che, salvo pochissime eccezioni, accusano l'ignoranza pretenziosa dei loro autori, e che sono stati ammessi dalla Commissione musicale o per leggerezza, che trovo ingiustificabile, o per ragioni di amicizie personali, che non dovrebbero esistere quando c'entra di mezzo la dignità.[143]

Despite the negative comments by Floridia, it appears clear that the music instrument and score exhibition was not simply a casual assembly of objects lacking any hint of what we could call "high-brow" music. In fact, mechanical pianos, mandolins, brass band music, *romanze*, and music teaching methods pointed specifically at what appeared to be the goal of the exhibition: to appeal to the taste of music enthusiasts and amateurs who indulged themselves with playing instruments and singing.

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[142] "[...] a pleiad of mandolins, lutes, mandolas, etc., etc. [...] The harmoniums are just about ten: I could not examine them, disturbed by the continuous sound of little mechanical pianos and barrel organs, aristons, etc., etc., instruments not of art but of torture, and which, in my opinion, are not an artistic manifestation, and therefore should not find a place in an artistic Exhibition." Pietro Floridia, "Corriere musicale," 752.

[143] "Of particular interest in the musical Exhibition is the special Exhibition of your Publishing House, which products are much admired for the beauty and sharpness of the types, as well as for the extraordinary elegance, and for the chic of artistic book covers. [...] I cannot even understand a certain Exhibition of pieces, for the most part dance music or chamber *romanze*, for piano, voice and piano, Fanfare, scores of old and unknown operas, booklets that pose as great methods; all stuff mostly manuscript or printed by obscure publishing Houses; works that, with very few exceptions, suffer the pretentious ignorance of their authors, and that were accepted by the musical Commission for levity, which I find unjustifiable, or for reasons of personal friendship, which should not exist when dignity is at stake". Pietro Floridia, "Corriere musicale," 752.

Music performances during the Exposition

If we consider the offering of musical performances taking place in the *sala delle feste*, it is clear that the Exposition was conceived as a playground for music amateurs. It presented a blend of high-brow and low-brow music, with a much stronger focus on the latter — generally cheaper, and more successful among the audience. The *sala* was in fact more of a dance salon than a concert hall — unlike the one in Bologna. It was characterized by a square base enhanced by three additional recesses, each accommodating a balcony for the audience. This almost perfectly symmetrical structure required a stage to be installed every time a concert was given in the hall, but at the same time it created the perfect wide space for a ball. The light was then ensured through the installation of several electric lamps, further embellishing the interior decorations. The Exposition's opening ceremony took place in the *sala*, followed a few days later by the inauguration concert of the *sala* itself. Many more concerts were scheduled to take place in the *sala*, among which soloist recitals — for example that of violin *virtuosa* Metaura Torricelli — and a great gala in white. A concert of the Bologna Orchestra directed by Giuseppe Martucci and the so called "Tzigane concert" constituted direct references to the model offered by the International Music Exhibition in Bologna — ironically including the originally unintended traditional Hungarian ensemble. Unlike Bologna, in Palermo the presence of folk music was also highlighted by a performance of a Neapolitan *tarantella* ensemble.[144] The dates of these concerts are collected in TABLE 3, although it was not possible to retrieve many of them.[145] This is due partly to the lack of available sources, partly to the fact that some of them were also canceled for financial or organizational reasons, and therefore we do not find any mention of them among the reports and reviews in Treves's *Cronaca illustrata*.

[144] "La cupola della grande sala delle feste," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 55.

[145] Most of the periodicals documenting the musical events at the Exposition are held in the Biblioteca Comunale Centrale di Casa Professa and in the Biblioteca Centrale della Regione Siciliana. By the time of the writing, the historical collection of the Biblioteca Comunale was not accessible due to lack of personnel, while nineteenth-century periodicals at the Biblioteca Regionale were not available following the infrastructural damage caused by the fire of 2015.

TABLE 3. HIGHLIGHTS OF CONCERTS AND OPERA PREMIÈRES IN PALERMO DURING THE NATIONAL EXPOSITION.

	Teatro Politeama	**Grande Sala delle Feste**	**City of Palermo**
23/05/1891	*Lohengrin*		
08/10/1891	*Otello*		
11/1891	*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*		
15/11/1891		Exposition's opening ceremony	
18/11/1891		Inauguration concert	
20/11/1891			*Fiaccolata* for the Queen's birthday (Royal Palace)
21/11/1891			*Rivista navale* (harbor)
08/12/1891	*Guglielmo Tell*		
27/12/1891	Recital Gaetano Braga (cello)		
28/12/1891	*Orfeo ed Euridice*		
early 01/1892		"Tzigane concert"	
12/01/1892	*Lucia di Lammermoor*		
17/01/1892	Last of three recitals Teresina Tua (Violin)		
20/01/1892	*Traviata*		
late 01/1892		Great gala in white	
02/02/1892	*Trovatore*		
25/02/1892	*L'ebrea* [*La juive*]		
15/03/1892	*I pescatori di perle* [*Pêcheurs de perles*]		
01/04/1892	*L'amico Fritz*		

	Teatro Politeama	Grande Sala delle Feste	City of Palermo
05/04/1892	*Ernani*		
28/04/1892	*Lohengrin*		
28 or 30/04/1892		Press Committee: *Concerto umoristico*	
late 04/1892	Recital Elena Lamiraux (violin)		
late 04/1892	Recital Enrico De Leva (piano and singers)		
24/05/1892	*Carmen*		
01/06/1892			Farewell concert for Pietro Floridia (Sala Ragona)
07/06/1892	Concert in honor of Beniamino Cesi		

Music was not confined to the Exposition area, since special programming involved also other music institutions in the city. One example was the extraordinary opera season of Teatro Politeama, which will be discussed below. Furthermore, as it results from the correspondence between the Palermo military division and the Palermo municipality preserved in the Archivio Storico Comunale, the two army bands providing music every Sunday at sunset in Piazza Sant'Oliva and in Villa Giulia engaged also in an extraordinary program at the Foro Italico and at the Exposition itself.[146] Unfortunately, the list of pieces played by the bands is not indicated in the accessible periodicals of that time. Nevertheless, it is clear that the bands' participation at the Exposition had the priority over the regular programming, and this new intense activity required a constant re-programming.

Among the many activities that involved music performances, it should be also mentioned: a *corrida* organized in May; the celebrations for the end of the Exposition, with fireworks; and a number of parties, balls, and galas. The limited resources of the city and of the organizing committee resulted in an ever-changing schedule, such as the case of the *Cavalcata storica*, a parade reenacting events and protagonists of Sicilian history. In the end, the *Cavalcata* was replaced by a more collaborative *Ballo mascherato*, a ball given on the occasion of the Prince of Savoy's visit to the Exposition, in which all the different regions and cities of Italy were invited to send some representatives dressed with traditional costumes.[147] In the words of contemporary commentators, the scarcity of money and a hurried planning could make the attractions, and the musical offering specifically, disappointing at times. From the pages of Sonzogno's *Esposizione Nazionale Illustrata*, for example, we learn that the gala in white was deserted by many of the expected guests, despite the author's remark that similar parties were extremely popular in Paris and London.[148] A major reason for disappointment was the *Teatro della varietà*, a variety theater built especially for the Exposition:

> Esternamente questo baraccone arieggia lo stile di tutti gli altri fabbricati della Mostra; ma internamente è una cosa miseranda, un deplorevole stanzone che ha tutti i requisiti per una scuderia o per un magazzino di granaglie. [...] Nei primi giorni della Mostra l'apertura di questo teatro fu

[146] Documents concerning the *Corpo di musica municipale* can be found in the Archivio Storico Comunale di Palermo, especially in the folders n. 55 "Programmi e cartelle... programmi dei vari servizi musicali. Anni 1876–1905," n. 73 "Servizi pubblici — Foro Italico. Anni 1866–97," n. 76 "Servizi pubblici. Villa Giulia. Anni 1866–92," and n. 78 "Servizi pubblici — S. Oliva e piazza Bologni. Anni 1873–1907."
[147] "Il ballo bianco non riuscito", *L'Esposizione Nazionale Illustrata*, 64
[148] "Il ballo bianco non riuscito", *L'Esposizione Nazionale Illustrata*, 64.

> messa dall'allegro Comitato fra gli spettacoli inaugurali: si credeva di entrare in uno di quegli splendidi *salons* che dal gusto moderno furono creati per poterci stare comodamente a fumare, a bere ed a sentire i gorgheggi delle più o meno spiritose canzonettiste in voga. Invece, la sera dell'inaugurazione quando il pubblico si trovò in quell'ambiente volgare e indecente, non potendo fischiare il Comitato, che aveva messo al mondo una simile mostruosità, si sfogò a fischiare le canzonettiste.[149]

Once more, the expectations of the observers surpassed the actual results. In fact, as it will be apparent when analyzing Politeama's theater opera season, the clash between expectations and realization, and the comparison between Palermo and great European capitals with a solid tradition of great expositions was one of the major themes also in the commentaries and reviews concerning art music at Palermo 1891–92.

The inauguration of the *grande sala delle feste*: "la migliore società" on display

The royal visit

November saw the official opening of the Exposition, as the royal family visited the Exposition from the 15th to the 25th. Their visit featured numerous official events: the Exposition's opening ceremony (including an address to the city), special tours of all the pavilions (particularly of the area dedicated to the Eritrean colony), and other leisure events. Among these, a special attention was devoted to the figure of Queen Margherita. A *fiaccolata* [torchlight procession] was organized on the occasion of her birthday, the night of November 20, involving all the city. The procession lasted three hours and included fanfares, military parades, and a gathering in the piazza in front of the royal Palace (*Palazzo dei Normanni*), where the crowd was greeted from the balcony by the royal couple and their son, the Prince of Naples.[150]

The cult of the royal family marked Italy during the entire kingdom of Umberto I. As remarked by Körner, Umberto's public persona did not resemble by any means that of his

[149] "Externally, this huge shack emulates the style of all the other buildings of the Exposition; but internally it is a miserable thing, a disgraceful large room possessing all the qualities of a stable or a barn. [...] In the first days of the Exposition, the opening of this theater was programmed among the inauguration events by the jolly Committee: one would think of entering one of those beautiful *salons* that were built by modern taste to comfortably smoke, drink, and hear the warbling of more or less vivacious fashionable *chanteuses*. However, the night of the inauguration, when the public found themselves in that gross and obscene room, they booed the *chanteuses*, since they could not boo the Committee, which had given birth to such monstrosity." "Il teatro della varietà," *L'Esposizione Nazionale Illustrata*, 78.

[150] "La fiaccolata in onore della Regina," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 87.

father.[151] In fact, the "king soldier" of the independence wars and Unification had always kept his name in conformity of his original lineage: Vittorio Emanuele II of the Kingdom of Sardinia. Instead, not only did Umberto I finally acknowledge his role as the highest representative of a new kingdom, but he also happened to provide Italy with its first queen, Margherita, allowing for the typical association between the nation and a womanly figure, and consequently creating a need for the preservation of national honor typical of Italian society and central in the Risorgimento era.[152]

The visit of the royal family, therefore, increased the political relevance of the Exposition, and it was covered also on national newspapers. The social and cultural meaning of the Exposition became evident in particular in the columns of the *Gazzetta piemontese*, Turin's main daily newspaper (today's *La Stampa*). With a paternalistic tone, the commentator made it clear that the Exposition was a unique occasion for Palermo's society to legitimize its place on the broader national scene:

> Palermo, che cammina a passi di gigante sulla via del progresso, [...] ha fatto come il forte adolescente che comincia a sentire la propria forza nel cuore e nella fibra, e comincia ad avere una coscienza, non sempre esatta di se stesso, [...] ha detto a se stessa: O perché non faccio anch'io una Esposizione? Sono bello, sono forte, sono sviluppato, posso mostrarmi.[153]

Self-awareness was a necessary step for the growth of Sicilian society. In the light of the agonizing aftermath of Unification and the pressure of the *questione meridionale*, the Exposition became then a tool:

> [...] per farla meglio conoscere [Palermo], per stringere più forti vincoli col resto degli italiani, per mostrarsi infine una città colta e gentile al pari di tutte le altre città italiane. [...] L'Esposizione adunque per me è un pretesto, un mezzo [...] per dire agli altri connazionali: [...] guardateci negli occhi e nel cuore, e vedrete che siamo sangue del vostro sangue, fibre delle vostre fibre.[154]

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[151] Körner, *Politics of culture*, 197–220.

[152] Alberto Mario Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento. Parentela, santità e onore alle origini dell'Italia unita* (Torino: Einaudi, 2000).

[153] "Palermo, which is walking with giant steps on the way to progress, [...] is like the strong adolescent who is starting to feel his strength in the heart and the fibre, and starts to have a self-awareness, not always precise, [...] it said to itself: O why don't I also do an Exposition? I am beautiful, I am strong, I am developed, I can show myself." "La mostra nazionale di Palermo," *Gazzetta piemontese* 20/11/1891, [1–2]: [1].

[154] "To let it be better known [the city], to tie stronger relationships with the rest of Italians, ultimately to show itself as a cultivated and noble city as much as all the other Italian cities. [...] To me, the Exposition is therefore an opportunity, a means [...] to say to other fellow citizens: [...] look in our eyes and our heart, and you will see that we are blood of your own blood, fibre of your own fibre." "La mostra nazionale di Palermo," *Gazzetta piemontese* 20/11/1891, [1–2]: [1].

As it was the case with the first National Exposition of Florence 1861, these words confirmed that each National Exposition should be read as a *fatto* through which Italy was not only represented, but actively built. If volunteers at the first Italian Exposition were quite literally building the nation-state while building the pavilions, in Palermo 1891–92 a selected portion of the society participated in this building process, and the music-related events presented at the Exposition reveal that this portion was aristocracy. Indulging in leisure activities and practicing music as part of their education at an amateur level, aristocrats (and especially women) were perhaps the main target of the array of mandolins, lutes, and teaching methods displayed in the music exhibition. This went to the detriment of high-brow music, as pointed out by Floridia in his chronicle of the Exposition's opening ceremony. Despite the number of "gioiose fanfare"[155] played during the Exposition opening, he stated:

> Come corrispondente musicale, comincio dal notare l'assoluta assenza della musica ARTE [*sic*] a questa solenne inaugurazione. Salvo errore, questo mi sembra un fatto nuovo nella storia delle Esposizioni di ogni paese e di ogni epoca; […] si sentiva l'assenza di una di esse [le arti]; e questa assenza ha lasciato un vuoto indefinibile nel cuore di ogni artista.[156]

The concerto dei mandolinisti*: program and iconography*

Aristocrats — with the amateur music that constituted their typical pastime — were the main actors in one of the highlights of the royal family's visit to Palermo: the inauguration concert of the *grande sala delle feste*. Taking place on the night of November 18, the inaugural concert was especially dedicated to queen, and was divided into two parts. In the first part, the stage was left to a consort of one hundred musicians playing any sort of string instruments. About eighty of them were women, all wearing white dresses decorated with embroidered daisies (*margherite*, as an homage to the queen), while about twenty male musicians stood in the back rows of the orchestra. Mandolins and mandolas were the protagonists, supported by violins, violas and cellos, but also harps and a piano. In the press of the time, this unconventional orchestra was referred to as the *concerto dei mandolinisti*.

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[155] "Joyful fanfares". Pietro Floridia, "Corriere musicale," 751.

[156] "As a musical correspondent, I start by noticing the absolute absence of ART music at this inauguration. If I am not wrong, this seems to me a new occurrence in the history of Expositions of any country and era; [...] one could feel the absence of one of them [the arts]; and this absence left an undefinable void in the heart of every artist". Floridia, "Corriere musicale," 752.

The concert started as the royalty entered the hall. The musicians greeted the queen with a *Saluto alla Regina* by Carlo Graziani Walter, and then performed some short pieces among which a *Gavotta* by Giuseppe Lo Verde De Angelis — the conductor — and a *Serenata* by Giorgio Miceli.[157] Following the *mandolinisti*, it was the turn of a traditional symphonic orchestra. The Circolo Musicale Napoletano, conducted by Vincenzo Galassi, performed the *ouverture* from Gaspare Spontini's *Fernand Cortez*, Johannes Brahms' *Hungarian Dances*, and a *Minuetto* by Luigi Boccherini.[158] The concert was then concluded by a short recital of tenor Federico Corrado and soprano Adelina Pane, who sang arias and *romanze* by Jules Massenet, Leopoldo Mugnone, and Charles Gounod. Finally, as the royalty left the hall, the orchestra played the *sinfonia* from Gioachino Rossini's *Gazza ladra*.

An illustration from that time preserves a view of the first part of the concert [FIG. 8]. Conductor Lo Verde De Angelis is standing at the center of the scene, gesturing at the harp section on his left. He is turning his back to the orchestra, following the etiquette that required him to face the king and the queen, who are sitting in the front row. Six harp players

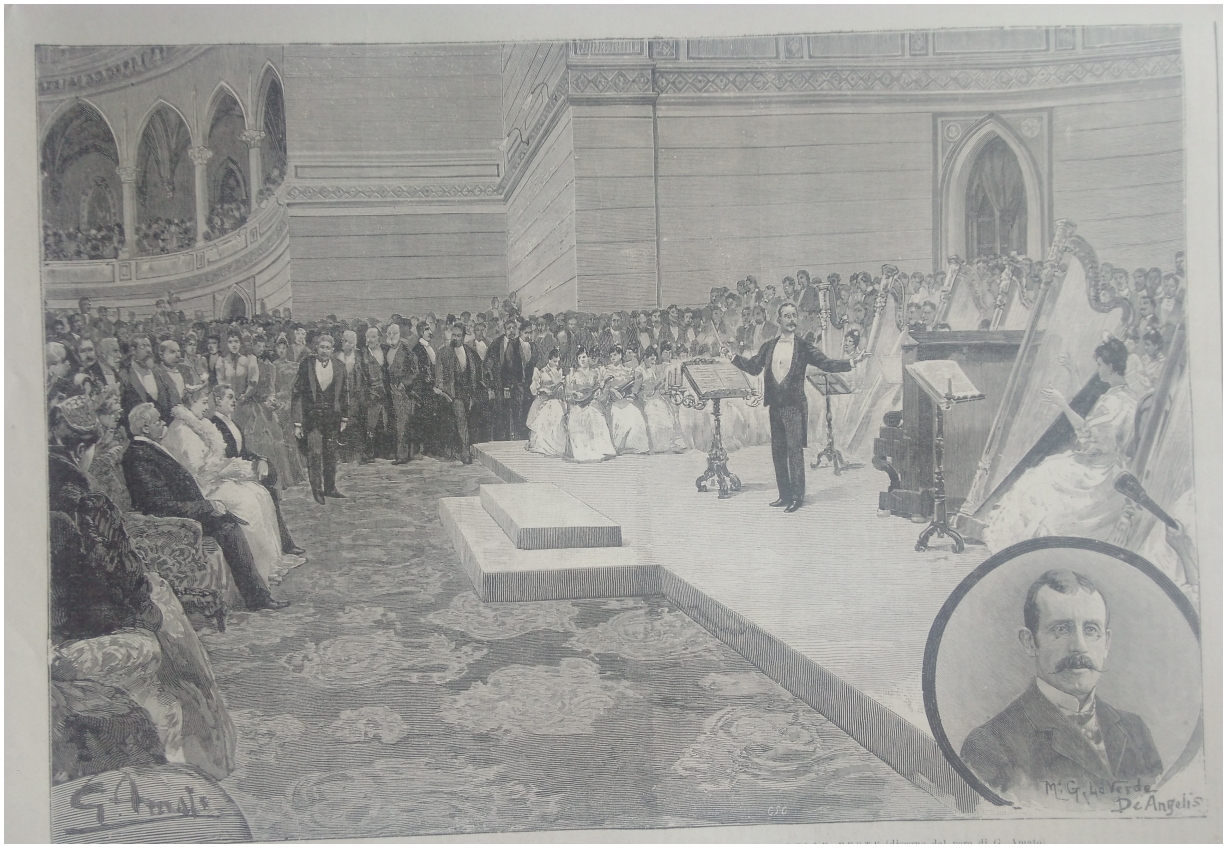

FIG. 8: The concert of mandolinists attended by the royal family in Palermo 1891–92.

[157] "Le Loro Maestà a Palermo. Il concerto dei mandolinisti," *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 99.
[158] Most likely from his Quintet Op. 11 n. 5 G.275.

and two rows of mandolinists, all of them women, are visible in the illustration. The orchestra, completed by an upright piano, is surrounded by the standing audience animating the crowded space of the *sala delle feste*. The illustrator saved the upper half of the picture to showcase some of the architectural elements decorating the *sala*, such as the pointed-arch windows of the balcony in the style of Basile, typically reminiscent of the Medieval Norman architecture.

In a circle at the bottom-right corner of the picture, it is possible to see a portrait of the same Lo Verde De Angelis. One of the protagonists of the night, starring as conductor and author of one of the pieces in the program, he was a musician very active in Palermo at that time, who had been also the founder of a short-lived music periodical just few years before the Exposition.[159] This juxtaposition of two different pictures is atypical in the illustrations that can be found in Treves's official gazette from the Exposition in Palermo. Another example similar to this comes from the so-called "Tzigane concert," the concert organized in the same *sala delle feste* with the participation of seventeen Hungarian bow and wind musicians [FIG. 9]. In this illustration, a sketch of two male figures in traditional clothing, one of which a fiddler, is juxtaposed to yet another view of the *sala*, where the ensemble is playing in front of an audience partly standing next to the stage, partly sitting in the main hall or on the balcony. The extraordinary costumes depicted in the close-up of the illustration matched the emphasis that concert reviewers put on the fact that the musicians could not read music, playing traditional folk music and adaptations of popular Italian opera numbers learned only orally.[160]

As opposed to the typical illustrations of the other pavilions in Palermo 1891–92, usually showcasing an overview on the machines in the building or focusing on specific works of art, these music-related pictures reveal once more the double function of the musical events in the Exposition. On the one hand, they served to convey certain musical paradigms — the portrait of Lo Verde De Angelis, similar to so many portraits of the protagonists of the musical canon, but also the sketch of the Tzigane ensemble, where the costumes and the fiddler turning his back to the observer essentialize the musical culture on display. On the other hand,

[159] Consuelo Giglio, "La modernità raggiunta: 'La Sicilia musicale' 1894-1910; 'L'arte musicale' 1898; la 'Rassegna d'arte e teatri' 1922-1936," *teCLa. Temi di Critica e Letteratura artistica* 2 (29 December 2010): 54–55. <http://www1.unipa.it/tecla/rivista/numero_2_pdf/numero2.pdf> (last checked 23 June 2018). See also: Consuelo Giglio, "Music Periodicals in Palermo. The Nineteenth and, Early Twentieth Centuries," *Fontes Artis Musicae*, 45/3–4 (July-December 1998): 250–272.

[160] "I Tzigani all'esposizione," *L'Esposizione Nazionale Illustrata*, 40.

FIG. 9: The "Tzigane concert" in the *grande sala delle feste* of Palermo 1891–92.

both these illustrations capture the atmosphere of the concert nights, showing not only the musicians at work, but also the elegant crowd attending the events and the *grandeur* of the architecture.

A concert for Palermo's high society

The success of the inaugural concert was threatened by some events that were carefully omitted in the illustration. A protest took place right outside the *grande sala delle feste*, where many exhibitors gathered to complain about some inaccuracies of the organization. Pietro Floridia from *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* reported on the events:

> Prima del concerto ebbe a deplorarsi uno spiacevole incidente. Un buon numero di espositori, che avevano rancori precedenti contro il Comitato, facevano una specie di dimostrazione, ostile soprattutto al presidente, Principe di Camporeale. Una grande folla era stivata nella piazza innanzi l'Esposizione. Ad un tratto uno dei cancelli fu rotto e folla e dimostranti invasero il grande salone del concerto, dopo una breve colluttazione con le guardie e i carabinieri. Ristabilita la calma, non

> poté essere ristabilito l'ordine — fu per grazia di Dio se il povero pubblico pagante poté trovar posto, non dico da sedersi, ma da stare all'impiedi. In questo mentre arrivarono i Sovrani, e si diè principio al concerto.[161]

Although we do not know the details about this protest, the night of this concert was perceived as highly significant, making for an easy target for the exhibitors to let their complaints be heard.

The solemnity of the occasion seems nonetheless to have gone unnoticed to Floridia. On the one hand, his main concern while commenting the night was the lack of an elevated stage for the orchestra, which would have at least protected the orchestra from the turmoil caused by the protest, and would have made the musicians visible by all the audience. On the other hand, Floridia was more focused on the symphony orchestra from Naples performing in the second part of the concert, or better for the lack of an orchestra from Palermo to serve in this function. The only comment to musical content of the concert was rather pessimistic: "Ad un programma così eterogeneamente fatto si volle dare la scusante, che la prima parte fosse un omaggio delle signorine mandoliniste palermitane a S. M. la Regina. Valga adunque la scusa e non parliamone d'altro."[162] And then: "Chiuse la parte mandolinistica un *Concerto* per dieci arpe, con accompagnamento di pianoforte, e, se non erro, di cornamusa — pezzo fatto apposta per urtare il buon senso artistico ed ogni più elementare criterio."[163]

What Floridia was completely overlooking in his commentary was the social and political impact of this event and especially of the first part of the concert. The *Serenata* performed by the mandolin consort had been written especially for the exposition by composer Giorgio Miceli. As singing teacher and director of the Conservatorio in Palermo, Miceli could represent at best the music institutions in Palermo for the inaugural *soirée*. His inclusion in the concert

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[161] "Before the concert, an unfortunate accident happened. A good number of exhibitors, who had previous resentments towards the [organizing] Committee, put up a demonstration, mostly against the president, the Prince of Camporeale. A great multitude was squeezed in the square in front of the Exposition. Suddenly one of the gates got broken, and the crowd and the protesters invaded the great concert hall, after a short fight against the guards and the *carabinieri*. As calm was restored, the order could not be equally resotred — thanks to God if the poor paying audience could find their place, if not to seat, at least to stand. In the meanwhile, the Kings arrived, and the concert began." Pietro Floridia, "Corriere musicale," 767.

[162] "It was used as an excuse for such a heterogeneous program that the first part was a homage of the mandolinist ladies of Palermo to Her Majesty the Queen. Let this excuse be, and let us not talk about this anymore." Floridia, "Corriere musicale," 767.

[163] "The mandolin part was closed by a *Concerto* for ten harps, with piano accompaniment, and, if I am not mistaken, a hornpipe — a piece made specially to hurt artistic common sense and any most elemental criterion." Floridia, "Corriere musicale," 767.

program had nonetheless also strong political reasons. Born in Reggio Calabria in 1836, Giorgio Miceli was the son of Domenico, a nobleman who opposed the Borbonic regime and took part in the Reggio revolt of 1847.[164] The father's legacy affected the music career of Giorgio, who witnessed the cancellation of one of his operas from the program of the San Carlo theater season of 1855, a decision of a police prefect close to King Ferdinando II of the Two Sicilies.[165] Miceli's production increased again after Unification. His cantata *Dall'Etna al Vesuvio,* written in 1861 to celebrate the anniversary of Garibaldi's arrival in Naples, together with his many musical homages to Queen Margherita, proved him a perfect candidate from a political point of view to be performed in front of the royal family.

As a professional musician writing for the main music periodical of his time, Floridia was more focused on the consistency of the program and the quality of the performance — and he had to admit that "l'esecuzione per quanto riguarda le arpe ed i mandolini fu almeno soddisfacente."[166] Yet, in doing so, he completely overlooked the aspect that made this event relevant, that is, the participation of selected members of the aristocracy and wealthy bourgeoisie of Palermo. The importance of noblemen attending the event, and especially noble ladies, was emphasized in an article from the Treves's official *Cronaca Illustrata*:

> Seguono [i Reali] la marchesa Pallavicini in nero; i ministri Nicotera, Pelloux, Saint-Bon e Chimirri; l'on. Biancheri, il generale Pallavicini, senatori, deputati e il seguito della corte. Nell'àmbito dove prendono posto i Reali, — si notano la principessa Sant'Elia, la principessa Sofia di Trabia, la marchesa di Ganzeria [*sic*], la principessa di Montereale, la baronessa Calascibetta, e tante altre signore della migliore società, elegantissime.[167]

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[164] The revolt of Reggio Calabria took place in September 1847 against the Bourbon regime to promote constitutional reforms. It resulted in the conquest of the city by the insurrectionists, soon repressed by the Bourbon military forces, and it is considered one of the predecessors of the large wave of insurrections that Italy and Europe at large underwent in 1848. See Alberto Mario Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano* (Bari: Laterza, 2004).

[165] Annunziato Pugliese, "Giorgio Miceli, Paolo Serrao e Andrea Cefaly, due musicisti e un pittore calabresi sulla scena risorgimentale," in *Prima e dopo Cavour. La musica tra Stato Sabaudo e Italia Unita (1848–1870): Atti del Convegno internazionale, Napoli, 11–12 novembre 2011*, ed. Enrico Careri and Enrico Dionisi, (Napoli: Clio Press, 2011): 119–139. For more information, see Maria Paola Borsetta and Annunziato Pugliese, eds., *Giorgio Miceli e la musica nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia nell'Ottocento. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi: Arcavata di Rende, 3–5 dicembre 2009* (Vibo Valentia: Spilinga, 2012).

[166] "At least, the performance concerning the harps and the mandolins was satisfying." Floridia, "Corriere musicale," 767.

[167] "Following [the Royalty] are the marquise Pallavicini wearing black; ministers Nicotera, Pelloux, Saint-Bon and Chimirri; member of parliament Biancheri, general Pallavicini, senators, deputys, and the court entourage. In the space where the Royalty is seating, — we can notice princess Sant'Elia, princess Sofia of Trabia, the marquise of Ganzeria [*sic*], princess of Montereale, baroness Calascibetta, and many more ladies from the best portion of society, very elegant." *Le Loro Maestà a Palermo. Il concerto dei* mandolinisti, *Palermo e l'Esposizione*, 99.

"La migliore società" was then at the very heart of the event. While the mandolinists were playing for the audience, the audience itself was the focus of the article. First came the royalty and four key ministers of the Government visiting the Exposition: Luigi Nicotera, minister at the Home Office, Luigi Pelloux, minister at the crucial War Office after the Eritrean campaign, Simone Pacoret de Saint-Bon, minister at the Navy Board of particular interest to the Florio family and the harbor of Palermo, and Bruno Chimirri, minister for the Agriculture, a sector on which the whole Sicilian economy and society relied heavily.

After these names and a mention of some more representatives of Italian Government came a list of members of the aristocracy in Palermo, representing only the tip of a larger segment of society that was present in the *sala*. All of them were women, just as the dominating portion of the mandolin orchestra. In fact, the line between the audience and the performers in this concert should not be drawn drastically. The mandolin part of the concert was sponsored by the Marchesa di Ganzeria,[168] one of the favorite dedicatees of music newly printed in Palermo, belonging to the illustrious, aristocratic Tomasi family. Although we have no specific information concerning the precise identity of the ladies performing at the mandolin, they had certainly been summoned among the ranks of women societies animating *fin-de-siècle* Palermo.

It is therefore implied that the eighty female musicians performing that night were not professionals, but rather amateur descendants of the most notable families in the city. Giglio has documented this blending of musical amateur societies and professional musicians, showing how it was typical of Palermo at the turn of the twentieth century.[169] That many of these ladies held a noble title does not come to surprise. Aristocratic families invested in the artistic education of their girls, and piano, singing, violin, harp, and of course mandolin were the disciplines of election. If harp was deemed more refined (and was certainly more expensive), the mandolin was extremely popular also for the predilection shared by Queen Margherita, encouraging the birth of many mandolin societies — both for women and mixed — in the Peninsula.[170]

[168] Possibly Carolina Guccia.
[169] Consuelo Giglio, *La musica nell'età dei Florio* (Palermo: L'Epos, 2006), 107–120.
[170] Although there exist some studies focusing on the history of local mandolin societies, a study on the popularity and diffusion of mandolin societies in nineteenth-century Italy and their social and political function is still lacking.

As Anselm Gerhard has pointed out, the influence of aristocracy commissioning musical works, and its participation in the musical life of Italian cities, is traditionally envisioned as a characteristic of the *Ancien Régime*, but was extremely relevant still in mid-nineteenth century in Italy.[171] In the case of Palermo, the second main center of the former Kingdom of Two Sicilies, where bourgeoisie and entrepreneurship struggled to establish themselves, the same observations could also be extended to the end of the century. In general, the value attached to aristocracy was still holding strong in *fin-de-siècle* Europe, but this was particularly true in Sicily and Palermo, where most of the power still concentrated in the hands of great landowners.[172] Ennoblement had been a necessary step even for the Florio, with the wedding of Ignazio I and Baroness Giovanna D'Ondes Trigona in 1866. The wedding consolidated the influence of a family whose name came later to identify Palermo's *Belle Époque*, and whose interests pushed towards the organization of the National Exposition.[173]

The inaugural concert in the *grande sala delle feste* represented therefore the social, leisure counterpart to the economic interests constituting the very foundations of the Exhibition. Representatives of the Kingdom and of the Government were attracted from continental Italy to admire the products Sicily had to offer, but also the social capital of its aristocracy. Within this interpretive framework, the quality of the musical works lamented by Floridia did not really matter to the organizers. Or rather, their quality resided precisely in their ability to be played by a heterogeneous consort of instruments and yet a homogeneous group of amateurs, representing Palermo's high society.

Opera reviews: anxiety and expectations

The frustration expressed by Floridia with regard to the inauguration concert of the *sala delle feste* must have been a burning one, since he had set high expectations before concerning the musical taste of his fellow Palermo citizens. Five months prior to the Exposition's opening,

[171] Anselm Gerhard, "«Cortigiani, vil razza bramata!» Reti aristocratiche e fervori risorgimentali nella biografia del Giovane Verdi (Prima parte)," *Acta Musicologica* 84/1 (2012): 37–63.
[172] Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981). See also Alberto Mario Banti, *Storia della borghesia italiana*. *L'età liberale* (Roma: Donzelli, 1996) and Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento*.
[173] Orazio Cancila, *I Florio. Storia di una dinastia imprenditoriale* (Milano: Bompiani, 2008); Giuseppe Barone, "Il tramonto dei Florio," *Meridiana* 11/12 (May-September 1991): 15–46.

this was his comment for the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* after a performance of Richard Wagner's opera *Lohengrin* at Teatro Politeama in June 1891:

> Ma quello che è nuovo negli annali del Politeama è il contegno di questo pubblico. Appena alzata la tela si estingueva ogni rumore per dar luogo ad una attenzione religiosa, assoluta, mai interrotta. Le cavee, questi baratri del vasto ambiente presentavano il magnifico spettacolo di un'immensa moltitudine di teste immobili, assorte, raccolte. E questo silenzio regnava tutto il tempo che la tela rimaneva alzata, per dar luogo poi, alla fine di ogni atto, ad un formidabile scoppio di entusiasmo. […] A questo Lohengrin il pubblico palermitano ha mostrato di comprendere come l'arte musicale sia il solo linguaggio veramente universale, il solo linguaggio che non riconosce limiti e confini di nazionalità, e che affratella tutti i popoli del mondo sotto la bandiera del bello. In questa circostanza io, siciliano, sono orgoglioso di questo pubblico siciliano.[174]

The opera was more than 40 years old by the time Floridia wrote this review, and its first staging in the Sicilian capital in 1891 was not fortuitous. In fact, it foreshadowed the celebrations organized for the National Exposition hosted in Palermo. Although Politeama's season did not depend on the Exposition's organizing committee, the municipality had certainly kept this event in mind while approving the theater's program.

Wagner's visit to Palermo a decade earlier (in Winter 1881–82) had undoubtedly left a mark on the city. During his stay, the German composer had completed the composition of *Parsifal*. He was lodged first at the luxurious Hôtel des Palmes, and then enjoyed the hospitality the Prince of Gangi in his villa, where he met all the aristocrats and socialites animating the city and supporting the Exposition ten years later.[175] In fact, the year of the Exposition marked the first of an increasing number of performances of Wagner's music in the city. In her fundamental study of Palermo's musical life at the turn of the twentieth century, Consuelo Giglio has defined it as the "cult of Wagner," a tendency culminating in 1898 with a symphonic

[174] "But what is new in Politeama's annals is the behavior of this audience. As the curtain was raised, every noise faded away, resulting in a religious, absolute, never interrupted attention. The parterre, these abysses of the large space presented with the magnificent display of an immense multitude of immobile heads, rapt, absorbed. And such silence prevailed as long as the curtain was up, then resulting, at the end of each act, in an extraordinary outburst of enthusiasm. [...] At this Lohengrin, the audience of Palermo proved to understand how musical art is the only universal language, the only language that overcomes limits and nation borders, uniting all the peoples in the world under the flag of beauty. On this occasion I, a Sicilian, am proud of this Sicilian audience." Bequadro [Pietro Floridia], "Palermo, 9 giugno. Chiusura della stagione," *GMM* 1891, 394.

[175] Ottavio Tiby, *Il real Teatro Carolino e l'Ottocento musicale palermitano* (Firenze: Olschki 1957), 305–309; Ubaldo Mirabelli, *Nella luce di Palermo / Im Lichte Palermos* (Palermo — Frankfurt am Main: Sellerio, 1982), 46–60.

concert of Wagner's music involving an orchestra of 120 musicians and renowned international singers from the opera scene.[176]

The *Lohengrin* staging at Politeama in June 1891 was then loaded with a strong symbolic value for the city of Palermo, but this enthusiastic review was also due to another factor: the recent change in Ricordi's commercial interests. In fact, in 1888, Ricordi had acquired the rights of music publisher Lucca, one of their main commercial rivals since the 1840s, who included Wagner in their catalogue.[177] The very Giulio Ricordi, president of the family's publishing house, had actually harshly criticized *Lohengrin* in the review he wrote in 1871 for the Italian première of the opera in Bologna.[178] Twenty years later, after the acquisitions of the Italian copyright on Wagner's music, the tone of the reviews needed to be entirely different, and the correspondents on Ricordi's official periodical made sure that their readers were adequately instructed to appreciate the German composer's works.[179]

Conditions of the opera scene in Palermo

In his review to Politeama's *Lohengrin*, Floridia used words imbued not only with pride for Palermo's public, but also with a slight tone of relief. In fact, as the Exposition's opening approached, the auspices in Palermo were not favorable when it came to the opera season. In December 1889 N. E. Sampieri, the correspondent from Palermo for musical publisher Sonzogno's *Il teatro illustrato e la musica popolare*, commented:

> La questione del teatro, da noi, è diventata scottante. Palermo, una delle più importanti *piazze*, adesso è discesa al livello di Peretola e Scaricalasino. [...] ed ora che vi scrivo in Palermo, una delle primarie città d'Italia, che avrà nel 1891 la sua brava Esposizione Nazionale, non vi è un sol teatro aperto, con quanto nostro decoro, lascio a voi il giudicarlo.[180]

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[176] Giglio, *La musica nell'età dei Florio*, 39–43.

[177] Anna Pasquinelli. "Contributo per la storia di Casa Lucca," *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* 16 (1982): 568–581; Matteo Mainardi, "Il Catalogo Generale delle edizioni G. Ricordi & C. Una prima analisi del gusto musicale di fine Ottocento," in *Scene di fine Ottocento. L'Italia fin de siècle a teatro*, ed. Carlotta Sorba (Roma: Carocci, 2004), 221–242.

[178] Licurgo Iridio [Giulio Ricordi], "Lohengrin di Riccardo Wagner al Teatro Comunale di Bologna," *GMM* 1871, 373–377.

[179] Axel Körner, "Music of the Future," 197–201.

[180] "The theater issue, here, has become a burning one. Palermo, one of the most important *piazzas*, has now fallen down to the level of Peretola and Scaricalasino. [...] and now that I am writing you in Palermo, one of the paramount cities in Italy, which in 1891 will host its National Exhibition, there is not a single theater open — you will judge by yourselves how this contributes to our decorum." N. E. Sampieri, "Nostre corrispondenze da Palermo," *Il teatro illustrato e la musica popolare* [from now on: *TI*] 1890, 10.

One of the issues with opera in Palermo at the time of the Exposition was the very Teatro Politeama, a theater that was not considered suitable for such genre. It had been built in 1874, originally only for open-air equestrian and acrobatic shows, but it had always been used also as an opera theatre. The opera programming in the Politeama had increased three years later, after the installation of a rooftop by Fonderia Oretea, Palermo's most prosperous steel factory at that time. A second issue always remarked by music critics was the severe delay in the building of Teatro Massimo, today's opera house in the city. Its plan had been approved in the mid 1860s, and Its construction had started in the following decade, but the building was far from being completed by the time the Exposition's gates opened. Minor concerts and sporadic operas were limited to Teatro Bellini (among them, the city première of Georges Bizet's *Carmen* in 1885), while opera programming at Teatro Politeama was affected by administration slowness in coordinating impresarios, city council, and authorities.

Opera programming was not the only matter of concern to Sampieri. In other letters and articles to *Il teatro illustrato*, he often lamented the expectations of his fellow citizens, very demanding in terms of quality of the cast and staging of operas, but not equally generous when it came to pay a consequently higher fare for the tickets. In his accounts, this had been the cause leading many ambitious productions to bankruptcy, thus mining musical art — but from his prose one could infer that also the reputation of the audience as a sophisticated and munificent multitude was at stake.

Despite the alleged volubility of this public, the 1891 and 1892 opera and concert seasons at Teatro Politeama were quite successful. During the Exposition celebrations, officially inaugurated in Fall 1891, Politeama's stage hosted also several recitals — among them, those of Australian Soprano Melba and violin *virtuosa* Teresina Tua. The rich programming and international guests were welcomed by an increasing number of attendees. It was in this context that Pietro Floridia noticed, in his review of *Lohengrin*, what to him was an auditory sign of the Politeama audience's maturity. He welcomed the "religious, absolute, never interrupted attention" as a novelty in the annals of Politeama theater. To him, the behavior of the audience had finally marked the city of Palermo's entrance in the age of what we could call a modern way of musical fruition: a silent, contemplative demeanor already established in continental theaters elevated this audience that finally proved to have internalized the

appropriate behavior in an opera theater.[181] This matched the choice of Wagner's work to put on stage: in fact, by the 1890s Wagner's reputation had transcended the composer's German origins, coating his music with an allure of universalism.[182]

Verdi cum *Wagner*

A different atmosphere was registered in Giuseppe Verdi's *Otello*, staged at Politeama in the same month. Here the dramatic tension was sometimes interrupted by the audience's cheers. in Floridia's words, that was due to the Southern and passionate nature of Palermo citizens, resonating with Verdi's genius:

> All'*Otello* di Verdi gli scatti entusiastici di questo stesso pubblico erano per così dire, forzati dalla irresistibilità del momento musicale e drammatico […]; agli slanci gelosi del moro rispondeva l'urlo formidabile delle cavee piene di questa popolazione meridionale entusiasta e passionata – non importa se la passione traboccando faceva per un momento arrestare l'azione drammatica![183]This contrasted with the description of the applauses to Wagner's work: "L'applauso lungo, universale, convinto, che scoppiava alla fine di ogni atto, era l'espressione del contento, della commozione, dell'incanto, piuttostoché l'esaltamento della passione."[184]

The crystallization of the dichotomy between Verdi's and Wagner's music, well established in the public discourse about opera, has been analyzed by Emilio Sala in an article about the different reactions to *Lohengrin* in its Bologna and Milanese premières.[185] Such a difference in attitudes finds its explanation in the different interests of the music publishers involved in the 1970s: Lucca favoring Wagner, and Ricordi against Lucca and therefore against the German composer. In addition to that, we must also consider the way in which Bologna consistently portrayed itself as a progressive and sophisticated city as opposed to Milan, as

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[181] Sven Oliver Müller, "The invention of silence: audience behavior in Berlin and London in the nineteenth century," in *Sounds of Modern History: Auditory Cultures in 19th- and 20th-Century Europe*, ed. Daniel Morat (Brooklyn, NY: Berghahn Books, 2014) 153–174; Sven-Oliver Müller, *Das Publikum macht die Musik. Musikleben in Berlin, London und Wien im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

[182] Axel Körner, *Politics of Culture*, 221–262.

[183] "During Verdi's Otello, the sudden explosions of this same audience were, so to say, compelled by the irresistible musical and dramatic moment [...]; the outbursts of jealousy of the Moor were corresponded by the extraordinary cry from the caveae filled with this Southern population, enthusiast and passionate — and it does not matter if the overflowing passion broke for a moment the action!" Floridia, "Palermo, 9 giugno," 394.

[184] "The long, universal, committed applause bursting out at the end of each act, was the expression of satisfaction, emotion, awe, rather than the celebration of passion". Floridia, "Palermo, 9 giugno," 394.

[185] Emilio Sala, "Il 'Cavaliere dell'oca' cacciato dalla Scala. Il fiasco milanese del *Lohengrin* (1873) e il suo contesto," in *Un duplice anniversario: Giuseppe Verdi e Richard Wagner*, ed. Ilaria Bonomi, Franca Cella and Luciano Martini (Milano: Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere, 2014), 9–32.

shown in the previous chapter. Yet, it is interesting to notice how the dichotomy between Verdi and Wagner changed from the 1870s to the 1890s. Starting as a blunt opposition, where Wagnerian supporters of the *musica dell'avvenire* (music of the future) contrasted with promoters of the genuine Italian tradition incarnated by Verdi, it evolved into a complementary duality, expressed in Floridia's description of the public reactions: the religious and intellectual attention devoted to Wagner was balanced with the passionate, tumultuous feelings conjured by Verdi. This was due partly to the shift in Ricordi's commercial interests, partly to the characteristics of Verdi's latest Opera, *Otello*.

A work based on a libretto by Arrigo Boito, with whom Verdi had already collaborated on the revised version of *Simon Boccanegra* in 1881, *Otello* came after a long break (sixteen years) from the composer's previous original opera, *Aida*. The new opera *Otello*, characterized by the virtual absence of standard forms and separate numbers, was clearly influenced by the spread of Wagner's operas in Italian theaters in the previous decades. This trait got noticed also in Palermo on the occasion of *Otello*'s city première in 1888, when an anonymous reviewer for the monthly *Psiche* redirected Wagner's undeniable influence within a nationalist frame:

> L'*Otello* segna un progresso meraviglioso nell'opera di Verdi e nella storia della musica moderna. [...] Il pubblico grossolano [...] dirà che Verdi è diventato wagneriano [...]. Abbiamo tali glorie nella nostra storia musicale italiana, abbiamo in Verdi un tale fenomeno di vitalità vera, che possiamo riconoscere qualche influenza straniera, se questa influenza ha saputo indirizzare a più largo avvenire la nostra musica nazionale.[186]

The reviewer was admitting Wagner's impact on Italian opera, but he did so only because an author like Verdi could bear such concession to transalpine music without fear of losing pride in his "Italianness." I will come back to how *Otello* represented a beacon of hope for Italian music in the next chapter, providing more context to a review of the same opera staged during the Exposition in Genoa.[187] For now, it will suffice to notice that when Floridia wrote his

[186] "*Otello* marks a wonderful progress in Verdi's work and in the history of modern music. [...] The unrefined public [...] will say that Verdi has become Wagnerian [...]. We have such pride in our Italian musical history, we have such a phenomenon of true vitality in Verdi, that we can acknowledge some foreign influence, if this influence could direct to a broader future our national music." *Psiche*, 30 December 1888, quoted in Guido Leone, *L'opera a Palermo dal 1653 al 1987, volume primo, dal 1653 al 1977 (escluso il Teatro Massimo)* (Palermo: Publisicula Editrice, 1988), 457–459.

[187] See pp. 156–162.

review of *Lohengrin*, the celebration of Wagner did not come anymore at the expense of Italian musical pride. Indeed, cherishing Wagner would project also Verdi's music in the glorified but also fearsome future, the *avvenire* — and with Verdi, Italian music at large. The same reasoning was confirmed also in a commentary about Ricordi's music printing exhibition in the music pavilion of the Exposition in Palermo. In fact, on the pages of *Psiche* we read: "in uno scompartimento a parte, le opere di Verdi elegantemente rilegate stanno vicine a quelle di Riccardo Wagner — simbolo, forse, di un'unione tra le due sorta di musiche, che completandosi a vicenda, potrebbero ridursi a una sola."[188]

Policing the theater audience

The complementary, less oppositional quality characterizing Wagner and Verdi became more and more a common feature in the Italian reception of Verdi after *Otello*, but this was not the only point made by commentators of the Exposition in Palermo. It also represented the premise to an evaluation of the music offered during the celebrations and of its consideration on the part of the audience. That works by both Verdi and Wagner were present at the celebrations, and especially that they were equally praised by the public — although not in the same fashion — seems to be the most relevant aspect in Floridia's review.

The journalist and composer's account of *Lohengrin*'s première in Palermo and of the appreciation expressed by its audience should not be taken necessarily as reflecting what actually happened in the theater. Most likely, what Floridia presented is an exaggeration, if not an idealization, of what he *wanted* to witness. In this sense, he worked as an "interpretive activist" according to the definition of Peter Stamatov, that is, an individual capable of influencing the political meaning attributed to an opera, thanks to his activity as a reviewer: in this case, the universality of the operas reviewed.[189] In addition to that, the level of detail he devoted to describing the — alleged — reactions of the public is interesting in itself, and speaks for the nature and mechanisms of expositions at large. As the commentary on the music section of the Exposition in Palermo shows, part of the press attention in expositions

[188] "In a separated compartment, Verdi's finely bound works are placed beside those of Wagner — perhaps a symbol of a union between these two kinds of music which, completing each other, could be reduced to one." Quoted in "Esposizione nazionale di Palermo," *GMM* 1892, 242.

[189] Peter Stamatov, "Interpretive activism and the political uses of Verdi's operas in the 1840s," *American Sociological Review* 67/3 (June 2002): 354–355.

was devoted to the array of industrial and cultural objects exhibited, but the reactions of the public equally became a constitutive element for the assessment of the musical supply. Society and its response to the different exhibitions and events were also to be analyzed and judged, so that an exposition became not only an endeavor for its organizers, but also a test for the hosting city and the community it gathered.

In the context of an exposition, therefore, an opera such as *Lohengrin* served a double function. On the one hand, the staging of a selected work was objectified as a component of the well-known "imaginary museum" of different operas from different nationalities.[190] This happened also for Palermo's National Exposition, during which the staging of *Lohengrin* was reprised in April 1892 (almost one year after Floridia's review), and got included in the Politeama's special calendar for the exposition together with works by Verdi (*Otello*, *Traviata*, *Ernani*), Rossini (*Guglielmo Tell*), Donizetti (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), and Mascagni (*L'amico Fritz*), but also Bizet (Pêcheurs de perles), Halévy (*La juive*), and even Gluck (*Orfeo ed Euridice*).[191]

On the other hand, as any other performance, this *Lohengrin* production was subjected to the agency of its audience. The audience's reactions were unpredictable first of all for the impresario, and then also for the reviewer: would people attend or desert the performance? How would they behave in the theater? The presence of the public and its responses were therefore crucial to the success of all the events featured in expositions. In evaluating this aspect, Floridia's review revealed a common tension characterizing many nineteenth-century globalizing social and cultural practices: that between transnationally standardized expectations and the need for each local community to express its specificity. In this case, global changes regarding the etiquette at the opera house led the audience from sounding cheerfully to silence, exception made for suitable expressions of a "Southern nature."

A side remark made by Floridia while opening his review is particularly interesting: "Se fosse il caso, si potrebbe qui fare uno studio lungo ed interessante sui pubblici in genere e sui pubblici meridionali in ispecie."[192] This comment testifies of the author's geographical and cultural categorizations of the audience behaviors, worthy, according to him, of scientific,

[190] Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works. An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
[191] See table 2.
[192] "Elsewhere, one could carry out a long and interesting study on audiences in general and on Southern audiences in particular." Floridia, "Palermo, 9 giugno," 394.

comparative investigation. Unfortunately, Floridia never expanded on this subject in his following writings for the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, but his focus remained equally directed to what happened on the stage as to its reception even in other opera reviews, especially on the most important occasions.

One case worth noticing is the inauguration of the Fall opera season at Politeama theater on Sunday, October 8, 1891 — that is shortly before the Exposition opened its gates. For the Exposition, the theater's original architect Giuseppe Damiani Almeyda had been hired again to embellish its facade with the decorations and statues we see today [FIG. 10]. The expectations were therefore at their highest, since the opening of the opera season coincided with the inauguration of the newly refurbished theater and represented the first musical event in Palermo correlated to the Exposition, coming even before the opening ceremony.

Impresario Carlo Di Giorgi was the organizer of this new Fall season, and the opera presented was *Otello*, with an exceptional cast. Stars such as tenor Francesco Tamagno and baritone Victor Maurel were reprising their roles after having been part of the opera's original cast at La Scala theater in Milan in 1887. They had presented the city's première of the same

FIG. 10: Teatro Politeama with the decorations designed for Palermo 1891–92.

opera in 1888, an occasion anticipated by the local press with many articles about the work's composition and its performers.[193] The new 1891 production by Di Giorgi, therefore, was bound to be a success, given the reception the same cast members had already enjoyed two years earlier. Floridia noticed the exceptional elegance of the ladies in the audience, the number of men wearing tails, a general sense of "dignitosa compostezza imposta dall'ambiente, e dal fatto di assistere ad un'esecuzione dell'*Otello*, resa da quegli stessi artisti che ne hanno raccolto la tradizione dal sommo Verdi in persona."[194]

In the review, Tamagno singing the title role was particularly praised. But once again, instead of commenting on his technique or his interpretation, Floridia preferred to address the reactions of the people in Palermo:

> Tamagno ha in Palermo una tradizione speciale. Ho udito io stesso molte persone del popolino a sgolarsi in istrada, ripetendo fedelmente le frasi più salienti di Otello con l'accento di Tamagno. Dopo la sua prima apparizione, Tamagno divenne qui così popolare, che sollevò uno sciame di copiatori. E quando nel cartellone si legge *Otello* con Tamagno, il pubblico corre a festa. Non c'è memoria di recite di *Otello* con Tamagno, che il teatro non sia stato, come domenica ora scorsa, zeppo come un uovo![195]

The impact of the production on the people, and especially of the protagonist singer, was at the center of Floridia's attention. The concurrence of many factors, including a capable impresario, the presence of extraordinary singers, and brand new interiors in the theater, made this production the perfect way to kick off the Exposition's months. In fact, this *Otello* had all the necessary characteristics to leave an unforgettable impression on the audience, and, by extension, on all the people of Palermo. In the words of Floridia: "Insomma un *Otello* unico, un *Otello* che lascerà imperitura memoria nei palermitani."[196]

Unfortunately, the same level of detail and enthusiasm did not characterize Floridia's correspondence with the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* in the following months, since most

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[193] Giglio, *La musica nell'età dei Florio*, 70–71.

[194] "Dignified composure imposed by the environment, and by the fact of attending to a performance of *Otello*, given by those very artists who received its tradition from the great Verdi himself." Pietro Floridia, "Palermo, 10 ottobre. *Otello* di Verdi al Politeama," *GMM* 1891, 747.

[195] "Tamagno has in Palermo a special tradition. I have heard myself many of the common people crying out in the street, repeating accurately the most salient phrases of Otello with Tamagno's accent. After his first apparition, Tamagno became here so popular, that he raised a bevy of imitators. And when on the playbill one reads *Otello* with Tamagno, the audience hurries up. There is no memory of a performance with Tamagno, in which the theater was not completely full, like last Sunday." Floridia, "Palermo, 10 ottobre", *GMM* 1891, 747.

[196] "A unique *Otello*, an *Otello* that will leave an eternal memory in the people of Palermo." Floridia, "Palermo, 10 ottobre", *GMM* 1981, 747.

accounts for other musical events in the city amount only to few lines on the pages of the periodical. The special column on the *Gazzetta* devoted to music pavilion and the activities of the music committee was discarded few weeks after the beginning of the Exposition, due to the scarcity of what Floridia called "musica ARTE." Yet, a closer look at the opera programming — and at the discourses that surrounded it — reveals that the Exposition was a much-awaited event involving many more institutions outside of its grounds. From a musical perspective, opera was one of the practices where discourses about taste reflected ideas of identity. The focus on the audience's behavior also showed that what happened off-stage was as much worthy of critical inquiry as what happened on-stage. Despite the lack of a proper opera theater, in Floridia's accounts Palermo proved to appreciate Wagner and to celebrate Verdi. These elements spoke therefore of a city profoundly "Italian," but also open to modern, progressive musical trends, which was one of the objectives of the Exposition itself.

Sicilian folklore studies at the time of the National Exposition

In Palermo, amateur music was a necessary element complementing the relatively scarce presence of art music in the Exposition. However, the Exposition's musical dimensions were not limited to the music played in institutionalized places such as the theater, the public square or the *sala delle feste*. The Exposition became also an important occasion to present the folkloric traditions of Sicily, harvesting the rich and varied popular culture characterizing the island and its inhabitants.

That folklore occupied a predominant role in the Exposition was perhaps connected to the fact that Sicily, as all of the Italian South, was characterized by a severe backwardness in terms of industrialization. Few exceptions compensated for the lack of a Sicilian industrial production, notably the enterprises of the Florio family. Particularly the Fonderia Oretea, a factory for the foundry of iron and bronze in Palermo, had been acquired in 1841 by Vincenzo Florio from its founders, the Sgroy brothers, and had expanded to serve the increasing mechanization of agricultural and vinicultural processes, as well as to equip with engines the ships of the Florio's naval company.[197] Having played a major role in the electrification of the city of Palermo from the late 1880s, the Fonderia Oretea occupied a relevant place in the Galleria

[197] Rosario Lentini, "La Fonderia Oretea di Ignazio e Vincenzo Florio," *Nuovi quaderni del Meridione* 60 (October-December 1977): 23–44.

del Lavoro of the Exposition, where other major national foundries exhibited their products. Yet, the Fonderia could hardly stand the comparison with these factories, mostly presenting old models already in use in the industry since decades.[198] Although the official gazette of the Exposition praised the modernity of the industrial pavilions, Sicily *de facto* was still a rural region. Therefore, rather than industry, the folkloric traditions of its inhabitants could represent a striking element captivating the Exposition public's imaginary and strongly characterizing the experience offered by a visit to the Exposition's pavilions.

Giuseppe Pitrè, an ambassador for Sicilian folklore

Luckily for the organizers of the Exposition, Sicilian folklore could count on an exceptional ambassador also involved in the curation of some sections of the fair: Giuseppe Pitrè. A medical doctor and man of letters born in Palermo in 1841, Pitrè devoted most of his life collecting tales, stories, proverbs and poetry in Sicilian dialect and also from other Italian regions, while commuting from one patient to another, compiling hundreds of pages that would be published in the course of his life.[199] His engagement and erudition gained him consideration outside Italian borders, and led him to a career culminating with the appointment, in 1914, as Senator of the Kingdom.

The role of Pitrè for Sicilian and Italian culture cannot be overestimated, embodied in his twenty-five volumes constituting the *Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari siciliane* (1870–1913), with the addition of his collection *Novelle popolari toscane* (1885), the sixteen-volume series *Curiosità popolari tradizionali* (1885–1899), and the *Bibiliografia delle tradizioni popolari italiane* (1894).[200] He was also the director, together with Salvatore Salomone-Marino, of the journal *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari* (1882–1909), on which pages many contributions were published from international anthropologists, thus inaugurating a precious anthology of folklore studies in Italy. Pitrè was also the first professor teaching a course of what he called 'demopsicologia,' a folklore studies course at the University of Palermo, the

[198] Salvo Amoroso, "Crescita e crisi dell'industria meccanica", *L'esposizione nazionale del 1891/92 a Palermo. Kalós* 1991/2: 30–33.
[199] Jack Zipes, "The indomitable Giuseppe Pitrè," *Folklore* 120/1 (April 2009): 1–18.
[200] Giuseppe Pitrè, *Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari siciliane* (Palermo: Luigi Pedone-Lauriel, 1870–1913); Giuseppe Pitrè, *Novelle popolari toscane* (Firenze: G. Barbera, 1885); Giuseppe Pitrè, *Curiosità popolari tradizionali* (Palermo: Libreria internazionale L. Pedone Lauriel di Carlo Clausen, 1885–99); Giuseppe Pitrè, *Bibliografia delle tradizioni popolari d'Italia* (Torino-Palermo: Carlo Clausen, 1894).

first of its kind in the Peninsula. Pitrè's multifaceted activity was not limited to his writings, but also to the study and collection of artifacts connected to the traditional Sicilian culture. Such well-rounded profile made him a Romantic "emblema del folklorista italiano."[201]

Pitrè's vision of Sicilian folklore was offered in one of the highlights of the Exposition in Palermo, the *Mostra etnografica siciliana* [Sicilian ethnographic exhibition], which attracted many visitors and presented them with an array of objects connected to different aspects of rural life in Sicily, spanning from garments, to tools of everyday life, to artifacts related to celebrations and special occasions, and works of art illustrating life for the Sicilian people.[202] The objects presented, listed in the catalogue of the *Mostra*, constituted the core collection of what is still today's Museo Etnografico Siciliano, founded by Pitrè himself in 1909, seven years before his death. While presenting the museum's collection, Pitrè emphasized the prominent position of Sicilian traditions and their richness in comparison with the folk cultures of other Italian regions:

> Non v'è forse regione in Italia dove tante e così svariate siano le forme del vivere quanto quelle della Sicilia. Le dominazioni da questa subite hanno lasciato tracce profonde nelle vesti, nei cibi, nella casa, nella mente, nel cuore, nella fantasia, come nei visi e nei cognomi d'ogni siciliano. I nuovi aiuti che offre la scienza potranno rendere segnalati servigi a quella parte della storia che i dotti non hanno scritta, ma che il popolo ha lasciato nei suoi costumi, nelle sue usanze, nelle sue credenze, nei suoi riti. Bisogna saperla leggere quella storia, e gli oggetti del Museo ora nato, strati diversi di antiche civiltà, rappresentano tante pagine della storia dell'Isola.[203]

Although these words came some years after the National Exposition, there is no doubt that the same approach also inspired the curation of the *Mostra etnografica siciliana*. The key elements animating Pitrè's interest were therefore rather scientific on the one hand, and politically invested on the other. As demonstrated by Carmen Belmonte, the *Mostra etnografica siciliana* represented also a local counterpart to the Eritrean village recreated in

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[201] "Emblem of the Italian folklorist". Fabio Dei, "Il populista Pitrè", *Lares* 83/1 (January-April 2017): 55.

[202] *Esposizione nazionale di Palermo 1891–92. Catalogo illustrato della Mostra etnografica siciliana ordinata da Giuseppe Pitrè* (Palermo: Stabilimento Tipografico Virzì, 1892).

[203] "Perhaps there is no other region in Italy where the forms of living are as many and varied as those of Sicily. The dominations it suffered left deep marks in the garments, the food, the house, the mind, the heart, the fantasy, as well as the faces and the family names of every Sicilian. The new tools offered by science will provide a remarkable service to that part of history that the erudites have not written, but that the people left in their habits, their beliefs, their rituals. We need to know how to read that history, and the artifacts of the new born Museum, different layers of ancient civilizations, represent many pages of the Island's history." Quoted in Giuseppe Bonomo, "La mostra etnografica siciliana del 1891–1892 di Giuseppe Pitrè," *Lares* 59/1 (January-March 1993): 7.

the last segment of the Exposition, one of the most visited and discussed attractions.[204] Pitrè expressed his interest in historicizing oral culture and connecting it to the very identity of the Sicilian people: to their habits, their artifacts, but also their imagination, and their very faces and names. This also concerned music, since indeed in 1891 did he present a second edition of his volume dedicated to folk music from the *Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari siciliane*.[205] In the context of the Exposition, though, the showcasing of this culture implied that the visitors would also commodify and essentialize it as in the case of the Eritrean one. Before discussing this process of commodification, it will be useful to understand how the ethnographic tradition was incorporated in such process. I will therefore start by presenting the main exponents of such tradition and the tropes they developed in their publications.

Folk poetry collections, from Vigo to Salomone-Marino

Pitrè's was the dominant and most authoritative view over Sicilian folklore at that time, and his collection and exhibition of objects of everyday use in a traditional Sicilian household was a pioneering experience for Italian expositions. Nonetheless, the collection and study of traditional tales and poetry was already an established practice in Sicily before the Exposition in Palermo opened its gates, and it had a decisive influence on one of the most intriguing music-related objects of the Exposition, Leopoldo Mastrigli's publication: *La Sicilia musicale*. In order to fully appreciate what Mastrigli's volume represented for Sicilian folklore in the context of Palermo 1891–92, it will be therefore useful to retrace the evolution of folklore studies in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century, a tradition of studies particularly rich in Sicily which articulated a series of tropes to be found also in Mastrigli's work.

Shortly before Unification, marquis Lionardo Vigo Calanna, a notable and philologist from the coastal town of Acireale, published in the near Catania the collection: *Canti popolari siciliani* (1857).[206] The volume consisted of hundreds of poems in Sicilian dialect organized according to their main subject, thus creating an extremely diverse and detailed array of subjects.

[204] Carmen Belmonte, "Staging colonialism in the 'other' Italy. Art and ethnography at Palermo's National Exhibition (1891/92)," *Mitteilungen des kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 59/1 (2017): 87–107.

[205] Giuseppe Pitrè, *Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari siciliane: Canti popolari siciliani [...] 2. ed. interamente rifusa con un' appendice di canti inediti e un saggio di canti dell' isola d'Ustica* (Palermo: Luigi Pedone-Lauriel, 1891).

[206] Lionardo Vigo, *Canti popolari siciliani* (Catania: Tipografia dell'Accademia Gioenia di C. Galatola, 1857).

Poems could celebrate the beauty of men, of women, of hair, of the eyes, or feelings such as desire, love, hope, but also jealousy and disdain; they could refer to common situation from the lives of the people, including birth, death, and weddings, or serve specific functions as in the case of laments, lullabies, sacred songs, and commemorations of historical events. This kind of classification was not exclusive to Vigo's work. In fact, it was adopted by Vigo from studies published by other Italian scholars, starting at least from Niccolò Tommaseo and his collection of *Canti popolari toscani*.[207]

The interest of Vigo was mainly that of a linguist. The collection of poems is in fact preceded in the volume by some essays exploring the origins of the Sicilian dialect and poetry, and their relationship with Italian language. Linguistic enclaves isolated from the family of Sicilian dialects are also taken into account in Vigo's study, with a couple of short collections of poems from the Lombard- and Albanese-speaking minorities historically dwelling on the island. In order to collect all these lyrics, Vigo organized a collaborative endeavor, contacting colleagues from different provinces of Sicily and asking them to participate in his colossal work of folklore popularization: "Ma che il nostro popolo non sia vinto dagli altri nel colorire i suoi affetti, e i suoi dolori in musica e poesia, non è ancor noto all'universale, anzi da parecchi fra i nostri, facili alle foresterie, s'ignora, o si nega."[208] The stakes were high for Vigo, who had expressly in mind the collections of the aforementioned Tommaseo, but also Giovanni Berchet's *Vecchie romanze spagnuole* (1837),[209] and Jacopo Vincenzo Foscarini and Giulio Pullè's *Canti pel popolo veneziano* (1844).[210]

Despite the strong linguistic focus of the volume *Canti popolari siciliani*, in its pages Vigo provided also the musical setting of few songs arranged for voice and piano, in order to appeal to the taste of those among his readers who were also music amateurs. The music accompanying these *Canti* was occasionally acknowledged also in Vigo's prose: "Ovunque odi un canto popolare, sii certo essere popolare la musica di cui si veste."[211] Vigo's consideration

[207] Niccolò Tommaseo, *Canti popolari toscani, corsi, illirici, greci* (Venezia: Girolamo Tasso, 1841–42).
[208] "Not everybody knows yet that our people is not inferior to others in depicting their affects and sorrows with music and poetry, and even many of us, inclined towards foreign influences, ignore it, or deny it." Vigo, *Canti popolari siciliani*, 70, n.1.
[209] Giovanni Berchet, *Vecchie romanze spagnuole* (Bruxelles: Società belgica di libreria, ec: Hauman, Cattoir e compagni, 1837).
[210] Jacopo Vincenzo Foscarini, *Canti pel popolo veneziano. Illustrati con note da Giulio Pullè* (Venezia: Tipografia Gaspari, 1844).
[211] "Wherever you hear a folk song, be sure that the music to which it is set is also folk". Vigo, *Canti popolari siciliani*, 57.

of this repertoire originated from his assumption about the innate character of such musical and poetic artistry. The philologist appreciated the culture of Sicilian lower classes in heavily ideological terms, as an organic expression of the Sicilian people, something that defined their very identity and that should permeate and inspire the production of contemporary Sicilian art music as well: "Queste antiche cantilene raccolse l'angelico Bellini, e di esse infiorò i suoi melodrammi, e in queste melodie dovrebbero inspirarsi quanti l'arte de' canti coltivano, per non afforestierare la musica."[212]

Vigo's collection, although a pioneer's work impressive in its scope, caused many negative reactions, as documented in an extensive study by Sergio Bonanzinga.[213] What fell under the critics' attacks were especially Vigo's inaccurate attributions of the songs to specific geographical areas, and his naive Sicilian chauvinism, which was not supported by credible scientific evidence. His ideological mindset pushed him to revise the history of Sicilian culture and erase any foreign influence on Sicilian poetry in his subsequent writings, starting from his unpublished work *Protostasi sicula o genesi della civiltà*, also the object of "critiche talvolta permeate di velata derisione, quando non addirittura [...] burle."[214]

The criticism Vigo's ideas attracted did not prevent him from publishing more works, including a second edition of his collection of Sicilian songs, the *Raccolta amplissima di canti popolari siciliani* (1870–74).[215] Once again, his spurious attributions and weak scientific premises clashed with the rigor promoted by younger scholars, among which Pitrè himself. Nonetheless:

> I folkloristi siciliani della nuova generazione, pur manifestando il desiderio di aggiornare gli studi sul canto popolare, estendendo le ricerche ad ogni area della Sicilia e seguendo una metodologia più rigorosa per classificare, trascrivere e commentare i testi, considerano comunque Vigo una stimolante autorità.[216]

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[212] "Heavenly Bellini collected these ancient songs, and with them he adorned his operas, and those who practice the art of songs should derive inspiration from these melodies, in order not to contaminate the music with foreign influences." Vigo, *Canti popolari siciliani*, 58.

[213] Sergio Bonanzinga, "Lionardo Vigo, un pioniere dell'etnografia siciliana," *Lares* 81/1 (January–April 2015 [2016]): 17–84.

[214] "Critiques sometimes permeated with subtle derision, if not even [...] mockery." Sergio Bonanzinga, "Lionardo Vigo:" 27.

[215] Lionardo Vigo, *Raccolta amplissima di canti popolari siciliani* (Catania: Tipografia Galatola, 1870–74).

[216] "The new generation of Sicilian folklorists, although expressing the wish to update folk song studies, extending the research to every area of Sicily and following a more rigorous methodology to classify, transcribe and comment the texts, considered Vigo a stimulating authority nonetheless." Bonanzinga, "Lionardo Vigo:" 43.

In fact, the second half of the century witnesses a flowering of studies and collections dedicated to the same subject, in a collective effort to document Sicilian folklore and its poetic and musical achievements.

Among these collections, we find the aforementioned works by Pitrè, but also numerous works by another medical doctor and man of letter from Palermo, Salvatore Salomone-Marino, a close collaborator of Pitrè. An expert and author of book on Sicilian traditions, Salomone-Marino opened a public scholarly debate expressly with Vigo with the publication of his *Canti popolari siciliani in aggiunta a quelli del Vigo* (1867).[217] This collection, despite its lack of a critical commentary, represented more than a complement to Vigo's publication. Instead, it was meant to be read more as an updated, more scientifically aware response to it. While maintaining, with some alteration, the classification operated by Vigo, Salomone-Marino's book focused on the province of Palermo, one that Vigo did not cover in his collection. Furthermore, Salomone-Marino declared in his concise introduction:

> Nella mia raccolta ho rifiutato qualunque poesia la quale, benché fatta da persone del popolo e ignoranti, non va per le bocche del popolo: qualche canto, per lo contrario, ho accettato che non è fatto da analfabeti, ma che pure è divenuto retaggio comune. Non ho rifiutato infine quei canti popolari che o sui giornali o altrove son pubblicati ma che non si trovano nella raccolta del Vigo; appunto perché un'aggiunta ad essa, qual'è [*sic*] la mia, riesca incompleta il manco possibile.[218]

In other words, Salomone-Marino subtly criticized the lack of accuracy in Vigo's work, where spurious poems that did not belong to Sicilian tradition had been blended together with those actually known and performed by the people.[219] On the contrary, Salomone-Marino combined the transparency about the source of his collected songs — published or unpublished, orally transmitted or composed in a written form — with a simple rule for their selection, namely that their knowledge and practice among illiterates had been documented. Moreover, Salomone-Marino's effort towards a more scientific approach was not limited to his methodology, but also in his attempts to historicize the songs he collected, as it is shown in writings such as

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[217] Salvatore Salomone-Marino, *Canti popolari siciliani in aggiunta a quelli del Vigo* (Palermo: Francesco Gilberti, 1867).

[218] "In my collection, I rejected any poem which is not orally transmitted, although composed by simple, non-educated people: on the contrary, I accepted some songs that have not been composed by illiterates, but that has become a shared heritage nonetheless. Finally, I did not reject those folk songs that are published on periodicals or elsewhere, but that were not to be found in Vigo's collection; precisely in order that an addition to that collection, as mine is, will be the least incomplete possible." Salomone-Marino, *Canti popolari siciliani in aggiunta*, X.

[219] See Bonanzinga, *Lionardo Vigo*.

Canti popolari siciliani trascritti nei secoli 16., 17. e 18., appeared for the first time on the journal *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari*,[220] and *La storia nei canti popolari siciliani* (1868).[221]

As the list of works by folklorists discussed shows, Sicily by the time of the Exposition was one of the privileged research field for the exercise of an emerging discipline in Italy, that is ethnography — and later, social anthropology. And although the transcription of melodies and studies on traditional instruments were not predominant in the folklorists' discourse, much attention to the music of traditional Sicilian culture was brought by means of men of letters who focused on the poetic production. They did not necessarily discuss musical settings in detail, but they acknowledged them as integral to such production. Scholars with a marked profile as linguists and philologists, such as Vigo, thought in fact that sung poetry was the site where Sicilian culture and character were quintessentially expressed.

A more three-dimensional, culturally aware approach followed in the next generation of scholars, as in the case of Pitrè and Salomone-Marino. With their acclaimed publications, they showed to a better degree of scientific accuracy that Sicilian folklore was of particular interest for observers of all sorts, even outside the regional and national borders. Perhaps unintentionally, all these pioneering works aroused curiosity around Sicilian folklore and paved its way towards the commodification that became instrumental to the National Exposition in Palermo. The book *La Sicilia musicale* that I will discuss below, in fact, profited from this tradition of studies and from the attention that the public in Palermo devoted to the *Mostra etnografica siciliana* curated by Pitrè, and used these elements to propose Sicilian folklore outside the borders of the Exposition transforming it into a touristic attraction.

A souvenir from the Exposition: *La Sicilia musicale* by Leopoldo Mastrigli

Sicily in the tourist imagination

The first Sicilian ethnographers were not the only intellectuals interested in Sicilian culture by the time of the Exposition. Far beyond Italian borders, Sicily had been for centuries one of the

[220] Salvatore Salomone-Marino, *Canti popolari siciliani trascritti nei secoli 16., 17. e 18.* (reprinted in Bologna: Forni, 1975).
[221] Salvatore Salomone-Marino, *La storia nei canti popolari siciliani* (Palermo: Tipografia di Michele Amenta, 1868).

culminating destinations of the Italian *Grand Tour*. Noblemen and artists undertook this travel in order to complete their education by first-hand observation and experience of architectures and works of art of every era, starting from the antiquity of *magna Graecia* and the Roman Empire. The never-fading appeal of the natural and architectural beauty offered by Sicily had been once more revived shortly before the opening of the Exposition, with the publication in 1887 of August Schneegans' travel journal *Sicilien. Bilder aus Natur, Geschichte und Leben*.[222] In this book, the Alsatian journalist recounted his travels on the island alternating descriptions of the many ancient attractions he visited with scenes from everyday life he observed during his stay. The work, translated in Italian three years later and enriched with a commentary by Pitrè,[223] proved once again how charming Sicily was for observers belonging to the European élite.

At the same time, Southern Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century had also become a target for a broader group of international tourists, thanks to the progressive improvements of train connections after Unification, and to the promotion guaranteed by the first examples of modern tourist guides. Already in the 1840s, British publisher John Murray had included Central and Northern Italy in their growing catalogue of tourist guides, which provided not only descriptions of the monuments and their history, but also information about possible itineraries, the logistics of transportation to the most beloved spots, and other useful details.[224] It was only in the 1860s, though, that Southern continental Italy, and occasionally Sicily, began to be featured as travel destinations in tourist guides in England and in Germany (with publishers Baedeker and later *Meyers Reiseführer*), making visits easier also for the middle class.[225]

The fascination for Sicily and Southern Italy had been also popularized in the last decades of the nineteenth century through the works of writers adhering to the current of *verismo*, characterized by an attention to the objective truth and strongly influenced by philosophical positivism. The interest for the lower classes, typically *verista*, was focused especially on the

[222] August Schneegans, *Sicilien. Bilder aus Natur, Geschichte und Leben* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1887).
[223] August Schneegans, *La Sicilia nella natura, nella storia e nella vita* (Firenze: G. Barbera, 1890).
[224] *Hand-book for Travellers in Central Italy* (London: Murray, 1843) and *Hand-book for Travellers in Northern Italy*, third edition (London: Murray, 1847).
[225] *A Handbook for Travellers in Southern Italy*, fifth edition (London: Murray, 1865); *Unter-Italien. Handbuch für Reisende* (Leipzig: Baedeker, 1866); and *Meyers Reisebücher. Unter-Italien und Sizilien*, third edition (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1889). See also Susanne Müller, *Die Welt des Baedeker. Eine Medienkulturgeschichte des Reiseführers 1830–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2012).

South, where the living conditions were more poignantly miserable. A magnifying glass scrutinizing the lives of the poor characterized the works of *verismo*'s most renowned representative, novelist Giovanni Verga from Catania. In 1884, he made his glorious debut as a playwright in Turin, with a stage adaptation of his own tale *Cavalleria rusticana*. The work obtained an immediate success, serving as a consecration for Verga, and inspired a number of musical adaptations, the most famous of which is certainly Pietro Mascagni's homonymous opera in one act. Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* debuted in Rome at Teatro Costanzi on May 17, 1890. It was the composer's first opera, and it made of its author an instant sensation, immediately becoming one of the general public's opera favorites of all times. It goes beyond the scope of this chapter to assess the impact of *Cavalleria rusticana* on the public's appreciation of Sicilian folklore, but certainly the *couleur locale* evoked by the most dramatic scenes in the play, combined with Mascagni's effective musical rendition, left a mark in the minds of all theater- and opera-goers at that time.

The "Concorso della canzone siciliana"

An event that took place during the Exposition should also be counted among the contributions to the rooting of Sicilian *couleur locale* in the tourist's imagination: the "Concorso della canzone siciliana," a competition of Sicilian popular songs — a genre that has only recently started to receive scholarly attention.[226] The competition was organized by one of the great protagonists of Palermo's musical life, Caterina Paolina Anna Luisa "Tina" Scalia Whitaker. The daughter of Alfonso Scalia, a general who made his career servicing in Garibaldi's army, Tina had married Joseph Isaac Spadafora Whitaker, known also known as Giuseppe Whitaker or simply "Pip," who was descendant of a prestigious family of British entrepreneurs. Arrived in Sicily in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Whitakers had in fact established an agricultural and a commercial empire in winery, and especially in the production of Marsala wine, particularly appreciated in America. The Whitakers' history was intertwined with that of their business partners, the Florio, and both families were extremely well connected in the high society of Palermo, which was vastly dominated by local aristocracy, as we have seen. The Whitakers were therefore an example of the many foreign — and especially British —

[226] Sorgi, Orietta, ed. *La canzone siciliana a Palermo: un'identità perduta* (Palermo: CRicd, 2015).

notables who based their fortune in Sicilian industry and contributed to the splendid allure of Palermo during the *Belle Époque* with the building of new *ville* and the particiaption in the city's cultural life.[227] Tina Whitaker was particularly active in animating Palermo's musical offering. A talented singer herself, she proposed concerts for private circles of friends at her own prestigious residency, today's Villa Malfitano Whitaker, completed only few years before the Exposition's opening. The "concorso della canzone siciliana" was therefore part of her broader and eclectic musical interests, and constituted the first such event to ever take place in Sicily.

The "Concorso" took its inspiration from many similar manifestations appeared in Italy at that time, and found its model especially in the Neapolitan song competition of Piedigrotta in the city of Naples. Piedigrotta constituted already from 1835 a staple in the establishment of a repertoire of songs that were considered popular because they were not specifically composed for the theater nor the concert hall, they could be performed with the simple accompaniment of a piano or the guitar (the instrument of music amateurs *par excellence*), and they conveyed a certain *couleur locale* — in their lyrics but also with the music material of which they were constituted. Unlike folklore music, the popular Neapolitan song was a written genre whose authors of the text and the lyrics were known — and sometimes they were even famous composers such as Gaetano Donizetti and Vincenzo Bellini. After the festivals or the competitions, these songs were published in collections or as single leaflets and became extremely popular, forging the imagination of the general population, without being limited to music lovers nor to their city of origin.[228]

In an effort to match the success of the Neapolitan song, Tina Whitaker decided therefore to propose a competition in Palermo that would stimulate the music production in the Sicilian capital and would contribute to the rich and entertaining soundscape of the Exposition. The "concorso" has been described by Consuelo Giglio, who has positioned it as a turning point in the history and developement of the Sicilian popular song, opening a first season of success of the genre which even brought to the birth in 1893 of a committee for the promotion of

[227] Consuelo Giglio, "Tina Whitaker e la musica a Palermo nella belle époque," in *"I Whitaker di Villa Malfitano", atti del seminario di studi Palermo 16-18 marzo 1995*, ed. Rosario Lentini and Pietro Silvestri (Palermo, Fondazione Giuseppe Whitaker, 1995), 339–364.
[228] Marialuisa Stazio, *Osolemio. La canzone napoletana 1880–1914* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1991).

Sicilian song.[229] The committee was nonetheless short-lived — it was canceled in 1895 — and the repertoire of Sicilian song had to wait for the twentieth century to gain momentum again. However, from an analysis by Massimo Privitera it is possible to understand what were the characteristic elements that contributed to a typically Sicilian *couleur locale*: alterations in the melodic scale (raised fourth degree of the scale, lowered sixth degree), a 6/8 meter traditionally characterizing the baroque *Siciliana* dances, a minor tonality, and the evoking of guitar sonorities in the piano accompaniment.[230]

The "concorso" helped to crystallize some commonplaces of Sicilian popular music as much as the work of etnographers did. In this case, though, the initial impulse did not come from the scholarly interest of philologists and etnographers, but rather from the cultural élite that was actively engaged in the production of music that could potentially be appreciated by all strata of society. Tina Whitaker, together with the many women involved in the organization of the inauguration concert of the *grande sala delle feste*, proved to be one of the principal actors shaping the musical image of Palermo at the time of the Exposition.

Leopoldo Mastrigli and La Sicilia musicale

In this climate of fervent interest in Sicilian folklore and of popularity of Sicilian *couleur locale*, a short book was published following the celebrations for the National Exposition in Palermo: *La Sicilia musicale*, by Leopoldo Mastrigli — published in 1891 — which on its frontispiece indicated expressly to serve as a "ricordo dell'esposizione di Palermo," a souvenir from the Exposition.[231]

Mastrigli, a composer and singing teacher, was born in Albano, near Rome, in 1856. Although not much information can be retrieved about his life, we know that by the time of the Exposition Mastrigli had already published numerous writings on musical subjects. In particular, he had proven to be a fertile writer in the 1880s, with the publication of some biographical works. First, the collection *Gli uomini illustri nella musica: da Guido D'Arezzo fino*

[229] Consuelo Giglio, "Un genere urbano dimenticato: la canzone siciliana a Palermo (1880–1940), in Sorgi, ed., *La canzone siciliana*, 51–315.
[230] Massimo Privitera, "Canzoni in concorso nella Palermo di fine secolo," in Sorgi, ed., *La canzone siciliana*, 317–353.
[231] Leopoldo Mastrigli, *La Sicilia musicale. Ricordo dell'esposizione di Palermo 1891–92* (Bologna: C. Schmidl & C., 1891).

ai contemporanei (1883),[232] which was followed in few years by a monograph on Ludwig van Beethoven (1886) and one on Georges Bizet (1888).[233] At the same time, he also wrote some theoretical works, and many manuals for singers and pianists.[234]

By the time of the publication of *La Sicilia musicale*, therefore, Mastrigli was not a specialist in folklore studies, but he had rather gained a professional credibility as a musicographer well-versed in didactics and musical popularization. In fact, on July 12, 1891 he had already published a shorter version of *La Sicilia musicale*'s first chapter on the prestigious *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*.[235]

In the opening of *La Sicilia musicale*, Mastrigli included a dedication to Duchess Maria of Mondragone, a Sicilian lady born in Palermo as Lanza of the princes of Trabia and Butera. The dedication is followed by the table of contents, where we see that the book is divided in two parts [Appendix I]. The first part, "La musica nei costumi del popolo siciliano," consists of about one hundred pages, and is devoted to Sicilian folk music, including also a transcription of the musical setting of forty of the songs, for solo voice without accompaniment. On the other hand, the second part is much shorter — seventeen pages — and consists of a series of brief biographical notes about the most illustrious Sicilian composers, from Alessandro Scarlatti, to Giovanni Pacini, to Vincenzo Bellini, to many other less-known musicians. From the organization of the book, it is evident that Mastrigli embraced an organic view of Sicilian musical genius, from the allegedly spontaneous musical expression of the poor and uneducated, to the pinnacles reached by composers of art music. Yet, the disproportion between the two parts made it clear that folk music was the "musical Sicily" that Mastrigli wanted to celebrate.

The first part of the book provides a brief introduction on the role of singing in Sicilian history and traditional culture. In these pages, mythologies and the description of local traditions blend together, creating a compendium that could serve more as an introduction to the

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[232] Leopoldo Mastrigli, *Gli uomini illustri nella musica: da Guido D'Arezzo fino ai contemporanei, cenni storioco biografici* (Torino: Paravia, 1883).

[233] Leopoldo Mastrigli, *Beethoven: la sua vita e le sue opere* (Città di Castello: S. Lapi Tipografo Editore, 1886); Leopoldo Mastrigli, *Giorgio Bizet: la sua vita e le sue opere. Con una lettera di Carlo Gounod* (Roma, Torino, Milano, Firenze: G.B. Paravia e C., 1888).

[234] In the first group, consider his *Il coro nel dramma musicale moderno* (Roma: Loescher 1886); *Le danze storiche nei secoli XVI, XVII e XVIII* (Roma: G.B. Paravia e C., 1889); and *La musica nel secolo XX* (Roma, Torino, Milano, Firenze: G.B. Paravia, 1889). Among the many handbooks, I will mention only *Igiene del cantante* (Roma, Torino, Milano, Firenze: G.B. Paravia e C., 1889); *Manuale del pianista* (Milano: U. Hoepli, 1891); and finally *La respirazione nel canto. Per le pubbliche e private scuole di canto* (Roma: G.B. Paravia, 1899).

[235] Leopoldo Mastrigli, "La Sicilia musicale," *GMM* 1891, 447–48.

subject than an in-depth discussion. This part is clearly derived from the collections of Sicilian songs published by philologists and folklorists in the previous decades. From these more extensive studies, Mastrigli borrows the thematic classification: "Women and Love," "Weddings", "Birth", "Death", are only some of the different chapters in which the author divides his discussion, alternating description of the traditions connected to specific situations with excerpts of the lyrics of songs illustrating such situations.

Some rhetorical tropes of Mastrigli's presentation are also derived from the reading of Sicilian folklorists. Like his predecessors, and especially Vigo and Salomone-Marino, Mastrigli, in his first chapter *La Sicilia e il canto*, exalts the beauty of nature and architecture as the source of inspiration for the songs of the Sicilian people:

> nell'isola sacra a Cerere il canto forma una cosa sola coi bisogni dell'uomo. E come potrebb'essere altrimenti in una terra dove regna eterna la primavera e la state, sotto un cielo sempre azzurro? dove agli olezzanti giardini e alle pianure verdeggianti di vigneti, di olivi, di cedri e di aranci, a alle amene convalli cosparse di ville — frammezzo alle quali alzano il capo vetuste opere di un'età che fa pensare agli arabi, ai saraceni, ai normanni — si succedono [...] i preziosi avanzi di un tempio greco o d'un teatro romano?[236]

According to Mastrigli — and to Vigo and many travel journals permeated by Romanticism — music, and specifically singing, were innate and integral to the Sicilian people. His words recreated an idealized, pastoral view of the lives of the poor on the island:

> Qui il canto è nella natura; e nasce poeta chiunque nasca in questa meravigliosa terra. [...] Così, canta il pescatore quando scioglie al vento le vele per lontani lidi, canta l'agricoltore sotto gl'infocati raggi del sole nel lavoro della trebbiatura e nel tripudio della vendemmia, e canta la fanciulla innamorata. Ogni opra dell'uomo qui è ravvivata, idealizzata dal canto.[237]

Given this idealization, it does not surprise that not just language alone, but rather singing and sung words became the foundational element of Sicilian culture, what identified the Sicilian as a people. Singing became for Mastrigli the purest means of expression of Sicilian nature,

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[236] "In the island sacred to Ceres, singing is united with human needs. And how could it be different, in a land where Spring and Summer reign eternal, under an ever-blue sky? Where the perfumed gardens and green lands of vineyards, olives, cedars, and oranges, and the pleasant valleys scattered with villas — among which stand ancient architectures from an age that makes you think of the Arabs, the Saracens, the Normans — are followed by the remains of a Greek temple or a Roman theater?" Mastrigli, *Sicilia musicale*, 13–14.

[237] "Here singing is in the nature: and everyone who is born in this wonderful land, he is born a poet. [...] Thus, the fisherman sings as he lays out the sails towards far beaches, the farmer sings under the burning sunrays during the work of threshing or the triumph of harvesting, and the girl in love sings. Every human activity here is revived, idealized by singing." Mastrigli, *Sicilia musicale*, 14.

and was therefore innate. However, the traditions associated with Sicilian people were at the same time rooted in historical and cultural grounds:

> Perché il canto è la più vera, la più sentita espressione dell'indole del popolo, e i canti popolari sono il tesoro della sua scienza e della sua religione; sono l'espressione del suo interiore, nella gioia e nel pianto; sono il linguaggio delle sue passioni, la rivelazione del suo particolare sentimento, il riflesso dei suoi usi, associati a ragioni storiche, etnografiche e morali.[238]

Another trope that Mastrigli adopted from preexisting literature on Sicilian folklore was the assumption of a direct connection between folk music and art music, as it had been expressed by Vigo. Mastrigli repeated it in his "Letter to the reader" introducing *La Sicilia musicale*: "Chi sospetta, infatti, agricoltori, pastori, pescatori, accendersi di poesia e riempire l'aura, imbalsamata dal cedro e dall'arancio, di armoniose patetiche cantilene alla cui sorgente dovette attingere Vincenzo Bellini!"[239] Mastrigli the teacher, then, saw the contiguity between these two different musical realms as a resource for the young generations of musicians, and expressed this concept by quoting Giuseppe Mazzini's *Filosofia della musica* in conclusion to his "Letter to the reader:" "I giovani artisti s'innalzino collo studio dei canti nazionali, delle storie patrie, dei misteri della poesia, dei misteri della natura, a più vasto orizzonte che non è quello dei libri di regole e dei canoni d'arte."[240]

All these tropes were very common in philological and ethnographic works by Sicilian scholars. Yet Mastrigli, coming from continental Italy, adopted an additional narrative strategy, one derived from travel literature rather than from the scientific studies carried out by locals. In his book, the author imagined that the reader was a visitor, a tourist exploring Sicily for the first time. In Mastrigli's narration, the reader/tourist would admire the natural and architectural wonders of the island, but would miss yet another attraction offered by Sicily, that is, its folklore, its poetry, and its music:

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[238] "For singing is the truest, most heart-felt expression of a people's temperament, and folk songs are the treasure of its knowledge and religion; they are the expression of its inner reality, in joy and sorrow; they are the language of its passions, the revelation of its specific sensibility, the reflection of its traditions, associated with historical, ethnographic and moral causes." Mastrigli, *Sicilia musicale*, 15.

[239] "Who would think, in fact, of farmers, shepherds, fishermen igniting with poetry and filling the air, perfumed by the cedar and the orange, with harmonious, moving melodies, which must have been a source to Vincenzo Bellini!" Mastrigli, *Sicilia musicale*, 9.

[240] "Young artists should rise up with the study of songs from the nation, of stories of homeland, of mysteries of poetry, of mysteries of nature, towards a broader horizon than that of handbooks and art canons." Mastrigli, *Sicilia musicale*, 10.

> Tu visiti compreso di riverenza i templi di Selinunte, d'Agrigento, i teatri di Taormina e di Siracusa, e le terme, le naumachie, gli acquedotti, le latomie, le vastissime catacombe siracusane (*Antrum Pelopis*), e ammiri gli edifici arabi e saraceni e normanni; ma non t'accorgi di un altro tesoro nascosto fra li popolo e il volgo che pullula nelle città e suda ne' campi, nei boschi, nelle zolfare e sulle cocenti frastagliate vaste costiere dell'Isola. Tu non t'accorgi che ivi germoglia e cresce rigoglioso a tanto bacio di sole il fiore del canto e della poesia, sbocciato senz'ausilio di arte e di lettere, naturale ramificazione di quello coltivato dai più vetusti abitatori del sicanio suolo.[241]

There is a byzantine quality to this enumeration of wonders characterizing Sicily to the eye of a foreign beholder, but Mastrigli's main preoccupation is clearly expressed in his subsequent statement, where he embraces his responsibility as a guide for the imaginary visitor to the hidden, unexpected treasure of Sicilian folk music:

> Io mi terrò ben pago se queste modeste pagine varranno a svegliare nel lettore il vivo desiderio di conoscere più addentro le bellezze ond'è ingemmato il canzoniere siciliano, e se avran virtù, insieme, di allettare qualche nostro compositore a deliberare le poetiche cantilene della sicula terra, onde in esse ritempri le corde della sua lira [...].[242]

Mastrigli final goal, therefore, was to make the visitors become aware of Sicilian folklore. At the same time, he expressed the wish that the appreciation of such folklore could inspire composers, thus contributing to the production of new music which would benefit Sicilian and Italian culture at large.[243]

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[241] "You visit full of awe the temples of Selinunte, Agrigento, the theaters of Taormina and Siracusa, and the thermal baths, the *naumachia*, the acqueducts, the *latomie* [caves], the ample catacombs of Siracusa (*Antrum Pelpis*), and you admire the Arab and Saracen and Norman buildings; but you are not aware of another trasure hidden among the common people proliferating in the cities and sweating in the fields, the woods, the sulphur caves, and on the burning, jagged, ample coasts of the island. You do not realize that there is germinating and growing under the kiss of the sun the flower of singing and poetry, blossomed without the help of art and letters, a natural ramification of the flower cultivated by the most ancient dwellers of the land of Sicily." Mastrigli, *Sicilia musicale*, 9.

[242] "I will consider myself content if these humble pages will suffice to reawaken in the reader the vivid desire to know more deeply the wonders that enrich the Sicilian songbook, and if they will the power, together, to entice some composers to free the poetic melodies of the Sicilian land [make them resound], so that he may strengthen the strings of his lyre in them." Mastrigli, *Sicilia musicale*, 10.

[243] On the perceived urgency to put an end to Italian musical decline at the end of the nineteenth century, see Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem. Opera, Nationalism and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 17–22.

From folklore to commodity, for the nation

To compare the multitude of songs to be found among the Sicilian people to a treasure was not exclusive to Mastrigli. Salomone-Marino too had mentioned the idea of a "tesoro della poesia" in his writings.[244] Yet, Mastrigli's rhetorical strategy insists on referencing a treasure multiple times in his pages, associating it with the other treasures that can be observed and enjoyed on the island. In the quotation above, he refers to it as the *canzoniere* [songbook] of Sicilian melodies — a songbook that is at least partly materialized in his publication.

In order to interpret this apparently minute shift, we must return to the frontispiece of the book, and consider that *La Sicilia musicale* was conceived as a "Ricordo dell'Esposizione di Palermo, 1891–92," a souvenir from the Exposition. At the time of great expositions, it was a common commercial practice to release many different publications under the label of "souvenirs." This was the case of countless postcards depicting the most extravagant pavilions, or beautiful views over the hosting city, but also short music scores (such as songs, dances, anthems) that would remind those who bought them of the experience they had while visiting the Exposition. The National Exposition in Palermo was no exception to this, with elaborate prints and other iconographic material now available for consultation in many archives scattered on the Italian peninsula, but also with catalogues of specific sections of the Exposition published as souvenirs,[245] and with dedicated musical pieces, such as a polka by Carlo Graffeo.[246] An extraordinary example of this kind of musical souvenirs was a whole *album* for piano published by Carmelo Tamburello, where many of the Exposition's attractions were depicted with appropriate music inspired by the atmosphere: a polka called "Elettricità" [electricity], an Abyssinian *cantilena*, a mazurka dedicated to the light fountain, a *siciliana* commemorating the "Ricordi Patri" [historical monuments], and finally a *galop* for the "Cavalcata storica" [historical horse ride].[247]

[244] "Treasure of poetry". Salomone-Marino, *Canti popolari siciliani in aggiunta*, VI.
[245] See for example: *La stenografia all'esposizione di Palermo. Album ricordo agli espositori* (Torino: Tipografia G. Candeletti, 1892).
[246] Carlo Graffeo, *Ricordo dell'Esposizione Nazionale di Palermo. Polka per pianoforte* (Palermo: Luigi Sandron, 1891?).
[247] Carmelo Tamburello, *Ricordo della Esposizione Nazionale di Palermo. Album per pianoforte* (Palermo: A. Branci, 1891?).

Another kind of publication connected to expositions was the visitor's guide. Published in the form of single booklets with a plan of the exposition and a map of the city, or accommodated on the columns of periodicals and official gazettes, these guides illustrated the most inspiring monuments and the most charming remains to be visited in the city and its surroundings in the time that visitors would not spend in the exposition area. In fact, they consisted in a detailed reproduction, on a small scale, of the models represented by the great tourist guides published by Murray and Baedeker. In addition to being an extremely informative tool, visitor's guides to the expositions also taught the reader how to interpret the exhibitions — as we have seen for the visitor's guides to Bologna 1888 and the music history they narrated in their pages.[248]

In the light of all these different publications connected to the special occasion of an exposition, it is therefore possible to consider *La Sicilia musicale* as an object that served multiple functions. On one hand, as expressly written on the front page, it was a souvenir from Sicily. As mentioned earlier, Mastrigli dedicated his work to Duchess Maria of Mondragone, a Sicilian lady who moved to the Marche region because of her marriage. In fact, in her public response to the dedication, the duchess admitted that the book "mi ricorderà la mia terra natale."[249] If we focus on the content and the prose adopted by Mastrigli, though, *La Sicilia musicale* also resembles a tourist guide. The expected tourist attractions in Sicily — nature and ruins — are listed and then compared with the "hidden treasure" of folk music. In this perspective, all the sections composing Mastrigli's presentation are not the result of a rigid thematic classification anymore, one derived from the works of previous linguists and ethnographers. They are rather stop-overs in the journey through the intangible heritage of Sicilian musical traditions that the reader's imagination would travel across, guided by Mastrigli, and that the actual visitors would experience, if they ventured outside the gates of the Exposition.

To summarize, *La Sicilia musicale* allows us to understand the kind of transformation a specific cultural (musical) object could experience through an exposition. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Sicilian culture and traditions were dissected and analyzed under the lens of ethnographers and philologists, who interpreted them through the prism of their own late-Romantic vision of sung poetry as a treasure, and as the site where Southern nature

[248] See pp. 48–51.
[249] "[...] will remind me of my homeland". Mastrigli, *Sicilia musicale*, [5].

expressed its essence at best. By 1891, the scientific knowledge produced around Sicilian folklore was ready to get absorbed in the operations of the National Exposition. Namely, it was showcased as a cultural product in Pitrè's *Mostra etnografica siciliana* and also commodified as any other monument or attraction for the visitors of the Exposition in Mastrigli's book — ideally, for Duchess Maria of Mondragone, or any other visitor animated by an aspiration towards the Duchess's aristocratic status.

Like the Exposition itself, though, *La Sicilia musicale* had another function past the commercial, consumerist one: it served the political scope of presenting Sicilian traditional culture (and Southern culture at large) to continental (Northern, rich) Italy and Europe. If traditional singing, as suggested by Mastrigli, had the potential to inspire the melodies of young Italian composers, this would be to the advantage of the whole nation-state. If more people in Sicily could recognize themselves in Mastrigli's idealized portrait, and more people in continental Italy could start to appreciate cultural aspects of a region otherwise afflicted by the traumatic discourse of *questione meridionale*, this would help legitimize the former subjects to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in the eyes of the new-born Italians. After all, the attempt was to transform the specificity of Sicilian history as a positive value, reacting to the severe remark by Francesco De Sanctis, author of a monumental history of Italian literature: "La coltura siciliana avea un peccato originale. Venuta dal di fuori, quella vita cavalleresca, mescolata di colori e rimembranze orientali, non avea riscontro nella vita nazionale."[250] In other words, *La Sicilia musicale* was one response, produced by a cultivated continental music popularizer for the élite public at the center of Palermo 1891–92, to the cultural crisis represented by the Italian *Mezzogiorno* in the wake of Unification.

[250] "Sicilian culture had an original sin. Coming from outside, that chivalric life, blended with oriental colors and reminiscences, it did not compare to the life of the nation." Francesco De Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana (1870–1)* 1, ed. Benedetto Croce (Bari: Laterza 1954), 11.

3. Genoa 1892: Columbus's centennial for Italian musical identity

The *Esposizione italo-americana*: an international vocation

The celebrations for the fourth centennial of Christopher Columbus's discovery of America were a much-awaited occasion in many countries, and especially in the great imperial powers which could take the most advantage from the symbolic value of such a turning point in history. According to the cultural imaginary prevailing since the second half of the nineteenth century, such powers decided to celebrate by engaging with world's fairs: Spain created monuments[251] and organized a series of congresses culminating in Fall 1892 with a triple exposition with a strong focus on the state of arts and industry around 1892, when the colonization era started; on their part, the United States of America cherished what was seen as the main divide between ancient history and the modern world of which they were the undisputed protagonists with the *World's Fair: Colombian Exposition* of Chicago in 1893.

In this battle between two economic giants and strong political powers, the city of Genoa decided to participate with its own series of events, which included the creation of a monument,[252] the publication of dedicated writings, and the organization of a number of fairs that were grouped under the name of *Esposizione Colombiana*, also known as the *Esposizione italo-americana*, which took place in the Italian city from Spring to Fall 1892. This Exposition, occurring immediately after the *Esposizione Nazionale* in Palermo, represents a useful term of comparison for the present study. Compared to Palermo, Genoa at the end of the nineteenth century was growing fast as an industrialized pole in Northern Italy. Its connections to the important cities of Turin and Milan, together with its proximity to France and its important harbor, allowed it to gravitate not only in the constellation of enterprises on the continent

[251] Among others, Spain erected an obelisk in Palos de la Frontera dedicated to discoverers, created a monument representing the encounter between Queen Isabella and Columbus in Granada, and a representation of a ship in Barcelona.

[252] The city commissioned sculptor Francesco Caroni a statue dedicated to the seafarer, located in piazza Acquaverde.

and overseas, but also to participate in the network of cultural actors animating Northern Italian cultural life — and especially the Italian music at the center of the present study.

The *Esposizione Colombiana*, therefore, constituted indirectly an attempt to elevate Genoa to the same level of cities like Milan, Bologna, and Turin, while it also directly impacted Italian musical panorama with the special commission of an opera on the subject of Christopher Columbus in a time where Italian identity in opera and high-brow music at large was at stake. The role of music within this Exposition and, conversely, the contribution of this Exposition to Italian music will be the object of this chapter. I will first illustrate how fanfares, choirs, and amateurs' music, orchestrated by Genoa's workers' society, were considered a resource to revitalize common Italian musical life — and consequently Italian people. On the other hand, I will show that high-brow instrumental music and opera were called to tackle, with different results, the difficult issue of an identity crisis afflicting Italian high-brow music in the second half of the nineteenth century. In order to understand why specifically the Exposition of Genoa 1892 became the opportunity to achieve such a high goal, however, it is necessary to underline how this Exposition surged to the level of national relevance — albeit funded by the municipality alone — and managed to reach an international scope.

From Palermo to Genoa: a case for another National Exposition

The Italian Exposition in Palermo offered a way to understand how the Italy managed, thirty years after its Unification, to include the *Mezzogiorno* in the national discourse in a way that was intended to solve, or at least to contain, the burning "Southern issue" singled out by intellectuals and politicians and afflicting the former Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. An exposition on the edge of being partly a compensatory maneuver for this Italian suffering macro-region, partly a celebration of the recently acquired colonies in the Horn of Africa, Palermo 1891–92 was born thanks to the impetus of local aristocratic élites who profited from the occasion largely funded by the state to showcase their cultural values and to legitimize their role in modern Italy.

With regard to music in particular, on the one hand the Palermo opera season during the Exposition months was praised by commentators writing for Northern Italian periodicals, and especially for the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, always looking for an internationally recognized repertoire — and possibly one included in the owner Ricordi's catalogue. The opera

offering of Teatro Politeama, including Wagner's *Lohengrin*, was praised as much as its audience, who proved to have internalized the proper behavioral pattern in a modern, international theater and therefore could bring Palermo to rank among the most civilized European cities. On the other hand, the same disciplined public had reclaimed the space of the music exhibition and of the inauguration concert by displaying the music genres to which it was more closely attached: amateur music and also what was identified as folklore music, which became a commodified product to be enjoyed as one of the many attractions Sicily had to offer.

As the Exposition in Palermo closed its gates, it was the turn of Genoa — another important Italian harbor city — to open its celebrations. Here too the Exposition had been promoted by local élites — most of which was represented by local aristocrats as well — but the actors involved at the organizational level were also entrepreneurs and engaged members not of the local aristocracy and government, but of the civil society. This difference in the social tissue of the two cities was inevitably reflected in the way their expositions were carried out, despite the time proximity with which they took place: as the last concerts were concluding the celebrations in Palermo in May 1892, the first events in Genoa — namely the floral exhibition — were already starting.

Once a proud, independent republic which, together with Venice, dominated Italian maritime commercial exchanges, Genoa had been first conquered by Napoleon at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and then annexed to the Kingdom of Sardinia after the Congress of Vienna.[253] From then, the city's destiny had been tied to that of the royal Savoy family, being closely connected to Turin and offering a direct access to the sea with its busy, industrialized harbor. The commercial and political fates were indeed intertwined in Genoa as in any other city in Italy around and after Unification. It is not by chance that the Navigazione Generale Italiana, the great national naval company founded in 1881, originated from the unification of the Florio enterprise from Palermo and Rubattino, the most important ship owner in Genoa. The image of the Rubattino company had profited from the revolts of Risorgi-

[253] Dino Puncuh, ed., *Storia di Genova: Mediterraneo, Europa, Atlantico* (Genova: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 2003).

mento, since its ships had been used in important missions towards the liberation of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and later the company had also inaugurated Italian colonial politics by investing in the Assab Bay on the Red Sea.[254]

The city of Genoa was therefore of primary importance in Italy as a crucial date for the world's history approached: October 12, 1892, the fourth centennial of Christopher Columbus's landing on the coasts of an island of Central America. The city started to prepare for the occasion a lot in advance. Already in August 1883, the city council had proposed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to organize a National Exposition on the occasion of the anniversary, one that would have included a world's exhibition of documents and material about Christopher Columbus.[255] The following year the Società Ginnastica Ligure Cristoforo Colombo, an organization for the promotion of sports and culture in the city of Genoa, proposed to be on the front line in the organization of the Exposition, and suggested to form an Exposition committee with the city mayor as its leader. In 1886, the committee for the celebrations was finally founded, and starting from March 1888 it found its leader in the person of mayor Stefano Castagnola, who, with a brief interruption in 1891, was one of the main figures orchestrating the whole preparation of the celebrations. With such celebrations and the Exposition, the citizens of Genoa wanted to pay an homage to the royal family, to showcase the advancement of science and culture in Italy, to demonstrate the city's maritime prowess, and ultimately to locate Genoa as a strategic center for the transmission of knowledge in Italy and abroad — music would of course play its part in the accomplishment of this set of goals. Yet, although motivated by a high aim and a strong determination, in Genoa 1892 all these expectations were not always equally fulfilled, as usually in the context of an exposition.

From frustrated ambitions to an international event

Initially, the ambition of Genoa with its celebrations was to officially represent Italy as a nation. Therefore, the committee had advanced to Rome an unprecedented request for what

[254] Paolo Fragiacomo, *L'industria come continuazione della politica. La cantieristica italiana 1861–2011* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2012), 19–30.

[255] A detailed reconstruction of the origins of the Exposition, with references to the administrative documents, can be found in *Cronache della Commemorazione del IV° Centenario Colombiano edite a cura del Municipio 1892* (Genova: Stabilimento Fratelli Armanino, [1893]), 11–33. For a more recent presentation of the *Esposizione Colombiana*, see: Mario Bottaro, *Festa di fine secolo. 1892 Genova & Colombo* (Genova: Pirella, 1989).

concerned Italian expositions, urging the state Government to financially support the endeavor with an amount of fifteen million liras — an unrealistic figure that was ignored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs — but also successive requests for a more reasonable sum of money — for example the same one million liras that Palermo was granted for the Exposition of 1891–92 — were rejected. We do not know exactly what made the Government in Rome choose in favor of Palermo rather than Genova as the recipient of an Exposition subsidy, but it is reasonable that once the funding had been allocated for Palermo, budgeting and practical reasons would not allow for another exposition to take place the immediately following year. The committee in Genoa had therefore to abandon the project of an official National Exposition with the full support of the Italian state, and instead opted for a collection of events, partly of national, partly of international scope, which were funded exclusively with the city's finances — the amount of the city budget destined to the Exposition in 1892 was 1,800,000 liras, to which minor, separate expenses should be added — and the revenue of a lottery organized for the occasion.[256]

The Exposition started on May 21, 1892, with the *Settima Esposizione Nazionale Floro-Orticola*, the seventh national floral-horticultural exhibition held in the gardens of Palazzo Doria, today known as Villa del Principe, with its garden directly facing the sea.[257] It was the first of a series of national congresses and exhibitions that the Genoa committee managed to attract to the city in the year of the Exposition. In addition to a *Congresso geografico e storico*, inspired by the double importance of the figure of Columbus both for the history of mankind and the geographical discoveries, an international regatta took place in the city's harbor, and actual exposition pavilions were built in the area denominated "Spianata del Bisagno," roughly starting from today's Piazza Verdi outside the Brignole train station and extending South, towards the sea, to today's piazza della Vittoria. All the relevant Exposition sites, together with a description of the main exhibitions organized during the celebrations, were carefully illustrated in the *Guida ufficiale illustrata* of the Exposition.[258]

The most elegant pavilions were concentrated in the Southern part of the Exposition grounds, where, apart from the usual galleries and for the arts and industry pavilions, a large

[256] *Cronache della Commemorazione*, 23, n. 40.
[257] Flowers exhibitions were common in many Italian cities, but Liguria has a long tradition of flowers production that represents an excellence in the region.
[258] *Esposizione italo-americana in Genova, luglio-novembre 1892. Guida Ufficiale illustrata* (Milano: Sonzogno, 1892).

area was devoted to the Southern American Catholic missions. The work of missionaries overseas was therefore a fundamental element of the internationalism boasted by the *Esposizione Italo-Americana*. On the other hand, the Northern part of the Exposition was dominated by the new "palestra" [gymnasium] of the Società Ginnastica Ligure Cristoforo Colombo: far from just being the space for sports and military exercises, this was the area that attracted the largest amount of people during the many events animating the Expositions. The Società Ginnastica Ligure Cristoforo Colombo was in fact the promoter of many of the activities programmed during the celebrations, such as a gymnastics competition, a velocipede race, more competitions for fireworks, fencing, choirs, and fanfares, and a parade of students' battalions displaying coordination and gymnastics skills. The nationalist inspiration was blatant in this kind of events, which summoned and brought together resources from all the country uniting them in collective shows with the excuse of competition. Nationalism was oozing especially from a comment to the student's gymnastics parade:

> Tutti i fanciulli, tutti i giovinetti in Genova sono convenuti da ogni parte della patria italiana [...]; li incita nell'atto altamente civile la coscienza del proprio dovere di futuri cittadini italiani; con essi batte il cuore d'Italia, in essi è la visione dell'avvenire della patria ridente di speranza e di gloria civile e pacifica.[259]

Finally, the entire city participated in the celebrations. The urban tissue and architecture were revolutionized, with the opening of new passages and arterial roads in the old town, which during the Exposition became the favorite site for parades and processions. The main opera house, the Teatro Carlo Felice, was also renovated and refurbished for the occasion, so that it could suitably serve as the heart of the most official soirées and the location of the most exclusive concerts. As I will discuss later, the most important event of the season at Carlo Felice was the première of an opera composed especially for the celebration, the *Cristoforo Colombo* by Alberto Franchetti on a libretto by Luigi Illica. Other highlights of the celebrations were the visit of the Royal Family, who stayed in Genoa from September 8 to 14 and attended multiple events at the Exposition,[260] the international regatta — the sailing competition taking place between August 4 and 9 — and the parade of ships, all decorated and carrying the

[259] "All the children, all the young boys have gathered in Genoa from every part of Italy [...]; they are urged to this highly civil action by the awareness of their duty as future Italian citizens; with them the heart of Italy is beating; in them is the vision of the motherland's future smiling with hope and civil and peaceful glory." *Cronache della Commemorazione*, 50.
[260] *Cronache della Commemorazione*, 273–307.

highest officials from different foreign countries, coming to the harbor to officially salute Genoa and Italy, a gesture that made particularly proud of the outcome of the celebrations:

> Genova vide il Re e la Regina d'Italia, tutta la Reale Famiglia circondati dalle Presidenze del Parlamento, dai Consiglieri della Corona, dai Rappresentanti delle Nazioni straniere onorare la città di loro visita, e fu a buon diritto superba di contemplare il suo Re ossequiato dalle Flotte di tutto il Mondo [...].[261]

Despite the lack of governmental funds, the 1892 celebrations in Genoa resulted in an officially recognized event, with the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which helped keeping the contacts with foreign ambassadors and emissaries. Italian and foreign institutions were therefore duly represented, but their presence did not depend solely on the good organization of the events. What attracted the many representatives of the world's leading governments was in fact the inspiration at the heart of the whole celebrations: Christopher Columbus and his journey to America, a figure and an undertaking of inherently international implications, which the celebrations in Genoa and the Exposition sought to represent adequately.

Expositions for Columbus: a cultural diplomacy conflict

In order to understand what made of Genoa 1892 an internationally recognized event, possibly to a level that not even the most recent Italian Exposition of Palermo could have hoped for, it is necessary to point out that Christopher Columbus was a figure of utmost interest in many different countries. *Genovese* of origins, he had been able to embark in his adventure thanks to the conjunct investments of private bankers from Genoa and the fundamental contribution of the Spanish Crown. The adventurous journey of the three caravels and especially the landing in an unexpected continent stimulated the imaginary of the generations to come, at least in Western Europe and in the Americas.[262] If in the United States the figure of

[261] "Genoa saw the King and the Queen of Italy, all the Royal Family honoring the city with their visit, surrounded by the Presidents of the Parliament, the Counselors of the Crown, the Representatives of the foreign Nations, and it was rightfully proud to see its King paid his tribute by the Fleets of the entire World [...]." *Cronache della Commemorazione*, 8.

[262] The reception of Columbus assimilated to other national heroes even affected twentieth-century France, which was not directly involved in the seafarer's undertaking. See: Annie Molinié, "Cristóbal Colón en Francia: los libros de texto de Historia (1920-1970)," in *Congreso Internacionál. Cristobal Colón, 1506–2006. Historia y Leyenda*, edited by Consuelo Varela (Palos de la Frontera: Universidad Internacional de Andalucía — Sede Iberoamericana Santa María de la Rábida, 2006), 345–355.

Columbus was appropriated to become a hero of national history,[263] in Spain the discovery of America inaugurated the era of colonialism and happened to coincide in the same year with the completion of the *Reconquista* after the conquest of Granada.[264] I will discuss later in this chapter the traits characterizing the reception of the historical figure of Columbus in Italy. For now, it will suffice to notice that both Italy and Spain, among many other countries, had valid reasons to reclaim the figure of Admiral Columbus as part of their national heritage.

With the Columbian anniversary approaching, Spanish historians had started to produce many publications to commemorate the seafarer's life and undertaking, while great celebrations were prepared in Spain for the triple exposition of 1892: the *Exposición Histórico-Americana*, the *Exposición Histórico-Europea*, and the *Exposición de Bellas Artes*.[265] With these events, the country sought to claim that the success of the discovery was effectively a Spanish accomplishment. At the same time, also Italy inaugurated a new season of Columbian studies with a gigantic effort which produced a collection of essays edited by philologist Cesare De Lollis. Here, all the newly-found documents concerning Columbus's life, and the biography and historical context of the seafarer, were discussed in detail.[266] *L'illustrazione italiana*, the most popular magazine and a valuable thermometer of Italy's cultural life of that time, created a new column called "Novità colombiane" [Columbian news], which signaled and reviewed publications or news concerning the Admiral, and dedicated a special issue to him. Columbus was portrayed also by Italian artists, not only with the appearance of many monuments and poems dedicated to the Admiral in the Peninsula, but by presenting statues inspired by the discovery of America also in other expositions abroad.[267]

When the *Esposizione italo-americana* was inaugurated in Genoa, therefore, the figure of Columbus and the celebrations devoted to him represented the delicate terrain for an international cultural diplomacy conflict concerning who, between Spain and Italy, was responsible for, and therefore should take pride in, the discovery of America. The political

[263] Carla Rahn Phillips and William D. Phillips, "Christopher Columbus in United States Historiography: Biography as Projection," in Varela, ed., *Congreso Internacionál*, 357–374.
[264] Carmen Bernand, "Colón y la modernidad: de un centenario a otro," in Varela, ed., *Congreso Internacionál*, 335–344.
[265] Salvador Bernabéu Albert, "De leyendas, tópicos e imágenes. Colón y los estudios colombinos en torno a 1892," in Varela, ed., *Congreso Internacionál*, 299–333.
[266] Cesare De Lollis et al., eds., *Raccolta di documenti e studi pubblicati dalla R. Commissione Colombina*, 15 Vols (Roma: 1892–1896). See: Diego Stefanelli, "Il *Cristoforo Colombo* di Cesare De Lollis," *Carte Romanze* 1/2 (2013): 275–350.
[267] Matteo Gardonio, "Scultori italiani a Parigi tra Esposizioni Universali, mercato e strategie," *Saggi e Memorie di storia dell'arte* 33 (2009): 340–353.

interest at stake necessarily enhanced the relevance and meaning of the events in Genoa, putting the city in the international spotlight for the duration of the Exposition. Moreover, the terms of such dispute extended largely beyond the limits of an exclusively intra-European conflict between Spain and Italy, since it involved even Latin American countries, former Spanish colonies which gained independence during the nineteenth century and which participation to the expositions — or lack thereof — had inevitably critical political implications.[268]

This diplomatic issue was tackled with tact by both parties involved, and an attempt at collaboration was even fathomed by Spain in 1888, in preparation for the upcoming centennial. In fact, the Spanish commission suggested that the celebrations could be coordinated between Italy and Spain in order to take place in succession, first in Genoa — where Columbus was born — then in Granada — where he encountered Queen Isabella for the first time, then in Salamanca, in Palos, in Barcelona — following the Admiral's travels — and finally in the capital, Madrid: "Per tale guisa queste feste costituirebbero come altrettante fermate di una sola grande solennità universale [...]."[269] Still, traces of their implicit antagonism, and of the processes of appropriation at play, can be read between the lines in a later, accurately crafted letter from 1892: here the Spanish Government, while accepting the formal invitation to visit the Genoa Exposition, appointed the Spanish ambassador in Italy "di rappresentare il suo Governo in quelle solennità le quali, per riferirsi a Colombo, la Spagna considera come proprie."[270]

References to Columbus were multiple for all the duration of the *Esposizione italo-americana*, which was officially inaugurated on July 10 and was closed on December 4. An initial project for the realization of a permanent Columbian world museum was reduced to an exhibition where reconstructions and models of the caravels could be admired by the Exposition visitors. Two *passeggiate storiche* — processions commemorating the day Columbus set sail from Palos de la Frontera and his return to Spain — served as a reenactment of two historical moments, with period costumes for the characters of Columbus, the King and

[268] See for example Dení Ramírez Losada, "La Exposición histórico-americana de Madrid 1892 y la ¿ausencia? de México," *Revista de Indias* 69/246 (2009): 273–306.
[269] "This way, these celebrations would constitute as many stop-overs of a single, great, universal solemn event." *Cronache della Commemorazione*, 16–17, n. 15.
[270] "To represent his Government in such celebrations that Spain considers as its own, since they refer to Columbus." *Cronache della Commemorazione*, 28, n. 61.

Queen of Spain, and the soldiers accompanying them — each of them interpreted by a notable member of the Genoa aristocracy and high bourgeoisie [FIGS. 11a-d]. Nor should we think that the spectators of the processions were neutral to the Renaissance-styled costumes, since *Il Teatro Illustrato* was already instructing its readers about the implications of such Spanish severe garments in an ongoing illustrated column called "Album di costumi" [costumes' album]:

> Pure qui [in Spain] si erano introdotti gli sparati, ma la stoffa o la camicia che vi facevano capolino furono tosto ricacciati: lo sparato si volle chiuso dal duro governo del dominatore, nel modo stesso che la libera parola restò soffocata e le labbra si chiusero davanti l'inquisizione.[271]

A curious restaurant in the shape of an oversized egg offered a favorite view over the Exposition grounds, but unfortunately these buildings lasted even less than what they had been conceived for: on January, 6 1893, a fire destroyed most of what remained of the Exposition [FIG. 12]. Little trace is left also of a cantata written by composer Ettore Perosio on a text by Silvio Caligo on the subject of Columbus. Since both the score and the libretto have gone lost, the only information we have consists in a review presented before its performance in the Salone dei concerti in the Palazzo delle Belle Arti on September 14, the last day of the Royal Family visit [TABLE 4].[272] In this cantata, called *Apoteosi di Colombo* and directed by Luigi Mancinelli — one of the protagonists of the musical offering for the Exposition — America and Italia, interpreted by stars of the likes of soprano Hariclea Darclée and mezzosoprano Caroline Zawner, praised the fate of Columbus and of mankind thanks to the Admiral's enterprise.

To conclude, the Columbian anniversary was an intrinsically international event in which different national powers had the opportunity to appropriate the historical figure of Columbus. Such characteristic made it possible for Genoa to enter the international stage and to present itself as one of the indispensable centers in the spotlight of international attention, even though only for the duration of the celebrations in which most events and facilities were inspired by the seafarer's life. In the next pages, I will show that this central position ephemerally gained by Genoa was taken as an opportunity to assess the conditions of Italian music at

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[271] "The front opening had already been introduced in the suits also here, but the fabric or the shirt peeping out were immediately pushed back in: the front got closed by the hard government of the ruler, in the same way that speech was suffocated and the lips were closed in front of the Inquisition." Album di costumi: gli spagnuoli dal 1500 al 1600," *TI* October 1892, 146–147: 146.

[272] "L'apoteosi di Cristoforo Colombo," *Il Caffaro*, Supplemento al numero 238 (26 August 1892): [2]; *Cronache della Commemorazione*, 135–137.

11a 11b 11c

11d

FIGS. 11a–d: Pictures of the *passeggiata storica* for the Exposition of Genoa 1892.

the end of the century in front of national and international observers, and it was done on the triple level of opera, high-brow instrumental music, and common music — fanfares, choirs, and amateurs' music. From the analysis of these three aspects will emerge that opti-

mism, on the one hand, permeated the presentation of common music thanks to the incessant work of the Società Ginnastica Ligure, while high-brow performances, on the other, were meant as a reaction to a perceived identity crisis of Italian music.

FIG. 12: View of the *Esposizione italo-americana* of Genoa 1892 from its main entrance. On the right the South side of the Exposition with the *fontana luminosa* and the egg-shaped restaurant. Between them, the *salone dei concerti* with the art gallery creating a loop behind it. The new gymnasium of the Società Ginnastica Ligure Cristoforo Colombo was located on the North side, not visible in this engraving.

TABLE 4. HIGHLIGHTS OF CONCERTS AND OPERA PREMIÈRES IN GENOA DURING THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION.

	Teatro Carlo Felice	**Salone dei concerti**	**Palestra S.G.L. Colombo**	**Palazzo Ducale**
28–29/06			Military fanfares competition	
22/07		Recital Sebastiano Gillardini		
30/07		Recital Edwin Lemare		
03/08			*Passeggiata storica*: departure	
05/08				Concert Comitato Universitario
19/08		Concert, Giuseppe Loverde De Angelis		
20/08	First Mancinelli concert			
21/08	Second Mancinelli concert			
23/08	*Otello*			
27–31/08			Mandolinists competition	
28/08		Concert Vittorio Maria Vanzo		
02–07/09			Municipal fanfares competition	
05/09	*Rigoletto*			
06–07/09			Choirs competition	
08/09	*Otello*: gala night for the royal visit			
10/09			*Passeggiata storica*: return	
14/09	*Apoteosi di Colombo*, cantata			

	Teatro Carlo Felice	Salone dei concerti	Palestra S.G.L. Colombo	Palazzo Ducale
16–19/09			Choirs competition	
17–18/09			Municipal fanfares competition	
06/10	*Cristoforo Colombo*			
17/10	*La Wally*			
27/10	*La Favorita*			

Music at the *Esposizione italo-americana*: performing Italianness

By focusing the attention on the music performance events organized for the Columbian celebrations in Genoa, it is possible to identify two different domains which I have mentioned earlier in this chapter. On the one hand, high-brow music, or, as Pietro Floridia would have called it, had he visited Genoa in Summer and Fall 1892, "musica ARTE," art music.[273] In Genoa, the main protagonist of this kind of musical offering was composer and famous conductor Luigi Mancinelli, supported by the local, devoted music critic and enthusiast Cesare Gamba in his vision of popularizing concert music — that is, symphonic and chamber music — and foreign music, together with opera. On the other hand, there was what I have called "common music," for lack of a better term. This kind of music was not defined as a single entity in the vocabulary of the newspapers and essays of that time, and yet learned commentators hardly missed a chance to mark the distinction between that and art music. With "common music" I refer to choirs, brass bands, military fanfares, and amateurs' circles that performed regularly in the cities throughout the year, and that intensified their performing schedule during expositions.

The difference between common and art music did not necessarily concern the musical material they comprised: in fact, it was the norm during all the nineteenth century for fanfares to present rearranged excerpts and potpourris of current or older operas, a phenomenon which indeed contributed largely to the diffusion of the opera repertoire outside the theaters and the main urban centers.[274] It was also not strictly a matter of professionalism, since professionals and amateurs could occasionally coexist in theaters as well as in choirs and brass bands — and actually, the members of a military fanfare were trained musicians who earned their living through the performer's profession. Instead, it was the concurrence of such tendencies, together with the venue where the musicians performed, which usually guided the aesthetic judgement of music critics: the label "art music" would mostly gravitate towards a complex and virtuoso repertoire performed by professional musicians in especially dedicated venues, such as the opera theater and the concert hall; common music, on the other

[273] See p. 83.

[274] Antonio Carlini, "La banda, strumento primario di divulgazione delle opere verdiane nell'Italia rurale dell'Ottocento," in *Verdi 2001: atti del convegno internazionale, Parma — New York — New Haven, 24 gennaio — 1 febbraio 2001* 1, ed. Fabrizio Della Seta, Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Marco Marica (Firenze: Olschki, 2003), 135–143.

hand, would more easily be associated with more approachable or simplified tunes performed by amateurs — with the exception of the military fanfares — in generic locations, such as palaces, conference rooms, or in open air.

The peculiarity of common music in Genoa 1892 is that it did not simply consist in an intensified programming ordered by the municipality with the participation of various private circles, as it was the case for the National Exposition of Palermo. Instead, the offering of common music in Genoa was strictly connected to the grounds of the *Esposizione italo-americana*, and it was thoroughly coordinated by the Exposition's promoter, the Società Ginnastica Ligure Cristoforo Colombo. The function of this society for the celebrations in Genoa cannot be underestimated, and although the most authoritative music critics did not devote as many pages to its activities, I will show in the next section that the success of the music events it created was crucial to present Italians as a revitalized people, and consequently Italy as a strong nation.

Of mandolins, choirs, and fanfares: music and the blood of the nation

Considering the radical differences in the history and identities of Palermo and Genoa, it should not surprise that similar musical practices were associated with radically different values and political meanings. The discrepancy between the judgements expressed towards the exhibition of music instruments is telling in this respect, since their appreciation in the journals that I could examine was entirely divergent. On the pages of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, Floridia, while visiting the music exhibition of the National Exposition of Palermo, despised the guitars, lutes, and the mechanical pianos, and was disappointed by the poor conditions of the pianos on display. On the other hand, the music critic for the local newspaper *Il Caffaro* praised the production of Italian instrument makers, which made for a pleasurable Exposition section:

> [...] è una di quelle sezioni che si visitano ben volentieri la seconda e la terza volta, sempre con maggior piacere, sempre più soddisfatti del nostro incremento nella geniale industria, in gran parte ormai non più tributaria all'estero. Primeggiano in questa gli strumenti a fiato: in quantità

> smisurata gli ottoni, in numero sufficienti i legni, ed abbondano quelli a percossa, timpani, casse, tamburi, ecc.[275]

As to the mandolins, which constituted for Floridia an overrepresented section of the music instruments exhibition in Palermo, and even haunted the inauguration concert at the *sala delle feste*, their presence did not disturb the commentators in Genoa. While reviewing an entire mandolinists competition taking place at the end of August, *genovese* music critic Achille De Marzi commented:

> È dunque [...] un risveglio generale delle facoltà artistiche e d'artistica coltura nel nostro paese, grazie allo strumento medioevale, che, per fatalità storica di condizioni è tornato in favore nella Società moderna. Son cambiati i tempi [...] tuttavia, conveniamone, il mandolino e la mandòla, il liuto e il plettro, se non riconquistarono il colore della tradizione medioevale guadagnarono certamente in meccanismo ed in espressione e risorsero fra noi con pieno diritto d'affermare l'*ego sum* nella grande famiglia istrumentale moderna.[276]

The mandolinists competition was actually one of the many musical events organized by the Società Ginnastica Ligure Cristoforo Colombo, funded in 1877 from the merge of two preexisting societies, the eponymous Società Ginnastica Ligure and the Società Ginnastica Operaia (later "Cristoforo Colombo"), an emanation of the Confederazione Operaia [workers' confederation].[277] It was this society which proposed the idea of organizing an Exposition for the centennial, and the same society was also the commissioner of many national competitions. Among them, sport competitions like the already mentioned gymnastics competition and parade, and the fencing competition, but also musical events such as the mandolinists competition, a competition for military fanfares in the month of June, and the competitions for choirs and municipal fanfares which took place in September.

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[275] "It is one of those sections that one may well visit a second and a third time, always with greater pleasure, always more satisfied with our progress in the industry of inventions, nowadays largely not anymore dependent from foreign countries. Here the wind instrument stand out: brass instruments in great quantity, a sufficient number of wood instruments, and many are the percussions, timpani, bas drums, drums, etc." "Gli strumenti musicali," *Il Caffaro* 1892/215 (Tuesday, August 2), [2].

[276] "It is therefore [...] a general awakening of artistic skills and artistic culture in our country, thanks to the medieval instrument, which, because of historical contingencies has met the favors of modern society. Times have changed [...] yet, we shall admit, the mechanism and expressiveness of the mandolin and the mandola, of the lute and the plectrum have certainly progressed, although they have not regained the color of medieval tradition, and have arisen among us to rightfully claim "I am there" in the great family of modern instruments." Reported in *Cronache della Commemorazione*, 88.

[277] See *Il Caffaro* 1877/36 (Tuesday, February 5), [1].

All this fervent activity should be indicative of the importance of workers' societies in nineteenth-century Italy, and especially of their role in great expositions. These societies were often invited to, or participated spontaneously in these celebrations of progress, being especially interested in keeping track of the technological developments of the industry and the consequences they would have on the conditions of the factory and its workers.[278] The presence of these and similar associations on the territory was valued as beneficial for society at large, including women,[279] and represented an outlet to creatively educate their affiliated members through specific activities — eminently sports and gymnastics — continuing the work of creation and disciplining of citizens established since the Risorgimento era in the Kingdom of Sardinia.[280] In late nineteenth-century Italy, workers' societies were also deemed the thermometer of the growing and evolving awareness of a class whose needs and critical issues had entered the political discourse. A major contribution to this new class sensitivity had been brought into society by contemporary literature, especially through the foundational works of Edmondo De Amicis, who educated generations with his 1886 novel for young adolescents *Cuore*.[281] But what made the workers' societies even more relevant during the Columbian celebrations was the fact that, during the Exposition, the Italian workers' organizations took advantage of affordable train fares to convene in Genoa and found the Partito Socialista Italiano [Italian socialist party].[282] Along with the Columbian centennial, this political event also contributed to attract the international observers' eyes on the *Esposizione italo-americana*.[283]

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[278] Anna Pellegrino, "Viaggi nel progresso. Gli operai Italiani alle esposizioni internazionali (1851–1906)," *Imprese e Storia* 36 (July–December 2007 [2009]): 305–344.

[279] Maurizio Ridolfi, "L'apprendistato alla cittadinanza. Donne e sociabilità popolare nell'Italia liberale," *Meridiana* 22/23 (January–May 1995): 67–95. For a discussion on presence and representation of women in world's fairs, see Myriam Boussahba-Bravard and Rebecca Rogers, eds., *Women in international and universal exhibitions, 1876-1937* (New York, London: Routledge, 2018).

[280] Stefano Pivato, "Ginnastica e Risorgimento. Alle origini del rapporto sport/nazionalismo," *Ricerche storiche* 19/1 (January–April 1989): 249–279; Sergio Giuntini, *Sport, scuola e caserma dal Risorgimento al primo conflitto mondiale* (Padova: Centro grafico editoriale, 1988).

[281] Roberto Risso, "Prima della FIAT: lavoro e lavoratori, realizzazione e sfruttamento (1869–1908) nella Torino di Edmondo De Amicis (A Luciano Tamburini, in memoria)," *Annali d'italianistica* 32 (2014): 155–176; Daria Valentini, "Amore e ginnastica," *Annali d'italianistica* 16 (1998): 103–119.

[282] Luca Borzani and Mario Bottaro, *Per Colombo ma con Turati: Genova 1892, la nascita del Partito Socialista* (Genova: Pirella, 1992).

[283] Ernesto Ragionieri, "L'Italia e il movimento operaio italiano nella 'Neue Zeit' (1883–1914)," *Studi storici* 5/3 (July–September 1964): 467–531. On the Italian socialist party's music politics and aesthetics, see: Marco Gervasoni, "Musique et socialism en Italie," *Le Mouvement social* 208 (July–September 2004): 29–43.

The activity of workers' societies was therefore preeminent in the celebrations, and the Società Ginnastica Ligure was on the forefront with its many competitions. Gymnastics were obviously one of the main focuses, and the kind of commentary it generated was permeated by a strong rhetoric of nationalism. Music was equally as important. The national competitions attracted the largest number of visitors, who appreciated the grandiosity of enormous choirs and brass masses performing all together and singing hymns dedicated to Columbus at the end of each tournament.[284] But most importantly, music performances such as that of the Italian military fanfares gratified the commentators like De Marzi, who got carried by the nationalist afflatus:

> Le due serate di gara indette dalla Colombo non hanno servito solamente a creare una lodevole emulazione fra i concorrenti, a stabilire un campionato, per quanto ristretto, nei sette corpi di musica del nostro Corpo d'armata; ma hanno fermamente provato a chi ha lungamente seguito lo svolgimento artistico di questi corpi, per loro vicende continuamente irregolari, che la musica militare ha camminato di conserva col movimento artistico moderno, ha fatto sangue di tutto il progresso musicale, ha toccato insomma una mèta, che dista di molto dall'obbiettivo delle musiche militari.[285]

The military fanfares had played a *Fantasia Militare* by Amilcare Ponchielli, Bizet's *L'Arlésienne*, but also opera favorite excerpts from Meyerbeer's *Dinorah* and Boito's *Mefistofele* among others. Reading De Marzi's lines, and especially the very common — and for that reason all the more revealing — allusion to "sangue," the blood, it is not possible to ignore their connection to the dominating, racialized ideas and preoccupations concerning the Italian nation at the end of the nineteenth century. A massive emigration of the poor and especially Southerners towards the Americas, severely aggravating the burning *questione meridionale*, had been a powerful ideological asset to justify the greedy colonialization of the Horn of Africa. The claim was that this new, promising land was waiting for productive members of the "Italian race" to cultivate it and civilize the local populations. In turn, Italians would have profited from it by getting the opportunity to own fertile land in the colonies without falling

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[284] For example, a *Canto del marinaio italiano* by Enrico Guarnerio and Nicolò Massa or the *inno La scoperta dell'America* by Antonio Puppo and Giuseppe Rota. *Cronache della Commemorazione*, 90.

[285] "The two competition nights organized by the Colombo have served not only to create a commendable imitation among the contestants, and to establish a tournament, although limited, among the seven fanfares of our army; they have also strongly proven to those who followed the artistic development of these fanfares, which has been continuously irregular because of some incidents, that military music has advanced along the modern artistic movement, has made of all musical progress its new blood, hence it has reached a destination that is much distant from the goal of military music." *Cronache della Commemorazione*, 79.

outside of the protection of the motherland.[286] This would have ultimately reinvigorated Italian people and benefited the nation, an urge felt at all levels of society. The dissemination of amateur and military music, both in the form of participatory and presentational practices, was interpreted as a metaphorical blood transfusion that could serve precisely the same goal. The technology *strictu sensu* of musical instruments that could be played by non-professionals, and the technology of high-brow music shifting from the opera stage to the military fanfare, became a device to revitalize Italian people, and consequently the nation.

The crisis of Italian art music

If Italy as a nation was coping with unfavorable demographic and economic contingencies, then the activity of the Società Ginnastica Ligure helped reacting to it through the use of amateurs' music and military fanfares. Yet, the musical programming in Genoa during the Columbian celebrations attempted to react also to another crisis, one that was exquisitely musical and concerned mainly "art music." High-brow music performances were offered in the music pavilion of the *Esposizione italo-americana* and at the city's main opera theater, and their aim was to compensate for the scarce production of new successful operas and instrumental compositions by Italian authors. This scarcity of impactful works was perceived as aggravating Italy's musical life in the second half of the nineteenth century, to the point that, in an era dominated by rampant nationalism, it constituted the reason for an identity crisis in its own right. A contextualization of such crisis will explain why the organizers of high-brow concerts in Genoa 1892 were so invested in the creation of a remarkable musical offering, and ultimately in the success of an opera based on the figure of Christopher Columbus.

The terms of the Italian music crisis have been well expressed by eminent music critic Massimo Mila in the late 1950s in an essay about musical life in nineteenth-century Italy that still reflects in part the same rigid division in national schools very popular since the late Romantic era — a division which expositions, with their different national pavilions, very well contributed to establish.[287] Mila dates the origins of the crisis back to the late eighteenth century, by certifying that instrumental music found itself in a state of "agony," since most of

[286] Rhiannon Noel Welch, "Race and colonial (re)productivity in post-Unification Italy," *Annali d'italianistica* 32 (2014): 197–213.
[287] Massimo Mila, "La vita della musica nell'Ottocento italiano," *Belfagor* 12/5 (September 1957): 485–505.

Italy's last great composers of instrumental music had found their fortune abroad, establishing their lives and publishing their works in foreign European courts. The lack of new instrumentalists from the Peninsula, with the notable exception of violin virtuoso Niccolò Paganini, had Mila drastically admit that "l'Italia aveva perduto i contatti con la musica europea [...]. Dopo Haydn e Mozart una saracinesca era calata sulle Alpi."[288] And although private circles and concert series devoted to the popularization of instrumental music were active in Italy and helped spreading foreign repertoires among the Italian audiences, it is true that in many cases these events, especially the public ones, stemmed from a perceived underrepresentation of high-brow instrumental music in theaters and concert halls.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, an aesthetic and systemic revolution would also affect opera, making it possible for the model of Italian (and specifically Neapolitan) opera dominating the eighteenth century all over Europe to become only one of the competitors to win the hearts of the aristocrats during Restoration, with other operatic traditions in foreign languages gaining popularity. Once more, Mila's brilliant use of metaphors captures perfectly how the state of Italian opera in the nineteenth century was perceived by contemporary observers:

> Il melodramma italiano aveva avuto carattere di colonizzazione. [...] era una secie d'impero musicale superiore alle divisioni politiche, e l'italiano — o qualcuno dei suoi dialetti — ne era la lingua ufficiale. Col passaggio dal Sette all'Ottocento la penetrazione degli operisti italiani all'estero perde il carattere trionfale di colonizzazione per assumere quello, meno comodo, di emigrazione.[289]

The double crisis of Italian music, that is, the lack of instrumental music since the beginning of the nineteenth century on the one hand, and the gradual loss of primacy of Italian opera in favor of foreign traditions (in German and French) in the second half of the same century

[288] "Italy had lost contact with European music [...]. After Haydn and Mozart a shutter closed on the Alps." Mila, "La vita della musica nell'Ottocento italiano:" 500.

[289] "Italian music drama had had the character of a colonization. [...] it was a sort of musical empire superior to political divisions, and Italian — or some of its dialects — was its official language. With the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, the penetration of Italian opera composers abroad loses its triumphant character of colonization, assuming that, less comfortable, of emigration." Mila, "La vita della musica nell'Ottocento italiano:" 487.

on the other, shaped the way in which the state of music in Italy was perceived after Unification.[290]

As the new-born nation-state faced economic straitened circumstances, state subsidies to opera theaters that had been inherited from pre-Unification legislation were gradually abandoned. The situation was aggravated at the beginning of the 1870s, when such subsidies virtually disappeared as a consequence of the major depression affecting the global economy for the last decades of the century.[291] Inevitably, theaters were confronted with hardships that made the production of new operas too risky as an investment, considering also the rising cachet of major singers who were gaining success on a global scale.[292] It became more convenient for impresarios to rely on evergreen classics from the previous decades in order to ensure their revenue and the survival of their business.[293] The only living Italian composer who could certainly summon crowds at the theater was in fact Verdi, who nonetheless seemed to have abandoned opera composition after *Aida* in 1872, with the exception of his revision of *Simon Boccanegra* in 1881 and the Italian version of *Don Carlos* of 1884. In addition to that, his last operas had been written for theaters abroad and were based on subjects and a conception that hardly oozed Italianness. As Körner notices, after the 1850s Verdi "almost ceased to contribute to the consolidation of a national culture through opera."[294]

Italian opera scenes, therefore, hosted mostly a repertoire of old Italian titles — all-time favorites by Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini in addition to Verdi — and works of foreign composers, a scenario confirmed also in the catalogues of music publishers advertising sheet music for amateurs.[295] This situation, extending from the early 1870s to the late 1880s, was disheartening for contemporary critics, who were constantly in the search for new, young composers.[296] They thought that new authors could reconnect to the glorious Italian operatic

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[290] The radical dichotomy between German instrumental music and Italian opera as the foundational divide of music history in the nineteenth century was also crystallized by Carl Dahlhaus in his *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesebaden: Laaber, 1980).
[291] See the chapter "A problem of identity," in Julian Budden, *From* Don Carlos *to* Falstaff. *The Operas of Verdi* 3 (London: Cassell, 1978), 261–292.
[292] John Rosselli, *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi. The Role of the Impresario* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 77.
[293] Irene Piazzoni, *Spettacolo, istituzioni e società nell'Italia postunitaria (1861–1882)* (Roma: Archivio Izzi, 2001); Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, eds., *Il sistema produttivo e le sue competenze*. *Storia dell'opera Italiana* 4 (Torino: EDT, 1987).
[294] Körner, "Music of the Future," 190.
[295] Matteo Mainardi: "Il catalogo generale delle edizioni Ricordi."
[296] Wilson, *The Puccini Problem*, 21–22.

tradition which, through the strategic establishment of opera houses in every town since the early nineteenth century, had been the predominant cultural factor in the creation of a civic and social conscious in the country and in the spread of Risorgimento ideas.[297] Music critics and cultural agents united were therefore hoping that a new generation of composers could carry such tradition into the twentieth century, thus putting an end to what has been gloomily defined "a long bleak winter" lasting almost twenty years.[298]

However, the scarcity of new acclaimed works by Italian composers due to mutating political and economic conditions should not leave us with an image of Italy as void of musical stimuli. The lack of state subsidies made it so that the theaters' opera season depended ever more often on funds allocated by municipalities, which started to gain importance in the definition of the opera programming and the overall musical offering in the cities and towns. Italians remained avid music consumers, and without native heroes to celebrate, they turned not only to an international operatic panorama, but also to instrumental music from abroad. Their appetite for instrumental music was cared after through the foundation of various "società del quartetto" and "società orchestrali" in major Italian cities and later in smaller towns, so that a capillary diffusion of instrumental music was granted by the beginning of the twentieth century.[299] At the same time, the institutionalization of series of "concerti popolari" aimed for the education of the public and the popularization of high-brow symphonic and chamber music. Many were the protagonists of these new programming trends, among which should

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[297] Carlotta Sorba, *Teatri. L'Italia del melodramma nell'età del Risorgimento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001). On the role of opera in the spread of Risorgimento ideas and the creation of a sense of belonging to United Italy, see by the same author: *Il melodramma della nazione. Politica e sentimenti nell'Italia del Risorgimento* (Bari/Roma: Laterza, 2015) and "National theater and the age of revolution in Italy," *Journal of modern Italian studies* XVII (2012): 400–413. See also: Philip Gossett, "Le 'edizioni distrutte' e il significato dei cori operistici nel Risorgimento," *Il Saggiatore musicale* 12/2 (2005): 339–387; Philip Gossett, "Becoming a Citizen: The Chorus in *Risorgimento* Opera," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2 (1990): 41–64; Francesco Izzo, "Comedy between Two Revolutions: *Opera Buffa* and the Risorgimento, 1831–1848," *The Journal of Musicology* 21 (2004): 127–174; Michael Sawall, "'Viva V.E.R.D.I.' Origine e ricezione di un simbolo nazionale nell'anno 1859," in *Verdi 2001. Atti del Convegno internazionale / Proceedings of the International Conference, Parma – New York – New Haven, 24 January – 1 February 2001. Vol. 1*, ed. Fabrizio Della Seta, Roberto Montemorra Marvin and Marco Marica (Firenze: Olschki, 2003), 123–131; Birgit Pauls, *Giuseppe Verdi und das Risorgimento. Ein politischer Mythos im Prozess der Nationenbildung* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996); Roger Parker, *"Arpa d'or dei fatidici vati." The Verdian Patriotic Chorus in the 1840s* (Parma: Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani, 1997).

[298] Budden, *From* Don Carlos *to* Falstaff, 278.

[299] Carlo Lo Presti, "I Concerti Mugellini e la vita musicale all'inizio del Novecento," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 49 (2014): 85–154. For a nuanced picture of insturmental music offering in Italy in the course of the nineteenth century, see also: Daniela Macchione, "Attività concertistica e musica strumentale da camera a Roma (1856–1870)," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 37/2 (2002): 265–319; Mariangela Donà, "La musica strumentale nei circoli privati milanesi nella prima metà dell'Ottocento," in *Scritti in memoria di Claudio Sartori*, ed. Mariangela Donà and François Lesure (Lucca: LIM, 1997), 89–110.

be remembered music critics, conductors and composers such as Abramo Basevi, Giovanni Sgambati, and Giuseppe Martucci. Foreign authors, eminent personalities among which Hans von Bülow and Franz Liszt, would also influence the musical taste on the Peninsula with their writings, their teaching, and the networks they created.[300] That the symphonic music they presented, often coming from abroad and not typically Italian by any means, were called "concerti popolari," shows that a new paradigm was in place when it came to addressing the Italian people, the "popolo:" an attempt to broaden the longstanding semantic equation in music that identified what is popular, and Italian, with the supremacy of melody over harmony.[301]

When the Genoa Exposition of 1892 took place, Italy's musical life was therefore characterized by the energetic activity of large but also small institutions established in the capital of Liguria, although with some delay if compared to larger cities such as Milan, Turin, Bologna and Naples. On the other hand, the "omnipresent spectre of a 'decadence' — a sense that civilised society was entering a period of moral and cultural decline, despite the rapid urbanisation and technological development," typical of *fin-de-siècle* Europe, imbued the discourse about art and progress also in Italy.[302] This sense of decadence, in the form of aesthetics of disenchantment, emerged also in the musical production of many European composers around 1890, including *italianissimo* Verdi.[303] In the project of the curators, starting from Luigi Mancinelli and his acolytes, the Columbian Exposition would then represent a positive answer first of all to the need to reconfigure the musical taste of Genoa citizens following the recent model of other Italian cities, and then to the contemporary decadence, the crisis of identity of Italian music at large.

1892: musical offering and the press in Genoa

At the time of the Exposition, musical theater dominated the music scene in Genova, with many open and operating theaters. In 1892, the Exposition year, operas were staged in many

[300] Budden, *From* Don Carlos *to* Falstaff, 270.
[301] Anna Tedesco, "National identity, national music and popular music in the Italian music press during the long 19th century," *Studia Musicologica* 52, 1/4 (December 2011): 259–270. For a contextualization of the phenomenon of "concerti popolari," see: Guido Salvetti, *Storia della musica. Vol. 10. La nascita del Novecento* (Torino: EDT, 1991), 241.
[302] Wilson, *The Puccini Problem*, 16.
[303] Emanuele Senici, "Verdi's *Falstaff* at Italy's *Fin de Siècle*," *The Musical Quarterly* 2 (Summer 2001): 274–310.

venues in the city center, such as Teatro Carlo Felice (the main theater), Teatro Politeama Genovese, Teatro Colombo, and also in the neighboring municipality of Sampierdarena, at the Politeama Sampierdarenese. At the same time, other theaters included operettas in their programming, such as Teatro Apollo, Teatro Margherita, and Teatro Paganini.[304] An overview of the opera programming around 1892 reflects the lively and diverse offering that the citizens of Genoa could enjoy. Among operettas, dozens of international works by French, Austrian and occasionally Spanish composers were represented, such as Jacques Offenbach (the *opéras bouffes Orphée aux Enfers* and *La belle Hélène*), Franz von Suppé (*Boccaccio* and many more) and Johann Strauss (*Die Fledermaus*), and Federico Chueca and Joaquín Valverde (the most popular *zarzuela La Gran Vía*). Italian operetta was also present, with *I granatieri* by Vincenzo Valente, or *La befana* by Edoardo Canti among others.

Numerous were also the operas staged, with many recent works such as the first *genovese* staging of Alfredo Catalani's *La Wally*, that had its première at Teatro alla Scala in Milan precisely in January 1892, or Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz*, which premiered at Teatro Costanzi in Rome the previous year. Verdi was undoubtedly a great protagonist of the season, with older titles such as *Ernani*, *Rigoletto*, *La forza del destino*, and the "*genovese*" *Simon Boccanegra*, but also, once again, the most recent *Otello*. Furthermore, more Italian opera favorites such as Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Linda di Chamounix*, or Gioachino Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* completed the programming, while the previous year Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* and *Le prophète* had been staged. Among the operas that the *genovese* public could enjoy, Italian authors were largely represented, but for the most part these were operas from the previous decades — if not from the first half of the century — thus confirming the general Italian operatic panorama.

The limited representation of instrumental art music characterizing contemporary Italy was also reflected in Genoa, where the conditions were aggravated by the lack of a stable symphony orchestra. In fact, despite the success of the "concerti popolari" in other Italian cities and the wide coverage these concerts received in the press, such initiatives had not yet reached Liguria's main center. The Giovine Orchestra Genovese, a long-living institution still existing today and Genova's main source of symphonic music performances, would be established only in the following century (1912). Actually, the 1892 Exposition was taken by the

[304] Edilio Frassoni, *Due secoli di lirica a Genova. Vol. 1 (dal 1772 al 1900)* (Cassa di Risparmio di Genova e Imperia, 1980), 393–412.

curators of the musical activities as an occasion to compensate for this lack of what was called in the contemporary press "musica da concerto," "concert music." The local press and its music critics played a central role in monitoring this issue.

Some updates about the programming of instrumental music concerts appeared on the most illustrious of the newspapers in Genova, the national *Il secolo XIX*. After the music periodical *Il Paganini* ceased its publications in January 1892 — before the Exposition's opening — the main source for regular commentary and information about the daily concert programming were the columns of *Il Caffaro*. *Il Caffaro* was a daily newspaper with a smaller circulation when compared to *Il secolo*, but it boasted articles by many city notables, and served as the main press organ of the Exposition for the duration of the celebrations, in absence of an official exposition gazette. The music-themed articles and musical critiques published in its columns came from at least three different collaborators, whose signatures appear occasionally at the end of the pieces: G., *Marius*, and L. Cicala.[305] The most important and active of them on the pages of *Il Caffaro*, hiding behind the initial G., is engineer Cesare Gamba (1851–1927). The member of a rich and influent family in Genova, Gamba was a prominent figure shaping Genova's *fin-de-siècle* architecture and city planning. In an article by an anonymous author, he was referred to as "l'egregio *collega* ingegner Gamba,"[306] a detail that might hint at his collaboration with the newspaper. Gamba's participation in the cultural press and the public life of Genoa should not surprise anyway, since he also held the office of the Carlo Felice's intendant at the time of the Exposition.[307] Gamba's reviews are generally more technical, bearing proof of his knowledge of music theory and composition. Not only his passion for music, but also his competence must have been a relevant characteristic of his figure, since it is even mentioned in the epitaph on his family's monument at Staglieno's cemetery commemorating his intellectual caliber: "Cesare Gamba: ingegnere, architetto, riedificatore della sua Genova, artista, musicista, alto intelletto e nobile spirito."[308]

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[305] Perhaps *marius* could be *genovese* writer and music critic Mario Panizzardi, while behind the pseudonym L.[anfranco] Cicala were hiding theater critics Luigi Ponthenier, Ernesto Morando, and Pietro Guastavino. See: Antonio Manno, ed., *Bibliografia storica degli Stati della monarchia di Savoia. Vol. 6* (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1898), 462. I would like to thank Vincenzina Ottomano for identifying these authors.

[306] "The eminent colleague engineer Gamba." Emphasis mine. "Il gran concerto all'Esposizione," *Il Caffaro* 1892/257 (Wednesday, September 14), [2].

[307] Richard Erkens, *Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien zur italienischen Oper der langen Jahrhundertwende* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 127.

[308] "Cesare Gamba: engineer, architect, rebuilder of his Genova, artist, musician, high intellect and noble spirit."

Cesare Gamba: an advocate for symphonic music

The musical offering in Genoa at the time of the exposition reflected the general panorama of Italian musical culture of that time, with severe shortcomings in what concerned high-brow instrumental music. In their reviews, the commentators for *Il Caffaro* — and Gamba in particular — often advocated for more symphonic music, in a panorama where opera and dance music seemed overrepresented. When the Exposition came, great expectations were placed on a concert organized by students of the University on the night of August 5, 1892. The concert was a special event created by the student organization "Comitato Universitario" [University Committee], directed by Genovese *maestri* Niccolò Massa and Carlo Bossola. It also featured international stars such as the American soprano Hélène Hastreiter, Spanish soprano Valentina Mendioroz, and Italian violinist Teresina Tua, another national treasure touring from one exposition to the other, with the extraordinary participation of Pietro Mascagni. The presence of Mascagni was saluted as the starting point of a new era in the city of Genova:

> La certezza della di lui [Mascagni's] venuta a Genova è tale arra di successo da produrre in noi [...] l'intimo convincimento che la sera del giorno 5 agosto seguirà per Genova una data fausta, poiché in quella sera potremo senza dubbio contare un nuovo e grande trionfo della gentile e gloriosa arte italiana.[309]

The author of the article was drawing a parallel between the state of "concert music" in Genova — and in Italy — with the figure of Mascagni, whose first opera *Cavalleria rusticana* had debuted only two years earlier and had become an instant sensation. In the author's hopes, Mascagni's participation in the concert would signal the upcoming, sudden popularity of Italian art in general, and implicitly of concert music specifically.

The extensive concert review was published on Saturday, August 6 and was signed by both Gamba and *Marius*. Telling the chronicle of the night, *Marius* reported that the event was hosted in the great hall of Palazzo Ducale that had been splendidly decorated with candles, banners and garlands. It was extremely well-attended ("davvero tutta Genova")[310] by many

[309] "The certainty of his arrival in Genova is such a guarantee of success, that it convinces us that the night of 5 August will follow a fortunate date for Genova, since in that night we will undoubtedly count a new and great triumph of noble and glorious Italian art." "Il gran concerto degli studenti," *Il Caffaro* July 30, 1892: [3].
[310] "Really all of Genova." Here and after: "Il concerto degli studenti," *Il Caffaro* 1892/219 (Saturday 6 August), [2].

students who could enjoy the reduced prices, and by all the most elegant ladies carefully listed in the review. And if the enthusiastic applause after each piece confirmed the success of the concert, the peak of the night was reached as Mascagni exited the hall, entered the car surrounded by many ovations, and reached a café to celebrate with the students.

Despite the satisfaction expressed by *Marius*, Gamba, who took care of reviewing the program and the execution, showed some disappointment in his portion of the article. In fact, he stated:

> Il Concerto è riuscito, non c'è che dire. Gli applausi del pubblico ne danno testimonianza sincera ed è dovere il dichiararlo. Pure, un Concerto simile, al quale la cortesia e generosità degli Studenti aveva tolti quelli augusti confini, che la grezzezza regnante in arte, o la deficienza finanziaria delle private Società Orchestrali, impongono presso di noi, un Concerto simile doveva avere ben altro programma. Perché non ammettere neppure un grande componimento sinfonico, sia italiano, sia straniero? Se sta bene l'eseguire qualche pezzo staccato da opere teatrali, come numero intermedio, non è lodevole escludere assolutamente dagli onori del programma quella musica che è ideata per Concerto e che altrove non si può udire. Nel suo insieme, il programma ha l'aspetto di una riunione di danze e di pezzi d'opera. Quindi gli viene tolto fin da principio quella serietà, che era nell'animo degli egregi giovani che si sobbarcarono ad una ingente spesa, pur di ottenere qualche cosa di degno della città, dell'epoca presente e della loro valorosa iniziativa.[311]

The critique attacked only the programming choices, and not their execution. In fact, for the most part, the talented performers lived up to the high standards of the music critic. But while the soloists performed some all-time favorites that proved their virtuosity as expected (only the program performed by Tua is listed in detail, and included pieces by Henry Vieuxtemps, Fryderyk Chopin, and Pablo de Sarasate), Mascagni chose to conduct his *Danza esotica* (which according to Gamba "farebbe miglior effetto in un un grandioso ballo, che in un concerto strumentale")[312] and the *intermezzo* from *L'amico Fritz*. Massa conducted some excerpts from his *Salambò* and the *ouverture* from Verdi's *I vespri siciliani*, while Bossola a *Marcia notturna*

[311] "The concert succeeded, that is out of question. The public's applauses bear sincere witness of it, and it is our duty to say it. Yet, such a concert, to which the students' courtesy and generosity had freed from those limits, that the coarseness reigning in the arts, or the financial deficiency of private orchestras, impose among us, such a concert should have had an entirely different program. Why were Italian or foreign symphonic compositions not included? If it is appropriate to perform some pieces taken from operas, as intermediate numbers, it is not commendable to exclude entirely from the program music that is conceived for a concert setting, and that cannot be heard elsewhere. The program as a whole appears like a collection of dances and opera excerpts. Therefore, it is deprived from the start of the seriousness animating the eminent youth that undertook an enormous expense, just to obtain something appropriate for the city, for the present time, and for their courageous initiative."

[312] "It would create a better effect in a grand ball, rather than in an instrumental concert."

by Ferdinand Hiller, Franz Schubert's *Moments musicaux* (an orchestral transcription from the piano original), and Edvard Grieg's *Norwegische Tänze* (Op. 35), which Gamba defined: "Gemme, se non le migliori, certo pregevoli dell'arte straniera."[313] From the review, it is clear that Gamba held (foreign) symphonic music in high consideration. He granted it top priority both because of its scarcity in the regular city programming, and because of its status of "serious" music that would dignify the city of Genova and the contemporary era.

Although the University Committee concert was partly considered by Gamba as a missed occasion, more opportunities to hear instrumental music were provided during the Exposition's months. On Friday, July 22, a recital of violinist Sebastiano Gillardini was given in the great *salone dei concerti* of the Exposition. Gillardini was already known in Genoa for a series of string quartet recitals he gave at the local *Circolo artistico*, performing masterpieces from Beethoven, to Boccherini, to Brahms.[314] With his string quartet, harpist Vittorina Cerruti-Dosio, and the accompaniment of a pianist (G. M. Poggi), he proposed for the Exposition a program mixing several popular short pieces for violin and piano, for harp, and of course for string quartet. The appeal of the event consisted in the virtuosity of Gillardini as well as in the first piece performed, an entire string quartet by Franz Joseph Haydn, marking a different tone from the rest of the program. While advertising the event, the commentator from *Il Caffaro* praised the ability of the performers and invited an "eletto pubblico" (distinguished audience) to join the concert also thanks to its modest price of just one lira ("una modesta liretta").[315]

To underline the small price of the entrance ticket revealed the intent to popularize, if not democratize, this kind of concerts. After all, one lira was also the price of one ticket of the Genova Exposition lottery, a very successful initiative which, similarly to other expositions before, became very popular and represented a substantial portion of the budget of the celebrations. At the same time, the public attending the concert would be granted the status of "eletto," that is, characterized by a refined taste as opposed to that part of the population who only went to the opera. Once again, a hierarchy was put in place, but this time to attract the audience, giving them the impression of participating in an exclusive ritual that would distinguish them from those who did not attend it.

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[313] "Exquisite gems of the foreign art, although not the best ones."
[314] "Ancora per la riapertura del Carlo Felice," *Il Caffaro*, Supplemento al numero 232 (20 August 1892): 2.
[315] "Un gran Concerto all'Esposizione," *Il Caffaro* 21 July 1892, [2].

The same kind of discourse was enacted with the performance of so-called "musica classica," that is, the repertoire from the first half of the nineteenth century and earlier. This was the case of the renowned English organist Edwin Lemare, who was performing in Genova during the time of the Exposition. An excellent musician, he was asked to give an extraordinary recital in the *salone dei concerti* on Saturday, July 30 performing on the great organ that had built especially for the Exposition. In this recital, Lemare played a *concerto* by Handel, Bach's "St. Anne" fugue (in E flat major, BWV 552), and Mendelssohn's *Ouvertüre für Harmoniemusik* (Op. 24) among other pieces. In this instance too, the article advertising the concert urged the "buongustai" (gourmets) among the readers to enjoy such a delicacy.[316] Finally, a special place in the concert programming at the Exposition was devoted to the concert on Friday, August 19 of Giuseppe Loverde De Angelis, who was remembered on the columns of *Il Caffaro* as the initiator and conductor of the special mandolin concert for the Queen at the National Exposition in Palermo the previous year ("eseguita nel novembre scorso [...] da cento signorine di quella migliore società").[317] Together with the singer Trabucco and Palermo violinist Filippo Governale, Loverde De Angelis proposed a concert with music by Chopin, Wieniawsky, but also Pietro Floridia, creating an event much appreciated by the anonymous commentator of *Il Caffaro*, who considered it "una serata musicale riuscitissima che lascia il desiderio di altre consimili in quel veramente splendido salone dei concerti dell'Esposizione."[318]

The organizers of the musical events at the *Esposizione italo-americana* were therefore catering to the need of more instrumental art music in Genoa, but the highlight of the season had yet to come, and it would have represented a burning disappointment for the commentators on *Il Caffaro*.

"Colossi della musica moderna:" Luigi Mancinelli's concerts

The desire for more nights in which "musica da concerto" would elevate, and at the same time become more accessible to, the public of Genova was immediately satisfied with the announcement of an upcoming series of symphonic concerts. The organizer of such concerts

[316] "L'ultimo concerto classico del Lemare", *Il Caffaro* 30 July 1892, [2].
[317] "[The serenata] was performed last November [...] by a hundred ladies of the finest society." "Gran concerto musicale all'Esposizione in onore della squadra," *Il Caffaro*,
[318] "A very successful musical night, leaving us with the desire for more similar nights in the truly wonderful concert hall of the Exposition." "Il concerto d'ieri sera," *Il Caffaro* 20 August 1892, [3].

was also the main coordinator of most concerts of classical music at the Exposition: composer and conductor Luigi Mancinelli.

Born in Orvieto in 1848, Mancinelli was one of Italy's most eminent figures animating Italian musical life of his time. As we learn from the biography written by Antonio Mariani, Mancinelli studied cello in the prestigious class of Jefte Sbolci at the Conservatorio in Florence, while he also perfected his composition skills with Teodulo Mabellini.[319] Florence at the time was one of the most thriving centers in Italy for the study and practice of concert music, thanks to the presence of an international aristocracy who promoted private concerts and public associations.[320] After the completion of his studies, Mancinelli was active as a composer and a conductor in Rome during the 1870s, and then moved to Bologna in the 1880s, where he established himself as the director of the Conservatorio and the Maestro di cappella in the San Petronio Basilica, the main church of the city. In Bologna, between 1881 and 1886, Mancinelli conducted the complete performance of Beethoven's symphonies with the Orchestra Comunale, directed the Società del Quartetto, and programmed a series of Concerti popolari at the Teatro Brunetti, following the aforementioned trend established in the previous decade in Turin by Carlo Pedrotti.[321] Mancinelli's experience in Bologna established him as a respected conductor, soon-to become an internationally acclaimed musician. In fact, after his years in Bologna he was chosen to lead winter season of the orchestra of Teatro Real in Madrid, starting in 1886. He maintained this appointment for seven years, until 1893, when he started his activity at the New York Metropolitan Opera House. In the meanwhile, he also gave several concerts in London (regularly at Covent Garden in the summer), Germany, Austria, and became a much-awaited guest at great expositions, coordinating the concerts during the Italian National Exposition of Turin in 1884, performing at the *Internationale Ausstellung für Musik- und Theaterwesen* in Vienna (1892), and of course participating in the Esposizione italo-americana in Genova.

The career of Mancinelli, one of the most admirable of his time, developed at best the influences he must have enjoyed in Florence under the guidance of Jefte Sbolci and Mabellini. Sbolci himself was in fact a conductor of the Società Orchestrale Fiorentina, a lively orchestra

[319] Antonio Mariani, *Luigi Mancinelli. La vita* (Lucca: LIM, 1998).
[320] Antonio Caroccia, "L'aurora della musicologia italiana: 'La rinascita musicale'," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 43/45 (2008/2010), 337–379.
[321] Giuseppe Depanis, *I concerti popolari ed il Teatro Regio di Torino: quindici anni di vita musicale* (Torino: Società Tipografico-Editrice Nazionale, 1914).

which was active in the promotion of new compositions and which launched a yearly competition for the production of new symphonic ouvertures in 1873:

> La Società Orchestrale Fiorentina non ha, né vuole avere altro scopo che quello di poter giovare all'arte. Intesa essa stessa a perfezionarsi coll'eseguirne le più splendide manifestazioni, e così coltivarne in altrui la intelligenza ed il gusto; desidera altresì di mostrare per quanto può, in modo anche più efficace l'opera sua. A tale effetto, [...] la Società deliberò di aprire un concorso annuale con premio d'una medaglia d'oro [...] pel migliore Autore italiano d'una grande overtura, che sarà pure eseguita dalla Società Orchestrale. [...] L'utilità del proposito, e l'eccitamento che possono averne i giovani Maestri, affidano la società stessa che il Concorso non debba rimanere del tutto infecondo d'onore.[322]

The aims expressed in this announcement present a rhetoric similar to that of the press during Genoa 1892. Symphonic music was seen as one of the highest artistic expressions; it was then the Società's duty to make it available to a large audience, in order to shape the public's intellect and taste; and finally, the Società felt the urge to compensate for the lack of Italian symphonic music by promoting new compositions, a task that was deemed not only honorable, but even useful.

When Mancinelli collaborated at the Genoa Exposition, he had already gained international recognition, which made him one of the best candidates to affirm the quality of the city's music scene in the eyes of the world. He was an important animator of Genoa's musical life, and had presented in 1880 the first city staging of *Lohengrin*.[323] His experience with orchestras abroad was certainly held in high consideration, but the ideological background he had already absorbed in his Florentine apprenticeship was probably what influenced his activity in the popularization of symphonic music first during his years in Bologna, and then in the planning of his symphonic concerts in Genova. Symphonic music was in fact deemed useful to society, something from which the community would profit. For this pur-

[322] "The *Società Orchestrale Fiorentina* has not, nor does it want to have, any other objective than that of being able to assist the art. [The *Società*,] Aiming at perfecting itself by performing its [of the art] most splendid manifestations, and thus by nurturing the understanding and taste in other, it also wishes to show its work, as much as it is possible. To this end, [...] the *Società* decided to open an annual competition with a gold medal as a prize [...] for the best Italian Author of a great ouverture, which will also be performed by the *Società Orchestrale*. [...] The benefit of this resolution, and the incitement that young Maestri could get from it, make the *Società* itself confident that the Competition shall be to some extent fruitful with distinction." *Società Orchestrale Fiorentina*, concert program for the performance on Saturday, 26 April 1873 (Firenze: Galletti e Cocci, [1873]), private collection.

[323] Sergio Martinotti, *Ottocento strumentale italiano* (Bologna: Forni, 1972), 103.

pose, during the Exposition, a short series of four concerts was organized. The endeavor, designed to finally provide Genoa with an adequate instrumental music offering, was nonetheless a failing one: it is important to remark from the onset that the original project was soon abandoned because of the lack of audience. Of the concerts originally planned, we only have extensive commentary from the first one, which took place on August 20, and coincided with the opening of the refurbished Teatro Carlo Felice. The concert was then repeated the following day, on the morning of Sunday 21st.

The concert was widely advertised on *Il Caffaro*. Three days before the concert, a note announced the program together with the prediction that the night would be "una festa artistica delle più imponenti."[324] The program anticipated a glorious event: a complete performance of the Beethoven's fifth symphony in C minor. This was meant to be the very first performance of the piece to ever take place in Genoa, and it was made in the context of a public event such as the Exposition — whereas rare, occasional opportunities to listen to German chamber and symphonic music had been mostly provided in the course of the century by families and their private foundations.[325] In addition to that, some opera excepts and Wagner's prelude to *Parsifal* and the overture to *Tannhäuser* would be played. The opera excepts dividing Beethoven from Wagner in the program were some dances taken from Mancinelli's first opera, *Isora di Provenza*, which premiered at Teatro Comunale in Bologna in 1884. In addition, an orchestral transcription of Rossini's *Petite polka chinoise*, originally a piece for piano that Mancinelli transcribed for orchestra, and the *Saul* overture by Antonio Bazzini. The program was designed to mix "serious" works with musical genres that were deemed lighter and more familiar to the public's taste. The intent was clear: to expose the public to orchestral masterpieces such as Beethoven's and Wagner's works (but also their Italian counterpart represented by Bazzini's *Saul* overture), while at the same time entertaining them with the dances from *Isora di Provenza* and especially with Rossini. The stakes were high, since in the mind of Gamba symphonic repertoire lied in desperate need for popularization among the audience.

The day of the concert, *Il Caffaro* presented an ample description of the night ahead, providing a long article signed by Gamba, who presented the figure of Mancinelli and introduced

[324] "A most important artistic celebration." "L'apertura del Carlo Felice," *Il Caffaro* 229 17 August 1892, [3].
[325] Clara Gabanizza, "Beethoven a Genova nell'Ottocento," *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 6/3 (July—September 1972): 338–371.

the program, and by *marius*, who commented on the recently completed renovations of the Carlo Felice theater.[326] It was a major occasion not only for music, but for the entire city, since the Carlo Felice — inaugurated in 1828 — was one of the focal points of architect Carlo Barabino's urbanistic interventions which had given a new look to the city of Genova in the first half of the nineteenth century.[327] In his portion of the article, *marius* was not entirely convinced by the renovations. The new decorations by painter Luigi Gainotti, in particular, were called disappointing, recreating more the atmosphere of a *café chantant* than the dignity of the city's *teatro massimo* ("major theater"). However, the main new feature consisted in the electricity, used to splendidly light up the theater and especially the three-color light system on stage. The occasion was also made special because it occurred in August, usually a season in which the theater was not operating. As *marius* noticed in another article, the exceptional summer programming matched the exceptional repertoire presented: in fact, in Genoa symphonic music initiatives had previously failed due to the scarce education of the public "a gustare la musica pura, senza le attrattive del canto e della scena."[328] The hope for the Carlo Felice inauguration concert was that a substantial attendance would grant many more symphonic and instrumental concerts and recitals in the future.[329]

On his part, Gamba contributed to the promotion of the concert by painting an enthusiastic picture of the program. His article functioned as an introduction in which he presented all the main protagonists of the upcoming night, starting from Mancinelli. Gamba dedicated part of his article to write a short biography of the conductor, announcing him as an international star and an "insuperabile direttore d'orchestra, elettissimo compositore [...] a lui va debitrice l'arte d'avere con studio ed amore contribuito largamente alla volgarizzazione delle grandi composizioni sinfoniche dei più sommi maestri del passato e dell'epoca nostra."[330] Mancinelli's activity as music popularizer was therefore highlighted, as it coincided with the aims of this concert series, and with Gamba's overt agenda. The journalist then continued his article by presenting the concert program, providing a brief analysis and commentary of many of the

[326] "L'inaugurazione della grande Stagione Colombiana al Carlo Felice." *Il Caffaro* 20 August 1892, [2–3].
[327] Giovanni Monleone and Michelangelo Dolcino, eds., *Storia di un teatro: Il Carlo Felice* (Genova: Erga, 1979).
[328] "To taste pure music, without the appeals of song and the stage." "Ancora per la riapertura del Carlo Felice," *Il Caffaro*, Supplemento al numero 232 (20 August 1892): 2.
[329] "Ancora per la riapertura del Carlo Felice," *Il Caffaro*, Supplemento al numero 232 (20 August 1892): 2.
[330] "Unparalled conductor, most refined composer [...]Art is in debted to him, for he contributed with dedication and love to the popularization of great symphonic compositions of the highest masters of the bast and of our time." "L'inaugurazione della grande Stagione Colombiana al Carlo Felice." *Il Caffaro* 20 August 1892, [2].

pieces to be played, including an extensive overview on Beethoven's symphony and Wagner's excerpts. Since this was the first performance of Beethoven's fifth in Genova, Gamba spent many praises to express the relevance of such an author and a piece in the program: "Al padre della moderna polifonia era dovuto il primissimo posto in una serie di concerti orchestrali, giacché dopo lui niuna orma più poderosa fu stampata nel campo sinfonico."[331] But it is in the description of Beethoven's musical accomplishments that Gamba makes his most remarkable rhetorical gesture, emphasizing the new paths that the composer opened for his posterity:

> [Beethoven] sollevò un oceano d'armonia mirabilmente fusa con una melodia larga e potente, esclusivamente strumentale, quale non s'era mai udita. È il Shakespeare, il Michelangelo della musica sinfonica; è lo scopritore di un nuovo orizzonte artistico. Non giunse peraltro di getto alla meta che s'era proposta. Cominciò col seguire i precetti e le orme di Haydn e Mozart e, per parlare delle sole sinfonie, non fu che con la terza l'*Eroica*, che rivelò la potenza originale del suo genio e la vastità dei suoi ideali.[332]

The central role of Beethoven in the history of instrumental music is highlighted by the reference to those presented as his predecessors, Haydn and Mozart, and to his legacy in the course of the nineteenth century until Wagner. In order to duly convey the eminence of Beethoven's figure in music history, Gamba compares him to Shakespeare and Michelangelo, great masters of their own disciplines. But what was probably most compelling for Gamba's readership is the implicit comparison that the commentator sets with his maritime allegories: that with Christopher Columbus. The new sonorities experimented by Beethoven are likened to an ocean of harmony and melody, and the composer is presented as a discoverer of a new (artistic) horizon, just like Columbus. Like Columbus, Beethoven did not have an easy path towards his discoveries, but had to be patient and conquer his way to his accomplishments. The intent of Gamba is clear: in the need to attract a vast audience to the theater inauguration and especially to the unusual symphonic program, he implicitly exploits the figure of Columbus. The narrative of travel and discovery typically associated with the *genovese* navigator is

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[331] "The father of modern polyphony was entitled to the very first place in a series of orchestra concerts, since after him a deeper groove was never traced in the symphonic field." "L'inaugurazione della grande Stagione Colombiana al Carlo Felice." *Il Caffaro* 20 August 1892: [2]

[332] "[Beethoven] raised an ocean of harmony admirably merged with a broad and powerful melody, exclusively instrumental, as nobody had ever heard before. He is the Shakespeare, the Michelangelo of symphonic music; he is the discoverer of a new artistic horizon. Yet he did not get directly to his intended destination. He started by following the teaching and footprints of Haydn and Mozart, and, to talk only about the symphonies, only in the *Eroica* did he reveal the original power of his genius and the extent of his ideals." "L'inaugurazione della grande Stagione Colombiana al Carlo Felice." *Il Caffaro* 20 August 1892: [2]

evoked to raise interest and create enthusiasm and anticipation around the figure of Beethoven and around his symphonies in particular.

The mythology built in these few lines around Beethoven is also instrumental to the celebration of another composer whose music could sound exotic to the average spectator of the concert: Richard Wagner.

> [Beethoven] gittò le basi granitiche su cui poggia l'intero edificio della polifonia moderna, rendendo possibile l'avvenimento di quel grandissimo che fu Wagner. [...] Finalmente nell'ultima [parte] apparisce il nome glorioso di Wagner, degno al tutto di chiudere il concerto cominciato col nome di Beethoven. I due colossi della musica moderna, insuperati finora e forse insuperabili, danno tali proporzioni alla solenne serata, da renderla degna d'essere particolarmente ricordata nei fasti del nostro teatro.[333]

The former set the preconditions necessary for the latter to flourish, and both represent two monuments to be honored in the concert. And if their presence in the program is overtly cherished as a great opportunity to elevate the status of the Carlo Felice theater, it is possible to read between the lines and see that Gamba is actually trying to legitimize these composers in the eyes of the public. If the spectators are not keen on attending the concert and paying tribute to this symphonic music, they are urged to do so at least in order to partake in a memorable night for the city's major theater.

A missed opportunity

The words of Gamba reveal how the occasion of the Exposition — with its renewed theater — and the figure of Columbus were exploited in the press to attract a large public to the concert and to finally put an end to what appeared as an intolerable ignorance of foreign symphonic music among the Genoa population. Yet, all this tireless advertising did not obtain the desired results: in the end, we know that the first Mancinelli concert was not attended by many. The pessimism oozing from the pages of *Il Caffaro* in the concert review is remarkable. In his commentary, L. Cicala noticed:

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[333] "[Beethoven] laid the granite stones on which is based the entire architecture of modern polyphony, making the advent of the great Wagner possible. [...] Finally, in the last part, the glorious name of Wagner appears, absolutely worth of closing a concert started with the name of Beethoven. The two colossuses of modern music, until now unmatched and perhaps impossible to match, give the solemn night such proportions, that make it worth to be remembered among the successes of our theater." "L'inaugurazione della grande Stagione Colombiana al Carlo Felice." *Il Caffaro* 20 August 1892: [2].

> una sola nota discordante: il poco concorso del pubblico. Il pubblico genovese deve essersi detto: — stasera si apre il *Carlo Felice*, ma martedì c'è la prima dell'*Otello*... vi andrò dunque martedì. [...] Peggio per il pubblico, se questo fascino non sentì, se tanta magia non lo vinse.[334]

The same disappointment was expressed by Gamba, who blamed the people in Genoa for not appreciating the exceptional program:

> Io l'avevo ben detto al maestro Mancinelli: perché introdurre nel programma i nomi di Beethoven e Wagner? Non sono queste due firme conosciute e ben quotate sulla piazza di Genova. Che diamine! bisogna avere della prudenza. [...] Lo scherzo e l'ironia mi bruciano la penna. Ben altre parole vorrei e dovrei usare per stigmatizzare il fatto che in una città di duecentomila abitanti, non si trovano mille, che dico? cinquecento persone che abbiano desiderio di sapere che cosa è una sinfonia di Beetowen [*sic*]; perché, giova il dirlo, mentre in tutto il mondo civile, mentre nella stessa Francia non sospetta di soverchio Germanismo, da quarant'anni le sinfonie di Beethoven sono il pane quotidiano artistico, sono la base di tutti i concerti orchestrali. Qui, per una grama volta ne apparisce una, e chiama due dozzine di uditori![335]

The program, praised as it was on the columns of *Il Caffaro*, was exactly the reason why spectators deserted the concert. In fact, the special occasion of the inauguration of Teatro Carlo Felice would have naturally attracted a large public, as we will see it was the case for the staging of *Otello* the following week. It is only possible to imagine the disappointment of the organizers and the press allies at the view of a virtually empty theater, especially after its renovations. It does not come to surprise that the whole concert series organized by Mancinelli was canceled shortly after, since the series was originally meant to reproduce in Genoa the "concerti popolari" of other Italian cities, an attempt that had undeniably failed. In his review, Gamba sarcastically suggested a new formula for future concerts:

> Il maestro Mancinelli e l'Impresa [...] daranno un secondo concerto un po' più rispondente all'indole della città. Anzitutto si eseguirà un coro scritto dalla Casa *Sundbear and Co*. di New York,

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[334] "Only one dissonant note: the scarce presence of the public. The Genoese public must have thought: — tonight the *Carlo Felice* opens, but there is the première of *Otello* on Tuesday... I will go on Tuesday, then. [...] Too bad for the public, if they did not feel this charm, if such magic did not convince them." "L'apertura del Carlo Felice: Il concerto Mancinelli." *Il Caffaro*, 21 August 1892, [3].

[335] "I had already told Maestro Mancinelli: why would you introduce in the program the names of Beethoven and Wagner? These names are not well known and valued in the Genoa market. What the heck! one needs to be cautious. [...] Sarcasm and irony are burning my quill. I would like and should use way stronger words to condemn the fact that in a city of two hundred thousand people there are not one thousand, what do I say?, five hundred people that wish to know what is a Beethoven's symphony; because, it is useful to say, while in all of civilized world, even in France itself, which cannot be accused of being excessively philo-Germanic, for forty years Beethoven's symphonies have been the artistic bread and butter, have been the basis of every orchestra concert. Here, when miserably one of them appears for once, it only summons a couple of dozens of listeners!" "Il primo concerto orchestrale al Carlo Felice." *Il Caffaro* Supplemento al numero 234 (22 August 1892), 2.

> raccomandata dal Crèdit [*sic*] Lyonnais. Il tema sarà: le *variazioni della rendita italiana* 5%. Poi un assolo di gran cassa con accompagnamento di pifferi. Tema: la beatificazione del signor Cristoforo Colombo fu Domenico, nato e domiciliato in Genova. Finalmente si farà vedere un giovane maestro alla moda e intorno ad esso intrecceranno vaghe ed esotiche danze i maggiorenti dell'Esposizione Colombiana, nonché le autorità del paese.[336]

Although perhaps involuntarily, the references to a work by a young and fashionable *maestro*, to exotic dances, and to the beatification of the figure of Columbus represents an ungenerous but fitting allusion to the most awaited and impactful musical event of the Columbian celebrations in Genoa: Alberto Franchetti's new opera *Cristoforo Colombo*.

The organizers of symphonic concerts had to compromise for the following great symphonic concert on August 28 directed by illustrious conductor Vittorio Maria Vanzo. For his concert, Vanzo mixed the preludes from Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Lohengrin*, which was already familiar to the *genovesi*, with the more beloved overtures from Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* and *Barbiere di Siviglia* among others.[337] Despite the efforts of the organizers, symphonic music did not really gain momentum in Genoa thanks to the Exposition. As in Palermo, but with many more expenses and stellar collaborations, the portion of Italian society attending the *Esposizione italo-americana* proved resistant to the popularizing efforts of these concerts. The internationality of the Exposition originated always from a localist urge, one that authors such as Beethoven and Wagner could hardly be attached to.

Otello*: the return of a national treasure*

A completely different picture emerges when looking at the two most important operas staged during the special Exposition season at Teatro Carlo Felice: *Otello*, which inaugurated the season, and *Cristoforo Colombo*, especially commissioned for the occasion. If symphonic music failed in the attempt to revitalize the audience in Genoa as the choirs and fanfares of the Società Ginnastica Ligure did, opera remained the main domain in which the primacy of

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[336] "*Maestro* Mancinelli and the *impresa* [...] will present a second concert a bit more adequate to the temperament of the city. First of all, they will perform a chorus written by the enterprise *Sundbear & Co.* of New York, recommended by Crédit Lyonnais. The subject will be: the *variations of Italian income* 5%. Then a bass drum solo with fife accompaniment. Subject: the beatification of *signor* Cristoforo Colombo, son of Domenico, born and domiciled in Genoa. Finally, they will show a young and fashionable *Maestro*, and the investors of the Columbian Exposition will perform beautiful, exotic dances around him, together with the State authorities. "Il primo concerto orchestrale al Carlo Felice." *Il Caffaro*, Supplemento al numero 234 (22 August 1892), 2.

[337] [S.n.], *Il Caffaro* 1892/240 (28 August), [2].

Italian art could be reclaimed. For this reason, the many resources that were devoted in Genoa for the presentation of operatic masterpieces paid back. Before discussing the major case study *Cristoforo Colombo*, I will turn to *Otello* — Verdi's instant classic immediately after its first apparition on stage in 1887 — to explain why the opera was so successful during expositions and how it was used in the Columbian celebrations.

A milestone for Italian opera scene, *Otello* was a much-awaited project at which the composer had collaborated with another protagonist of Italian music such as Arrigo Boito as his librettist. In 1881, Verdi and Boito had already worked together at the revision of *Simon Boccanegra*, presented at La Scala on the occasion of the National Exposition in Milan. Giulio Ricordi, invested as he was in the profit he could make out of a new opera from the two, had to insist for years before Verdi accepted to write for the stage again. The publisher's persuasive efforts are understandable given the hype (and the revenue) such an enterprise would generate: after a silence of more than fifteen years since *Aida*, and more than twelve years after the *Requiem*, the public opinion looked with utmost anticipation at the greatest Italian living composer. Despite the careers of composers as Ponchielli and Catalani or even Boito with his *Mefistofele*, it appeared that only Verdi could make Italian opera shine again in a modern landscape dominated by ultramontane composers.

When *Otello* came out, it was immediately acclaimed as a remarkable accomplishment for the composer, then aged seventy-four, and it encountered the favor of the public.[338] It would be incorrect, though, to think that the success of the opera was easily predictable before its première. The debate on the opposition of Italian and German music that polarized the reception of opera all along the second half of the nineteenth century had summed on top of the always fluctuating appreciation of the voluble public of Italian theaters, so that Verdi's operas had very rarely been received with unanimous enthusiasm even in Italy.[339] The conflicting interests of music publishers, and especially of Ricordi's first great rival Lucca, also influenced the fortune of Verdi's work.[340] When *Otello* premiered at La Scala theater, then, stakes were high, and the new opera amazed indeed everybody, since it diluted the traditional form of closed numbers typical of Italian opera and of Verdi's writing, and made it:

[338] Budden, *From* Don Carlos *to* Falstaff, 324–326.
[339] Körner, "Music of the Future;" Guido Salvetti, "«Ho detto male di... Verdi». Saggio di ricezione negativa," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 48 (2013): 105–141.
[340] Salvetti, "«Ho detto male di... Verdi»," 107.

> a difficult opera to 'place' in that it cannot really be compared with any other that were being written at the time. It is strictly modern in that it is conceived in whole acts rather than individual numbers, and its tonal and harmonic range is as wide as in any composition of the 1880s.[341]

In the end, *Otello* turned out to be a success precisely for Verdi's ability to adapt his compositional style to the newest trends of less rigid melodic and formal structures, trends that were identified as characteristics of Wagner's music — although they were actually the consequence of decades-long sperimentations that Verdi had undertaken independently.[342] These sperimentations had already been detected by music critic and historiographer Abramo Basevi as early as in the 1850s and interpreted as Verdi's integration of ultramontane stimuli in his own writing,[343] but *Otello* was perceived as a definitive step forward, proving that Italian opera could still maintain a place of honor on the international stage. With *Otello*, the opposition between Verdi and Wagner could rightfully be considered more of a balanced complementarity.[344]

From the analysis of the opera seasons programmed at the Teatro Politeama in Palermo, it has become apparent that the same complementarity between the two composers had served the purpose of the Italian Exposition of 1891–92. There, the staging of *Otello* had acquired relevance in process of identification of the citizens of Palermo as modern Italians. The stigma against Southern culture and society that started its development in parallel with the elaboration of the *questione meridionale* after Unification was something that the Exposition in Palermo sought to cancel once and for all. The heart of the matter was to prove that people in Palermo, and by extension Sicilians and Southerners at large as a homogenous community, were too an essential portion of what constituted united Italy.

The fact that *Otello* was represented multiple times at Teatro Politeama around the time of the Exposition gave a tangible contribution in this process of identity construction, or better, identity modulation. In particular, the comparison between Verdi's work and Wagner's *Lohengrin* with respect to the public's reception was thoroughly described in the official

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[341] Budden, *From* Don Carlos *to* Falstaff, 325.
[342] Anselm Gerhard, "Verdi, Wagner e la «prosa musicale»," in *Otello*, program note, ed. Fondazione Teatro La Fenice di Venezia (Venezia: 2002), 127–147.
[343] Salvetti, "«Ho detto male di... Verdi»," 119.
[344] Such a fruitful articulation of the dichotomy being expressed at best by Linda Faritile in the following "Verdi and Wagner — as men, as composers, and as cultural figures — have been linked as yin and yang at least since the 1860s." Linda B. Fairtile, "Verdi at 200: recent scholarship on the composer and his works," *Notes* 70/1 (September 2013): 9.

gazette of the Exposition, as we have seen, and was used to raise Palermo to the ranks of other northern cities. "*Lohengrin* had become an honorary Italian classic years before *Otello*,"[345] and thanks to its première on the island the Sicilian capital came to equate other cities like Milan, Turin, and Bologna, and partook in the circulation of modern, progressive art.

Similar strategies and methods concerning opera programming and its evaluation were implemented also in the Exposition of Genoa the following year, although with slightly different objectives. Located on the coast of Liguria, in northern Italy, and close to France, Genoa was the direct gateway to the sea from industrialized Turin, and needed only in part, as a smaller city, the legitimization required in Palermo to belong to modern Italian culture. In Genoa, the representation of *Otello* assumed nonetheless prominent importance as it was regarded as a much-required testimony to the healthy state of Italian music, even five years after its first appearance in Milan, and of the state of musical culture in the Columbian city. In the context of the Exposition, that this opera had somehow repaired the apparent absence of proper masterpieces in Italian music in the previous twenty years was conflated with the necessity to remedy the disregard shown by the Exposition's public to high-brow music. In fact, *Otello* opened on the night of August 23, that is, only three days after the burning disappointment caused by the deserted symphonic concert conducted by Mancinelli.

An extended review from *Il Caffaro* signed by Gamba better clarifies all these aspects. Here, many enthusiastic words are used to counterbalance the bitter tone of the article following Mancinelli's symphonic concert. The enthusiasm concerned first of all the money investment put into the opera house. Thanks to the costly recent renovations, Teatro Carlo Felice looked at its best: "La sala. Una bellezza, una meraviglia. I palchi, quasi tutti popolati di splendenti ed eleganti bellezze, avranno un fulgore speciale, sotto l'onda calda e vivida della luce elettrica."[346] But the exceptionality of the event depended also on the exceptionality of the production, including once more Tamagno in the title role and a rare chemistry between all the cast members and the conductor Mancinelli. Gamba reminded his readers that such

[345] Budden, *From* Don Carlos *to* Falstaff, 326

[346] "The hall. A beauty, a marvel. The boxes, almost all of them populated with splendid and elegant beauties, will have a special radiance, under the warm and vivid wave of electrical lights." Traduzione. Here and after: "La prima rappresentazione dell'Otello" *Il Caffaro* 1892/237 (24 August), [3].

an opportunity did not happen too often, and was especially rare in Genoa as it would be generally too expensive for the Carlo Felice:

> Dacché le sorti mutate dell'arte in Italia, rese straordinariamente difficili dal costo eccessivo degli spettacoli lirici, vietarono a [*sic*] nostro *Carlo Felice* di continuare le gloriose tradizioni del suo passato, dacché l'estero si impadronì dei nostri migliori artisti, non avevamo avuto un complesso come quello che l'Impresa Piontelli ci presenta per l'apertura della stagione Colombiana. [...] L'arte musicale è sventuratamente sottoposta ad esigenze economiche le quali non permettono in tutti i tempi e in tutti i teatri il conseguimento del perfetto, neppure del buono. E quando per un fortuito caso ciò si è ottenuto, è insulto all'arte vera il non mostrarsene grati, il non profittarne.[347]

The "fortuito caso" was in reality the product of a deliberate effort to provide an excellent musical offering, one that would serve the commended quality of the musical work presented:

> E in verità è dovere per me, spesse volte lodatore ed entusiasta dell'arte d'oltremonte, il dire tutta l'ammirazione che provo per l'istrumentale dell'*Otello*. Già sulle precedenti opere, e specialmente nell'*Aida*, egli [Verdi] aveva fatto vedere con quanto amore e quanto studio si era saputo impossessare di tutte le risorse della moderna orchestra. Ma nell'*Otello* giunse a tale elevatezza d'arte da riuscire un modello.[348]

The mastery of a modern orchestra (possibly intended both as the instruments and the tonal language used) was the marker of Verdi's accomplishment. A judgement of aesthetic value was thus combined with the appreciation for the lavish financial investment operated to support the opera season programmed by impresario Piontelli. This staging of *Otello* in particular was also lit up by (expensive) star Tamagno, a tenor who had become famous for his rendition of the title role. His presence had the positive effect on the third element on which Gamba insisted in his review, that is, the attendance of the public:

> Non troppo affollati gli scanni. Zeppa la platea. Rigurgitante il loggione, termometro sempre infallibile della minore o maggiore attrattiva dello spettacolo. E questo non poteva avere più splendidi

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[347] "From the time when changing fate of Italian art, made difficult by the excessive cost of operas, impeded our *Carlo Felice* to continue the glorious traditions of its past; from the time when foreign countries took our best artists, we did not have a program as the one that *impresario* Piontelli presents to us for the opening of the Columbian season. [...] Musical art is unfortunately pressured under economical needs which do not allow to obtain perfect — nor good — results in every theater every time. And when for a fortunate case this is obtained, not being grateful and not enjoying it represents an insult to the true art."

[348] "Actually, it is my duty as I often times enthusiastically praised ultramontane art, to tell all the admiration that I feel for the instrumental writing of *Otello*. Verdi had shown all the love and dedication with which he had been able to master all the resources of a modern orchestra already in the previous works, and especially in *Aida*. But in *Otello* he came to such a high point in art that it became a model."

> requisiti di fascinazione. L'*Otello* con Tamagno! Vale a dire due potentissime calamite artistiche, tali da elettrizzare tutto un pubblico di statue di granito, tali da fondere in un attimo tutta una regione iceberghiana.[349]

A reacting and invested audience was finally bestowing its approval onto the programming choice proposed at Teatro Carlo Felice, thanks to the work proposed and the leading artist on stage. By attending the soirée, the public in Genoa was redeeming itself to Gamba's eyes, and at the same time it was making it a pivotal moment for Italian musical art. In fact, that a numerous public would attend such event was certainly reassuring, but among the many elegant notables, the British officials stood out in the words of the reviewer:

> Tutti applaudivano, iersera. Dall'ottimo marchese Gian Maria Cambiaso, ai compunti e biondi ufficiali della squadra inglese, installati nelle poltrone; dalle corrette marchesine fiorenti nei palchi, a sir Giorgio Tryon, l'ammiraglio inglese che pontificava maestosamente, con la sua bella testa mosaica, in un palco di seconda fila.[350]

Otello was therefore not only being presented to the public in Genoa, but also to an international audience reunited in the city on the occasion of the Exposition. An even larger international attention had been already given to the première of the opera in Milan, when many critics for the most prestigious European periodicals had gathered to assist to the latest accomplishment of "the most authoritative and, in fact, the only living representative of the Italian operatic tradition."[351] In Genoa, other international witnesses, this time from outside the specific world of music and music critique, could also profit from the occasion and acknowledge the healthy state of Italian operatic tradition.

More guests were brought to Teatro Carlo Felice to attend the most important events featured in the opera season running during the Exposition. *Otello* was also performed in front of a delegation from Barcelona, while *Rigoletto* was performed on October 1 for the

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[349] "The stalls, not too crowded. The orchestra, crammed. Overflowing the gallery, always an infallible thermometer of the great or little appeal of the show. And this show could not have any better elements of seduction. *Otello* with Tamagno! Which means two incredibly powerful artistic magnets, able to electrify a whole public of granite statues, able to fuse in an instant an entire region of icebergs."

[350] "Yesterday night everybody applauded. Starting from the excellent marquis Gian Maria Cambiaso, to the contrite and blond officials of the English fleet installed in the seats; from the fair, blooming marquises in the boxes, to sir Geore Tyron, the English Tyron, the English admiral which dominated majestically in a box on the second row, with his beautiful head of a Moses."

[351] See the chapter "*Otello* at the Royal Lyceum (1889)" in Massimo Zicari, *Verdi in Victorian London* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016) <http://books.openedition.org/obp/3132> (last checked 15 December 2019).

members of the International Congress of Maritime Law.[352] Verdi was therefore the main course for the entertainment of representatives visiting the Exposition, while other works such as Donizetti's *La Favorita* [*La Favorite*] and the most recent *La Wally* by Catalani completed the offering for Genoese citizens during the rest of Fall. Thus, opera still served at best the purpose of defending Italian music in the eyes of a local public ever more used to the production of ultramontane composers and in front of international observers. In fact, it was with this strategy in mind that the curators of the Columbian Exposition commissioned a major operatic project that could convey at best not only the ambition of Italy's latest musical production, but also the objectives of the Exposition itself: Alberto Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo*.

Cristoforo Colombo*: the making of a new *operista

The memos of the city council sessions in Genoa in 1888 confirm unequivocally the long-circulating anecdote that the municipality had initially asked Verdi to write an opera on the life and venture of Columbus, and that the *maestro*, while declining the proposal, had suggested two composers, Boito and Franchetti, as worthy of the endeavor.[353] It was then Verdi himself who advised the city council to avoid Boito, as the author would have unlikely completed the score in time — after all, they would both very soon embark in the realization of Verdi's last masterpiece, *Falstaff*. The city council, then, proceeded to directly contact Franchetti. The idea of Giuseppe Verdi himself handing over the task of a new composition for such a great celebration directly to a young artist must have appealed to the imaginary of journalists, since they immediately started to repeat the anecdote: it served as a gesture of legitimization towards Genoa's choice of Franchetti and it highlighted the salvific role to which the opera *Cristoforo Colombo* was destined already in the stage of its very conception.[354]

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[352] G. B. Vallebona, *Il teatro Carlo Felice: cronistoria di un secolo* (Genova: Cooperativa Fascista Poligrafici, 1928), 197.

[353] Archivio Storico del Comune di Genova, Verbali della Giunta Municipale, 1888, 2 July, 1090–1091, and 27 December, 2790–92. See Appendix II. About the relationship of Verdi with Genoa cultural institutions, see: Roberto Iovino and Stefano Verdino, eds., *Giuseppe Verdi, genovese. Celebrazioni Verdiane Genova 2001* (Lucca: LIM, 2000).

[354] The anecdote appeared for the first time in an article by Luigi Alberto Villani on the *Gazzetta di Torino* for *Cristoforo Colombo*'s première in Turin on 24 December 1894, and that Verdi recommended Franchetti for this composition was stated already on March 4, 1891 on the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik. See Richard Erkens, *Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien*, 125, n. 7. For a more detailed discussion about Verdi's proposal, see my "Verdi and the commission of Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo*," *verdiperspektiven* 4 (2019), 153–171.

The work was officially commissioned in April 1889, when Franchetti was still twenty-eight years of age. Considering the crisis of Italian music — and of Italian opera specifically — casting a shadow roughly on the previous twenty years, the decision to commission a new opera from a young composer on such a cardinal subject for Italian identity and on such a solemn occasion could be viewed as an act of bravery. The Exposition was a very delicate moment, since the eyes of many observers both in Italy and from abroad were turned to Genoa to test if the city could live up to the ambitious expectations it had set by organizing this intercontinental event. In 1889, Franchetti was not unknown to the Genoese public, since they had already had the opportunity to see his first operatic success only few months before. In fact, in January of the same year, his opera *Asrael* had been enthusiastically welcomed on the stage of Teatro Carlo Felice as one of the last stops of its tour in many northern Italian theaters. The composer's talent and fame must have impressed the Mayor of Genoa, who, according to an article on the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, called him on stage at the end of one of the performances to publicly offer to him this responsibility.[355] Franchetti was therefore designated as a promising new composer for the main musical event not only of the Exposition, but actually of the entire Columbian anniversary. In order to understand the impact of such a professional accomplishment as the composition of *Cristoforo Colombo* and what it came to represent for Italian musical life, it will be useful first to illustrate the reception of the figure of Columbus in nineteenth-century Italy.

Cristopher Columbus: a fundamental figure for Italian identity

The endeavor of writing an opera about Christopher Columbus represented the perfect occasion for a young composer to prove his skills. The goal was to impress the operatic world with a subject of utmost relevance for Italian history, and particularly for the specific Italian history that was articulated in the country in 1892. In fact, Columbus's undertaking was being celebrated in many different locations around the world at that time, but the interpretation of such event was debated, shifting from place to place, as much as it had been changing over the course of history — and like it still is today, as shown by the fervent debates sparking every year in the United States on Columbus Day.

[355] Quoted in Erkens, *Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien*, 126.

Certainly, the Admiral's journey and his landing on American coasts had changed the world entirely, a correlation nobody would have argued against. Yet, at the center of the debates were the motives and contributing forces that led to such a groundbreaking event. Already in the sixteenth century, what Europeans experienced as the discovery of a new world was interpreted as the product of maritime prowess and flourishing commercial enterprises, but also as an effect of the still very powerful ideology of conquest that animated chivalric orders since the era of Crusades.[356] Moreover, a divisive issue was whether the merit of the discovery should be attributed mainly to Columbus and his vision or to the Spanish crown, who joined the venture with half of the necessary capital and profited from it in the following centuries. This double interpretation is testified for example in the way Italian authors referred to the event in their works:[357] on one hand, Torquato Tasso, praising directly Columbus in his *Gerusalemme iiberata* (1581): "un uom de la Liguria avrà ardimento [...] / tu spiegherai, Colombo, a un nuovo polo / lontane sì le fortunate antenne;"[358] on the other, Ludovico Ariosto, who chose to pay a diplomatic homage to the rising Spanish empire in his *Orlando furioso* (1516): "Vedo la santa Croce, e veggio i segni / imperial nel verde lito eretti [...] / e veggio i capitan di Carlo quinto [...]."[359]

In nineteenth-century Italy, that the merit should be attributed to Columbus was of course beyond any question. Yet, a flourishing of studies about Columbus and about the colonization of the Americas started to be produced and to circulate in the Peninsula, with a diffusion of interpretations varying from one author to the other. From one context to the other, the prevailing narrations would then influence how the figure of Columbus was perceived, and how it was tied to Italian historical and cultural identity. An excursus on the studies about, and the reception of, Christopher Columbus in nineteenth-century Italy has been carried out

[356] The book by Corina Bucher, *Christoph Columbus. Korsar und Kreuzfahrer* (Darmstadt: Primus-Verlag, 2006), although too inaccurate and sometimes imaginary for what concerns historically proven circumstances concerning the navigator's life, provides a convincing examination of the ideologies of crusaders circulating in fifteenth-century Europe, as well as an assessment of its impact on Columbus himself.

[357] Carmen M. Radulet, "La figura di Cristoforo Colombo nella letteratura italiana," in Varela, ed., *Congreso Internacionál*, 285–298.

[358] "A man from Liguria will have the bravery [...] / you will bring, Columbus, to a new pole / the fortunate vessels so far away." Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, ed. Lanfranco Caretti (Milano: Mondadori, 2001), Canto XV, XXXI-XXXII.

[359] "I see the holy Cross, and I see the emblems / of the Empire, raised in the green coast [...] / and I see the captains of Charles the Fifth [...]." Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso. Secondo l'editio princeps del 1516*, edited by Tina Matarrese and Marco Praloran (Torino: Einaudi, 2016), Canto XV, XXIII.

by Roberto Coaloa in at least two fundamental contributions.[360] In his essays, Coaloa focuses mostly on historians and intellectuals from the region of Piedmont, that is, the core of what before Unification corresponded to the Kingdom of Sardinia, which capital was Turin. If we consider that this area was in a condition of constant cultural exchange with France — with which many intellectuals in Turin also shared the language — and that the Kingdom of Sardinia represented the original kernel from which the Savoy family led the wars that brought to Unification, it does not come to surprise that what was written about Columbus in Turin in the first half of the nineteenth century shaped the Admiral's reception in United Italy later, and that these writings circulated also outside of Italy.

As shown by Coaloa, the figure of Columbus was present in the writings of renowned Cesare Balbo (1789–1853) — historian, politician, and, in crucial 1848, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia — and of Gian Francesco Galeani Napione (1748–1830) — historian and linguist.[361] Both intellectuals were promoters of the concept of a unified Italy, which in the case of Napione would start indeed with a confederation of all the "maritime," coastal Italian states, in order to protect Italy's strength in the Mediterranean and to start at the same time a process of cultural sharing and assimilation in the Peninsula.[362] Christopher Columbus was certainly an excellent patron to associate to such unitary visions, being universally known as the seafarer *par excellence* together with Amerigo Vespucci[363] and originating from Genoa, a city belonging to the Kingdom of Sardinia. In the course of the century, many were the contributions published about the life and achievements of Columbus, as well as about his uncertain origins. Longstanding revisionism, for example, would attempt to locate the Admiral's family among the aristocracy of the inner region of Monferrato instead of the Genoese

[360] Roberto Coaloa, "Le ricerche su Cristoforo Colombo e l'interesse per l'America nel Piemonte, tra Illuminismo e Romanticismo," in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Colombiano. "Cristoforo Colombo, il Piemonte e la scoperta del Venezuela." Torino 27 marzo 1999. Cuccaro Monferrato 28 marzo 1999*, ed. Piero Canepa, Giorgio Casartelli Colombo di Cuccaro and Gianfranco Ribaldone (Cuccaro Monferrato: Associazione Centro Studi Colombiani Monferrini, 2001), 185–211; Roberto Coaloa, "La storiografia del Settecento e dell'Ottocento sulla questione colombiana," in *Atti del II Congresso Internazionale Colombiano. "Cristoforo Colombo dal Monferrato alla Liguria e alla Penisola Iberica." Nuove ricerche e documenti inediti. Torino, 16 e 17 giugno 2006*, ed. Giorgio Casartelli Colombo di Cuccaro, Peter J. Mazzoglio, Gianfranco Ribaldone and Carlo Tibaldeschi (Cuccaro Monferrato: Associazione Centro Studi Colombiani Monferrini., 2009), 625–658.

[361] Coaloa, "La storiografia del Settecento e dell'Ottocento," 642–647.

[362] See the entry by Orietta Bergo, "GALEANI NAPIONE di Cocconato, Gian Francesco," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 51 (Roma: Treccani, 1998).

[363] Napione was also the author of an *Esame critico del primo viaggio di Amerigo Vespucci al Nuovo Mondo. Con una dissertazione intorno al manoscritto...* (Firenze: Molini, Landi e Comp., 1811).

textile industry.[364] This debate, far from being of any interest exclusively for petty archivists, stood for the opposition between conservative aristocrats and progressive liberals in reclaiming an important page in history and attaching their own set of values to it.

At the same time, many works were translated in Italian from foreign authors, among which Washington Irving must be remembered, who, together with Arthur Helps, played a key role in inscribing Columbus as a patriotic figure in the history of the United States.[365] Furthermore, a major international contribution came from France, where Count Antoine-François-Félix Roselly de Lorgues had printed a detailed biography of Columbus, in which he highlighted the mission of Christian proselytism that animated the Admiral, as well as the subsequent evangelization of local Americans that spread the gospel in this newly discovered part of the world.[366] The book got an immediate fame, and it came out in a moment of great tension between the Kingdom of Sardinia and the Papal States, since the Savoy State had recently inaugurated a process of secularization, declaring its independence from the Church. Pope Pius IX looked with apprehension at what was happening in Northern Italy. He had been elected in 1846, therefore he witnessed as a Pope the full Risorgimento turmoil, and during his pontificate he harshly contrasted the formation of the Italian Nation state, as it inevitably led to the end of the temporal power of the Holy See by terminating the Papal States in 1870.[367]

Pius IX, who did not spare intervening publicly in Italian political life, noticed the achievement of Roselly de Lorgues' and immediately commissioned an Italian translation of

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[364] Some of the most popular which I was able to consult, were in chronological order: Gian Francesco Galeani Napione, *Della patria di Cristoforo Colombo* (Firenze: Molini, Landi e Comp., 1808) [third edition; the first edition should be from 1805. See Bergo, "GALEANI NAPIONE"]; Gianbattista Spotorno, *Delle origini e della patria di Cristoforo Colombo* (Genova: Andrea Frugoni, 1819); Costantino Reta, *Vita di Cristoforo Colombo* (Torino: Baricco ed Arnaldi, 1846); Angelo Sanguineti, *Vita di Cristoforo Colombo* (Genova: Antonio Bettolo, 1846); Luigi Colombo, *Patria e biografia del grande ammiraglio D. Cristoforo Colombo* (Roma: Tipografia Forense, 1853); Michel-Giuseppe Canale, *Vita e viaggi di Cristoforo Colombo. Preceduta da una storica narrazione del commercio, della navigazione e delle colonie degli antichi...* (Firenze: Andrea Bettini, 1863); Rocco Cocchia, *Cristoforo Colombo e le sue ceneri* (Chieti: Giustino Ricci, 1892).

[365] Washington Irving, *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (New York: Carvill, 1828) [It. transl.: *Viaggi e scoperte dei compagni di Colombo* (Milano: Paolo Andrea Molina, 1842)]; Arthur Helps, *The Life of Christopher Columbus, the Discoverer of America* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1869) [It. transl.: *Vita di Cristoforo Colombo* (Firenze: Barbera, 1870)].

[366] Antoine-François-Félix Roselly de Lorgues, *Christoph Colomb. Histoire de sa vie et de ses voyages* (Paris: Didier et cie., 1856).

[367] Federico Chabod, *Storia della politica estera italiana dal 1870 al 1896* (Bari: Laterza, 1951), in particular vol. 1, chap. 2, "L'idea di Roma," 215–374; Renato Mori, *La questione romana* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1963). On the relationship between the Italian State and the Vatican, see also Robert A. Graham, *The Rise of the Double Diplomatic Corps in Rome. A Study in International Practice (1870–1875)* (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1951).

the work, which appeared only one year later, in 1857.[368] He also sent him an encomiastic letter in which he praised the author:

> [...] pour défendre à propos la cause de la Réligion et confondre par vos écrits l'audace des impies acharnés contre la foi catholique. Vous vous êtes appliqué de tous vos moyens à secourir la société humaine, qui sans réligion ne peut se soutenir.[369]

The figure of Columbus was in fact becoming a contended territory which could from time to time be claimed both by Italian nationalists and by the Church.[370] This second aspect is well instantiated by the ongoing, frequent public appeals for Columbus's canonization as a beatified man in the Christian faith, such as canon Angelo Sanguineti's volume *La canonizzazione di Cristoforo Colombo*.[371] The canonization never succeeded, but the appreciation of the figure Columbus was repeated in 1492, under the pontificate of Pius IX's successor, Pope Leo XIII. In his encyclical *Quarto abeunte saeculo*, Leo XIII underlined not only the evangelization promoted by Columbus's undertaking, but also the providential circumstances that made him spread and strengthen Catholicism right on the eve of the rift represented by Reformation:

> Columbus threw open America at the time when a great storm was about to break over the Church. As far, therefore, as it is lawful for man to divine from events the ways of Divine Providence, he seemed to have truly been born, by a singular provision of God, to remedy those losses which were awaiting the Catholic Church on the side of Europe.[372]

The figure of Christopher Columbus in Italy was molded therefore through many international contributions and different ideological contaminations. The diverging motivations on the part of the Church and the Italian State actually ended up in concurring to glorify the Admiral's

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[368] Roselly De Lorgues, *Cristoforo Colombo. Storia della sua vita e dei suoi viaggi* (Milano: Volpato e comp., 1857).

[369] "To rightfully defend the cause of Religion and bewilder with your writings the audacity of the impious and the furious against the Catholic faith. You devoted yourself by any means to assist human society, which cannot sustain itself without religion." I was able to read part of the letter as quoted in the third French edition of Roselly de Lorgues's book, in the chapter: "Témoignage rendu au zèle évangélique de Christophe Colomb par le Saint Pape Pie IX. Extrait du bref pontifical adressé à M. le Comte Roselly de Lorgues" (Paris: Societé Générale de Librairie Catholique, 1887).

[370] For a detailed analysis of the reception of Columbus's figure within the Catholic Church, see: Mariano Delgado, "«Columbus noster est». Der Wandel des Kolumbusbildes und der Entdeckung Amerikas," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 100 (2006): 59–78.

[371] Angelo Sanguineti, *La canonizzazione di Cristoforo Colombo* (Genova: Regio Istituto dei Sordo-Muti, 1875). See also Titus Heydenreich, "Christoph Columbus — ein Heiliger? Politische und religiöse Wertungsmotive im 19. jahrhundert," in *Columbus 1892/1992. Heldenverehrung und Heldenmontage*, ed. Gerhard Wawor and Titus Heydenreich (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 1995), 29–56.

[372] Leo PP. XIII, "Quarto Abeunte Saeculo," *Litterae Encyclicae,* A.S.S. XV, 3–7. English translation: <http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_16071892_quarto-abeunte-saeculo.html> (last checked 14 December 2019). The original Latin text can be also find on the same website.

figure, building up on what was already published and creating a debate that should not be taken as dramatically polarized. Columbus, therefore, enjoyed simultaneous, intertwining consecration both by the Catholic and the Italian nationalist ideologies: notably we can turn to music and indicate Guido d'Arezzo and especially Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, whose role as reference figures for (musical) Italianness and Christianity was crystallized over the course of the nineteenth century.[373] Outside of the scope of music, Dante — the highest reference for Italian language — was the most illustrious figure captaining such a Pantheon of artists, intellectuals and various kinds of historical heroes, to which the figure of Columbus was added to help creating a sense of cultural identity.[374]

Columbus in nineteenth-century Italy was therefore towering, multifaceted figure. On this complex subject Franchetti was called to compose a work that, as we will see, should worthily represent not only the peak of the Genoa celebrations, but also a new starting point for Italian opera. A contextualization of the life of Franchetti will therefore be fruitful to understand the critical moment for Italian music industry at which *Cristoforo Colombo* made its appearance.

A star is born: Alberto Franchetti and his Asrael

Born in 1860 in Turin, Alberto Franchetti was the son of Raimondo, a member of the Jewish Italian nobility, and of Luisa Sara Rothschild, a descendant from the Viennese branch of the important Rothschild family. The Franchetti family had gained the title of barons from King Carlo Alberto of Sardinia-Piedmont in 1858, while the Rothschilds, also barons, had been granted noble status in 1822 and established as bankers in the cities of Frankfurt, London, Paris, Naples, and Vienna, where Luisa Sara was born. Alberto Franchetti grew up in a luxurious palace in Venice, a city where his family established in 1871 and where they exerted their influence combining participation in aristocratic circles with a talent for business — the

[373] I have partly discussed this in my *L'immagine di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina nell'Italia dell'Ottocento*, tesi di Laurea Specialistica (Cremona: Università degli Studi di Pavia, 2012).

[374] Bruno Tobia, "Una cultura per la nuova Italia," in *Storia d'Italia. Vol. 2*, ed. Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto (Roma e Bari: Laterza, 1995), 427–529; Antonella Braida, "Dante and the creation of the *poeta vate* in nineteenth-century Italy," in *Dante in the Long Nineteenth Century: Nationality, Identity, and Appropriation*, ed. Aida Audeh and Nick Havely, 51–69. See also Lauren Jennings, "Defining Italianness: poetry, music and the construction of national identity in nineteenth- and twentieth-century accounts of the medieval Italian lyric tradition," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 142/2 (2017): 257–276.

Franchettis held key positions in land and infrastructure administration, and owning among other enterprises some important glassworks in Murano.[375]

Alberto Franchetti developed his musical competence first at home, where he could learn music theory and composition through private lessons, and decided later to pursue further music education in Germany. Starting from 1881, he spent three years at the Conservatory of Music in Munich, in the composition class of Joseph Gabriel Rheinberger, while in the year 1884–1885 he moved to Dresden to study with Felix Draeseke and Edmund Kretschmer. When he moved back to Italy in Summer 1885, his solid German education, certified by a well-received *Sinfonia in Mi minore* performed in Dresden on June 22, 1885, made him an unusual figure in the panorama of young Italian composers of his time, although he was not the only one dedicated to instrumental music.[376]

After his return to Italy, Franchetti dedicated himself to opera, which still remained the most appreciated music genre on the Peninsula. Given Franchetti's social status and his exceptional background, the composer's operatic debut, *Asrael*, was also marked by an extraordinary setting. This *leggenda in quattro atti* [legend in four acts] on a libretto by Ferdinando Fontana — the same author of the libretto to Puccini's *Le Villi* — was in fact staged in the Teatro Municipale of Reggio Emilia on February 11, 1888, and the theater had been renovated for the occasion.[377] Franchetti had won his father over to support his starting career, and Raimondo decided to embark in the production not only of his son's opera, but of the entire 1887–1888 season of the theater. He invested lavishly in refurbishing the theater, and even became the actual *impresario* of Teatro Municipale for the season, expanding the choir and the orchestra, and programming international masterpieces that would attract the attention of many observers and would consequently create an unusual hype around his son's endeavor.[378]

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[375] Alberto Franchetti's detailed biography, including information about his family, can be found in Erkens, *Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien*, 29–38. A very brief overview on the biography is also to be found in Roberto Marcuccio, "Alberto Franchetti (1860–1942): una biografia essenziale," in *Alberto Franchetti. L'uomo, il compositore, l'artista*, edited by Paolo Giorgi and Richard Erkens (Lucca: LIM, 2015), 349–352.

[376] Erkens, Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien, 30–31; Antonio Rostagno, "Alberto Franchetti nel contesto del sinfonismo italiano di fine Ottocento," in Giorgi and Erkens, eds., *Alberto Franchetti*, 5–54.

[377] For an analysis of the work, see: Erkens, *Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien*, 43–122; Emanuele d'Angelo, "Alla scuola di Boito. L'*Asrael* di Ferdinando Fontana," in Giorgi and Erkens, eds., *Alberto Franchetti*, 55–76.

[378] Erkens, *Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien*, 31.

The exceptionality of these circumstances seemed intentionally designed to establish Alberto Franchetti's star in the firmament of contemporary Italian opera. Ricordi, the composer's publisher, did not hesitate to print an article on the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* shortly before the opera was completed, in order to arouse his readers' curiosity and to predispose them to the outstanding event constituted by the opera première:

> Tutto fa prevedere che la prima rappresentazione di quest'opera sarà un avvenimento di altissima importanza. Non vi mancheranno i più celebrati critici d'arte. Editori e vecchi e giovani, maestri come il Gomes, il Catalani, il Puccini, il Massa, lo Samara, *ecc*.[379]

The foreshadowed presence of many different opera personalities would certainly attract more spectators to the opening night, and at the same time would enhance the relevance of the opera production, so that an economic success would follow both for the Franchettis — by selling out all seats for the duration of the production — and for Ricordi, by having the opera tour in other Italian theaters and through the sale of scores.

As it was easily predictable, the opening night was a great success. The libretto, based on a Flemish legend, told the story of Asrael and and Nefta, two angels in love who, being divided by the malevolent Lucifero, finally get back together in heaven after overcoming some challenges on Earth, in the Brabant. The score struck for the impressive and extravagant use of the orchestra, although some negative remarks addressed the overall proportions of the opera — sometimes considered too long — and the banal treatment of the voices and characters when compared to the purely orchestral episodes.

The *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* devoted two long articles to *Asrael*, one published after the première and the one once the production was concluded.[380] In the first of these articles, a particular appreciation was devoted to the Wagnerian influences in Franchetti's score, which was still clearly divided in separate numbers, unlike Verdi's more fluid *Otello* score. The author noticed that:

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[379] "Everything let us foresee that this opera's première will be an event of utmost importance. The most celebrated music critics will not miss it. Old and young publishers, masters such as Gomes, Catalani, Puccini, Massa, Samara, *etc*." Samiel: " Reggio Emilia, 16 gennaio," *GMM* 22/01/1888, 35.

[380] Samiel: "Asrael. Leggenda in quattro atti di Ferdinando Fontana. Musica di Alberto Franchetti," *GMM* 19 February 1888, 69–71 and 26 February 1888, 79–81; F. Biagi: "Asrael," *GMM* 20 March 1888, 117–118 and 8 April 1888, 139–140.

> Il *monologo* di Asrael, dove si sprigiona il primo dei *leidmotif* [*sic!*] che lo accompagna anche negli altri atti, ovunque, o col pensiero, o colla parola ricorda la sua origine infernale. Ma — intendiamoci bene — il Franchetti, nella sua opera, non ha mai abusato di cotale espediente. Egli vi accenna con parsimonia e solo allorché la situazione del dramma lo richiede; per dippiù questo uso non maschera povertà d'idee.[381]

Franchetti was then presented as the perfect balance between Italian fertile imagination producing many musical ideas and the teaching of Wagner, with the *Leitmotiv* being the outpost of a modern and international aesthetic sensitivity that needed to be internalized by Italian composers at the end of the nineteenth century.[382] The second article also noted that:

> In complesso la musica dell'*Asrael* è eclettica ed è bene che così sia. Nello svolgersi dello spartito accanto a brani della più sincera italianità, altri ve ne sono che al genere francese più si avvicinano, moltissimi che della elaborata e profonda architettura tedesca risentono.[383]

The international education of the composer was therefore confirmed as a necessary trait for a young, promising artist for Italy's modern opera scene.

Even *Il teatro illustrato e la musica popolare*, the monthly magazine by Ricordi's rival Sonzogno, dedicated a lengthy article about *Asrael* on its pages. The piece, signed by Arrigo Regi, provided a thorough commentary to each act of the opera, and did not spare harsh criticism directed specifically to the composer Franchetti.[384] While acknowledging the modernity of the orchestral writing, reinforced by the use of four trumpets which reminded Wagner's scores, Regi judged the quality of the libretto as very low, made of "episodi insignificanti" and "poesia e concetti non sempre felici."[385] At the same time, he blamed the composer for this, since it was Franchetti who imposed the subject to Fontana, and since he considered the librettist to be always at the service of the composer. The core of Regi's critique, nonetheless, concerned prevalently the business operation supporting this première, which would

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[381] "Asrael's monologue, where the first *Leitmotiv* which accompanies him also in the following acts is released, reminds of his infernal origin everywhere, both as a thought or with the words. But in his work — let us be clear — Franchetti has never exaggerated with this device. He frugally touches upon it only when the drama requires it; what is more, this is not meant to cover up for a lack of ideas." Samiel: "Asrael," 70.

[382] Although the real impact of Wagnerian scores in Franchetti's production has been downsized in Jürgen Maehder, "Le strutture drammatico-musicali del dramma wagneriano e alcuni fenomeni del wagnerismo italiano," in *Affetti musicali. Studi in onore di Sergio Martinotti*, ed. Maurizio Padoan (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2005), 199–217: 207.

[383] All in all, the music of *Asrael* is eclectic, and so should it be. In the unfolding of the score, besides episodes marked by the most sincere Italianness, we find others that lean more towards the French genre, and many more that are influenced by the elaborate and deep German architecture." Biagi, "Asrael," 139.

[384] Arrigo Regi, "Asrael," *TI* March 1888, 36–39.

[385] "Banal episodes" and "poorly conceived poetry and ideas." Regi, "Asrael," *TI* March 1888, 36.

inevitably influence the judgement of the critique and the success with the public. Franchetti was defined from the start of the article as an "arcimilionario" [multimillionaire], a characteristic preceding any possible critique to his work:

> Ma prima che la musica cominci, mi fermo ad ammirare il giovane e simpatico compositore [...]. Quanti avranno invidiato il trionfo che lo attendeva, quanti gli sguardi scintillanti che lo ammiravano: io, francamente, invidiai di preferenza il portafogli.[386]

The argument put forth by Regi was that the success of the opera depended solely on the lavish investment made by Franchetti's father. He did not forget to highlight the fact that most of the cheering audience members animating the première were actually invited guests, and not spontaneous public. And even regarding the music, he insinuated that most of the great effect aroused by the animated infernal scenes, marked by the most extravagant orchestral writing, was rather due to the rich scenography and the numerous, talented dancers cast especially for the occasion:

> Se tutta questa scena dovesse essere riprodotta in un altro teatro, con mezzi comuni, da uno dei soliti impresarii che non potesse disporre di tanta illusione, il pubblico trascenderebbe forse a quegli applausi così assordanti? Io credo di no.[387]

Regi concluded his review by addressing Franchetti himself: "Barone Franchetti, firmatemi una cambiale in bianco all'ordine di qualche giovane autore meno fortunato di voi, e vi assicuro che questi saprà scrivere un'opera che alla prima rappresentazione avrà il successo dell'*Asrael!*"[388]

Regi's article exposed one significant reason for Franchetti's success as a novice on Italian operatic scene. The personal and economic interests of Baron Raimondo Franchetti played a major role in the creation of an event such as the première of *Asrael*, the significance of which was enhanced by the pervasive promotion operated by Ricordi, therefore proving once more the power of music publishers in the creation of new operatic stars in Italy precisely in a moment of apparent void, with the exception of Verdi's *Otello*. Two years later, Mascagni will

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[386] "But before the music begins, I will stop and admire the young and likable composer [...]. How many people must have envied he thriumph waiting for him, how many were the sparkling eyes admiring him: to be honest, I rather envied his wallet." Regi, "Asrael," *TI* March 1888, 37.

[387] "If all this scene had to be repeated in another theater, with more common means, by one of the usual impresarios that could not arrange something so charming, would the public transcend to such enthusiastic applauses? I do not think so." Regi, "Asrael," *TI* March 1888, 38.

[388] "Baron Franchetti, sign a blank check for some young author less lucky than you, and I assure you that he will write an opera that will have the same success of *Asrael* on its première!" Regi, "Asrael," *TI* March 1888, 39.

meet a similar, but much greater fate with his *Cavalleria rusticana* written for the one-act operas competition of music publisher Sonzogno — an event that most likely convinced Ricordi to push the promotion of Franchetti and his *Cristoforo Colombo* even more strongly.

Franchetti had a few strings to his bow: in fact, the aesthetic shift occurred in Italian musical palate, following the internationalization of the operatic repertoire described earlier, was titillated by the composer's German music education, a characteristic that undoubtedly played an important part in his reception. This characteristic stuck with Franchetti in the public discourse articulated also by following commentators, becoming a relevant trait of his identity. For example, in his popular history of nineteenth-century Italian opera, published in 1900, Alfredo Colombani inserted Franchetti as the first figure in a section devoted to "I giovani" [the young generation], reporting that:

> Quantunque abbia fatto i suoi studi in Germania, il Franchetti si è mantenuto italianissimo per la bella, limpida e spontanea vena melodica [...] la quale dimostra, quando c'è vero e grande intelletto, come non sia possibile il desiderato connubio dell'austera e mistica musica tedesca, con la gentile ed appassionata musica italiana.[389]

After its appearance in Reggio Emilia, *Asrael* was taken on a fortunate tour in a number of Italian theaters, such as Bologna, Milan, Florence, Turin, Genoa and Treviso, and was also performed in Germany and the United States.[390] Although the opera's popularity decreased sharply before the end of the century, never to gain success anymore,[391] the cosmopolitism observable in the score and the commercial strategy put in place by Franchetti's patrons and investors made it possible for him to satisfy the thirst for new successful and accomplished authors, a thirst best expressed on the pages of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*:

> Nella romanza prima di Asrael vi è una parte di effetto così originale, non mai udito, da far concludere che chi lo ha ideato possiede l'energia intellettuale per produrre cose nuove.[392] [...] Il Franchetti con questo lavoro ha conquistato di primo acchito un posto primissimo fra i moderni

[389] "Although he completed his studies in Germany, Franchetti has preserved very much Italian thanks to his beautiful, clear, and spontaneous melodic inspiration [...] which proves, when there is true and great intellect, how viable is the desirable union between the austere and mystic German music with the gentle and passionate Italian music." Alfredo Colombani, *L'opera italiana nel Secolo XIX* (Milano: Tipografia del *Corriere della Sera*, 1900), 295–296.
[390] Alan Mallach, "Alberto Franchetti and *Cristoforo Colombo*," *The Opera Quarterly* 9/2 (Winter 1992): 13.
[391] Erkens, *Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien*, 40–41.
[392] "In Asrael's first *romanza*, there is a part of such an original effect, never heard before, to make us infer that the person who conceived it has the creative energy to produce new things." Biagi, "Asrael," 139.

> compositori, ed ora a giusta ragione tutti sono in diritto di pretendere da lui altre grandi e splendide opere che diano a lui onore e nuove glorie all'arte musicale italiana.[393]

Cristoforo Colombo *and Franchetti's consecration*

"Grandi e splendide opere" [great and wonderful works] were then expected from Franchetti. After he received the commission to write an opera about Columbus, the writer that was hired to take care of the libretto was Luigi Illica, at that time still a young author, after a brief moment in which the more experienced Anton Giulio Barrili was considered for the role.[394] The challenge was to create a new opera in an era that was marked by an aesthetic uncertainty affecting Italian librettists at least from the 1870s. Commenting on this crisis in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Jürgen Maehder has highlighted a "Verwirrung ästhetischer Kategorien, die der Versuch einer Imitation der deutschen romantischen Oper auf der Stufe des 'Lohengrin,' jedoch mit fünfzigjähriger Verspätung gegenüber dem deutschen Vorbild, auslösen mußte."[395] In fact, the reception of German opera in the Peninsula had awakened the need for new solutions both in the language of librettos and in the overall choice of opera subjects. Both aspects seemed nonetheless hard to tackle, as neither the Italian metric tradition nor typically Italian mythology proved especially fit to adapt to the new standard established by Wagner's works.[396] In the case of *Asrael*, Franchetti had resorted to a Northern European legend, but the libretto had not been unanimously well received, as we have seen. In the case of Columbus, the protagonist was a historical figure, whose existence needed nonetheless to be adapted in order to win the challenge posited by the *mise en scène*.

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[393] "With this work, Franchetti has conquered right from the start a preeminent place among modern composers, and now everybody can rightfully expect from him more great and wonderful works which will bring honor to him and new glory to Italian musical art." Biagi, "Asrael," 140.

[394] Erkens, *Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien*, 125–126.

[395] "Confusion of aesthetic categories, that should be resolved through the attempt to imitate the German romantic opera at the level of Lohengrin, albeit with a fifty-year delay on the German model." Jürgen Maehder, "Die Italienische Oper des Fin de siècle als Spiegel politischer Strömungen im umbertinischen Italien," in *Der schöne Abglanz. Stationen der Operngeschichte*, ed. Udo Bermbach and Wulf Konold (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1992), 181–210: 183. See also: Jürgen Maehder, "Szenische Imagination und Stoffwahl in der italienischen Oper des Fin de Siècle," in *Zwischen Opera buffa und Melodramma. Italienische Oper im 18. und 19. jahrhundert*, ed. Jürgen Maehder and Jürg Stenzl (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994), 187–248.

[396] Jürgen Maehder, "*I Medici* e l'immagine del Rinascimento italiano nella letteratura del decadentismo europeo," in *Nazionalismo e cosmopolitismo nell'opera fra '800 e '900. Atti del 3° Convegno Internazionale "Ruggero Leoncavallo nel suo tempo." Locarno, Biblioteca Cantonale, 6–7 ottobre 1995*, ed. Lorenza Guiot and Jürgen Maehder (Milano: Sonzogno, 1998), 239–260.

The opera was conceived by Franchetti divided in two parts ("Scoperta" [discovery] and "Conquista" [conquest]), each then into divided into two acts. The final form is then divided in four acts and an epilogue, capturing different pivotal moments in the undertaking of Columbus. In the first act, set in the square of the Spanish city of Salamanca in 1487, the crowd is waiting to see what the response of the Council will be to the request put forth by Cristoforo Colombo [Columbus] (baritone) to be supported for his journey. Here, the initial favor of the population, confident with the promise of a new land to be reached, is turned into aversion by Don Roldano Ximenes (bass), the opera's villain, reminding the people of the perils connected to the insidious ocean. As the Council rejects Colombo's project, the crowd inveighs against the protagonist, a tension solved only by the encounter with queen Isabella (soprano), who decides to help the seafarer in his undertaking. The second act opens directly on board of the ship *Santa Maria* on the fateful day of October 12, 1492. The crew on the ship is complaining for the long, uncertain journey and, afflicted with despair, is losing faith in Colombo, who is also doubting himself. During the Mass, Ximenes incites the crew to rebel against Colombo, and only as the admiral is about to get thrown in the sea is the land finally visible. To the cry of "Terra, terra!" everyone rejoices the imminent coming ashore

The third act shows us the situation in the colonized territory of Xaragua in 1503, where the Spaniards are perpetrating any form of oppression and abuse on a helpless indigenous population. At the same time, such brutality is counterbalanced by the love blossomed between Don Fernan Guevara (tenor), Colombo's right-hand, and princess Iguamota (soprano), the daughter of the indigenous queen Anacoana (mezzosoprano). Anacoana has also managed to seduce Ximenes as she is planning an ambush against the Spaniards. In the fourth act, Colombo has come back to Xaragua to put an end to the violence. He manages to win over Anacoana's trust, but he is interrupted by a royal delegate who arrests him. The Spaniards attack again the indigenous, who in turn set their temple on fire and die in a blaze. Finally, the epilogue shows Colombo in Medina del Campo in 1509. Now old and ill, the protagonist is asking for an encounter with queen Isabella. Once he knows she is dead, he starts to have visions of his past adventures, losing his lucidity, and dies.

Franchetti decided to develop the subject with many evident references to the genre of the French *Grand Opéra*, both because of the presence of a strong *couleur locale* connected to the many dances in the scenes involving the indigenous in America, and for the extensive presence of the choir, with large masses of people often required on stage. More importantly,

the connection to the longstanding tradition of the *Grand Opéra* resides precisely in the representation of a clash of different worldviews and ideologies, the American indigenous and the Spaniards, but also the voluble crowds and the wise Colombo and Isabella.[397] The relationship between Franchetti and Illica was actually not an easy one, as they prioritized different elements in the redaction of the musical-poetic text. On the one hand, Franchetti wanted to highlight the characteristics that made of *Cristoforo Colombo* a *Grand Opéra*, such as the great masses and the spectacular elements, while on the other, Illica paid more attention to the dramatic tension of the characters and the situations represented.[398] This creative disagreement resulted finally in the decision, on the part of Illica, to remove his name from the frontispiece of the libretto published for the première.[399] Apparently, Illica would have agreed with Verdi, who famously commented in a private letter:

> Ah, Franchetti ama la *mise en scène* spettacolosa? Diverso da me che la detesto. Quello che ci vuole, e nulla più. Con queste grandi *mise en scène* si finisce a far sempre la stessa cosa... gran cassa... masse di gente... e addio Dramma e musica!! Divengono cose secondarie.[400]

The opera was nonetheless a great success. The richness and variety of costumes and the complex, demanding scenography were much appreciated, and so were the many talented singers, among which the popular Giuseppe Kaschmann in the title role, Edoardo Garbin as Guevara and Francesco Navarrini as Ximenes.[401] The same success had the orchestra and the conductor Mancinelli, who after the first two performances left Genoa and was substituted by a young and emerging Arturo Toscanini. In fact, it is likely that in the Carlo Felice theater Verdi himself attended to the last performance of Toscanini, although *incognito*, as he wrote to Giulio Ricordi at the end of October:

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[397] To know more about how *Cristoforo Colombo* is inscribed in the tradition of the French *Grand Opéra*, see Richard Erkens, "*Cristoforo Colombo* als italienische Grand Opéra," in Erkens, *Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien*, 137–156.

[398] Virgilio Bernardoni, "Luigi Illica e il libretto di Cristoforo Colombo," in Giorgi and Erkens, eds., *Alberto Franchetti*, 381–388.

[399] [Luigi Illica], *Cristoforo Colombo. Dramma lirico (quattro atti ed un epilogo). Musica di Alberto Franchetti. Genova 1892, Feste Colombiane. Impresa del Teatro Carlo Felice, L. Piontelli & C.*, libretto (Milano: Ricordi, 1892).

[400] "So Franchetti loves a spectacular *mise en scène*? He is different from me, since I hate it. Only what is necessary, and nothing more. With this large *mise en scène* one ends up doing always the same thing... bass drum... masses of people... and goodbye Drama and music!! They become secondary things." Letter to Ricordi, 9 October 1892, cited in Franco Abbiati, *Giuseppe Verdi,* 4 (Milano: Ricordi, 1959), 464.

[401] Mercedes Viale Ferrero, "La visione scenica di *Cristoforo Colombo*," in Giorgi and Erkens, eds., *Alberto Franchetti*, 389–393.

> Arriveremo [in Genoa] alle 6.5 di sera. E così vi sarà una settimana di tempo per sentire *Colombo* e Rigoletto. Ed ora intendiamoci bene... *non presentazioni*, *né complimenti*. Dico di più: i complimenti guasterebbero tutto... perché non andrei al teatro. Come ho sempre fatto, andrò al Teatro prendendo palco e biglietti coi miei denari. E quando vedrò annunciata l'una o l'altra delle dette opere e senza che nessuno venga a dirmi "*Cane cosa fai*" disporrò le cose per sentirle.[402]

Grands Opéras were very popular in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century, being performed not only in the major theaters of the kingdom, but also in smaller centers, granting a widespread diffusion of the genre.[403] The exceptional length of *Cristoforo Colombo*, together with the spectacular character of many scenes, has led Alan Mallach to describe it as a "grand pageant of an opera."[404] And in fact, on the first night, the show was frequently interrupted by the public's outbursts of applause and cheering, to the point that the whole soirée lasted over six hours.[405]

Significant literature has been devoted to *Cristoforo Colombo*. In particular, some authors have focused on the analysis of the score — which dedicatee was Cesare Gamba. The analysis has highlighted the presence of some *Leitmotive* recurring along the opera, although not subjected to particular elaboration, but rather repeated as reminders of previous episodes.[406] Instead of possessing the quality of characters who carry on the plot of the drama solely within the orchestral texture, these musical ideas work more as signals of certain moments

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[402] "We will arrive in Genoa at 6:30pm. This way we will have a week to listen to *Colombo* and *Rigoletto*. And now let us be clear... no presentations, nor ceremony. What is more: any ceremony would ruin everything... because I would not go to the theater. As I have always done, I will go to the Theater by taking box and tickets with my own money. And when I will see one or the other aforementioned operas announced, without anybody coming to tell me "*Cane* [hey you] what are you doing" I will arrange things in order to listen to them." Giuseppe Verdi, Letter to Giulio Ricordi, 21 October 1892. I would like to thank Vincenzina Ottomano for informing me about this letter. Ricordi wanted Verdi to listen to *Cristoforo Colombo*, also considering that some of the singers in the cast would be also in the première of *Falstaff* few months later, among which Garbin and Navarrini, but also Antonio Pini-Corsi, Giovanni Paroli, and Attilio Pulcini. Therefore, he suggested in a telegram to Verdi that he could postpone Toscanini's prior commitments to give an extra performance of Franchetti's opera: Giulio Ricordi, Telegram to Giuseppe Verdi, [23 October 1892]. The correspondence is published in Dario De Cicco, ed., *Carteggio Verdi–Ricordi 1892* (Parma: Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani, 2015), 263–266.

[403] Alessandro Roccatagliati, "Opera, opera-ballo e gran opéra: commistioni stilistiche e recezione critica nell'Italia teatrale di secondo Ottocento (1860–1870)," in *Opera e libretto. Vol. 2*, a cura di Gianfranco Folena, Maria Teresa Muraro e Giovanni Morelli (Firenze: Olschki, 1993), 283–349.

[404] Alan Mallach, "*Cristoforo Colombo*. Alberto Franchetti." *The Opera Quarterly* 9/3 (Spring 1993): 175. For Mallach's contextualization of *Cristoforo Colombo* as the last Italian *Grand Opéra*, see Alan Mallach, *The Autumn of Italian Opera. From Verismo to Modernism, 1890–1915* (Lebanon, NH: Northeastern University Press, 2007), 62–64.

[405] Alfredo Soffredini, "*Cristoforo Colombo* di Alberto Franchetti. Prima rappresentazione al Teatro Carlo Felice di Genova, 6 ottobre 1892," *GMM* 1892, 651–652.

[406] Luca Zoppelli, "The twilight of the true gods: *Cristoforo Colombo*, *I Medici* and the construction of Italian history," *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 8/3 (November 1996): 251–269.

in the course of the story, and reappear in the final act, as Colombo remembers all the past episodes of his adventure. As highlighted by Erkens, such treatment gives the score a cyclic structure, a characteristic that partly assimilated Franchetti's work to the contemporary symphonic language of that time.[407]

The modernity and peculiarity of the score, as highlighted by modern scholars, did not go unnoticed when *Cristoforo Colombo* premiered. An evidence of the great interest aroused specifically by the score lies in an article appeared on the pages of *Il Caffaro* only two days after the opera's première. The article, lengthy and detailed, was a careful musical analysis of the opera signed by Gamba. An unusual piece of literature for the readers of *Il Caffaro*, this article had even been split in five parts — to be published on five consecutive days — and its relevance was enhanced by the position on the newspaper, each day at the bottom of the very first two pages.[408]

The analysis offered by Gamba retraces the entire *dramma lirico*, describing not only the scenes, but also the melodies, the tonalities, the peculiarities of the orchestral writing adopted and developed by Franchetti, offering a vivid record of the music performed. Such an analysis was certainly beyond the usual level of accuracy and technicality offered on the pages of *Il Caffaro*, even in other articles by the same author. Yet, every compositional detail captured served not only to inform about the score, but also to celebrate Franchetti's status as a composer, and more specifically a composer in Italy. For example, the *fugato* in the second act, while the crew on the Santa Maria is lamenting their uncertain fate — one of the most suggestive portions of the opera: "è una pagina musicale di mirabile fattura, condotta con sapienza e con ispirazione infinita. Ha un fare *Bachiano*, che rivela la profondità degli studi del Maestro."[409] A technical aspect is here singled out not only to simply highlight the inspiration of Franchetti's writing — Bach, the German tradition — but also to qualify it with a judgement of value — "deep." The last part of Gamba's article is the richest in the evaluation of

[407] Richard Erkens, "Cyclical forms in musical dramaturgy: comments on Alberto Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo*," in Giorgi and Erkens, eds., *Alberto Franchetti*, 77–110.
[408] Cesare Gamba, "Appendice musicale. *Cristoforo Colombo*, dramma lirico del maestro Franchetti," *Il Caffaro* 8–12 October 1892, [1–2].
[409] "It is a musical page of admirable composition, managed with knowledge and infinite inspiration. It has a *Bachian* gesture, which reveals the depth of the Maestro's studies." Emphasis in the original. Cesare Gamba, "Appendice musicale. *Cristoforo Colombo*, dramma lirico del maestro Franchetti," II, *Il Caffaro* 9 October 1892, [1–2: 1].

Franchetti's work, always underlying how the composer had fully internalized the lessons collected during his studies in Germany, which exposed him to the latest musical novelties in musical theater and orchestral writing:

> Il maestro Franchetti ha confermato in questa seconda opera la fama che s'era acquistata colla prima, di grande sinfonista; mostrò ancora una volta la rara padronanza strumentale, e quanta famigliarità abbia col contrappunto e tutte le risorse della moderna polifonia. Niuno più di lui in Italia riuscì a compiere il voto di Wagner, quello di immettere il ricco torrente della musica sinfonica, nella cerchia dell'opera.[410]

The reference to Wagner, though, is only in terms of the German composer's aesthetics, an effort to meet the needs of the drama at the base of any opera with an intense and current orchestral writing. In fact, the technique specifically was absolutely remote from Wagner's style, according to Gamba: overall in the score the melodic inspiration was never canceled, but rather supported by refined harmony and orchestral writing: "Checché taluno ne abbia detto, nulla di Wagneriano v'ha in quest'opera di Franchetti; l'orchestrale è pieno, elaboratissimo, di grande importanza, cio è vero, ma primeggia sempre il canto, specialmente nei luoghi drammatici."[411] And again: "vanno di pari passo, unite sempre, l'ispirazione melodica e la sapientissima veste armonica e strumentale, [...] quell'arte per cui vanno grandi i maestri d'oltralpe. In questo connubio felice, vedo l'avvenire dell'opera italiana [...]."[412]

With *Cristoforo Colombo*, Franchetti definitively rose to the status of a great promise for the national culture, one that later would be branded as a member of a triad of young, brilliant, popular Italian composers — together with Mascagni and Puccini.[413] After its première in Genoa, the opera underwent a number of revisions, progressively cutting and merging the

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[410] "Maestro Franchetti confirmed in his second opera the fame of great symphonist he gained with his first one; he showed once more his exceptional mastery of instruments, and how acquainted he is with counterpoint and all the resources of modern polyphony. Nobody more than him in Italy succeeded in fulfilling Wagner's promise, that of leading the rich torrent of symphonic music into the scope of opera." Cesare Gamba, "Appendice musicale. *Cristoforo Colombo*, dramma lirico del maestro Franchetti," V, *Il Caffaro* 9 October 1892, [1–2: 1].

[411] "What somebody has said does not matter, in this opera by Franchetti there is nothing Wagnerian; the orchestral writing is full, very elaborated, powerful, that is true, but the singing comes always first, especially in the dramatic moments." Cesare Gamba, "Appendice musicale. *Cristoforo Colombo*, dramma lirico del maestro Franchetti," V, *Il Caffaro* 9 October 1892, [1–2: 1].

[412] "Melodic inspiration and a wise harmonic and instrumental setting are always combined, [...] a skill in which transalpine masters are great. In this happy union, I see the future of Italian music [...]." Cesare Gamba, "Appendice musicale. *Cristoforo Colombo*, dramma lirico del maestro Franchetti," V, *Il Caffaro* 9 October 1892, [1–2: 1].

[413] Carlo Piccardi, "Ossessione dell'italianità: il primato perduto tra nostalgia classicistica e riscatto nazionale," in *Nazionalismo e cosmopolitismo nell'opera fra '800 e '900. Atti del 3° Convegno Internazionale "Ruggero Leoncavallo nel suo tempo." Locarno, Biblioteca Cantonale, 6–7 ottobre 1995*, a cura di Lorenza Guiot e Jürgen Maehder (Milano: Sonzogno, 1998), 25–57.

American acts until the last version of 1923, where the American part of the drama was substituted with an act set in Palos in 1493 — the new part of the libretto was written by Arturo Rossato so that it could fit portions of the preexisting music from the ancient acts three and four.[414] The excessive length of the opera was therefore a problem already starting from the first re-staging of the opera at Teatro alla Scala in Milan, and remained a longstanding one for the following thirty years. Nevertheless, where other critics saw a fault in the conception of the work, the *genovese* Gamba insisted in justifying it precisely for how it suited the occasion of the Exposition:

> Gli si rimproverarono le linee sovverchiamente [*sic!*] severe, la eccezionale richiesta di messa in scena e la difficoltà dell'esecuzione. Ma questa non è colpa; è merito precipuo del maestro che, compreso degli obblichi suoi verso la città che gli affidava un tale compito, non si preoccupò dell'avvenire del suo lavoro dal punto di vista commerciale, bensì di ben meritare dalla città stessa, facendo opera d'arte grandiosa, senza preoccupazioni di estrinseca natura.[415]

From Giuditta *to* Colombo*: fabricating a patron saint for Italian opera*

The opera *Cristoforo Colombo* served to consecrate Franchetti to the ranks of great living composers that could lead Italian culture — and music specifically — into the twentieth century. Now that more than a century is passed by, we can appreciate the different fate that the popularity and reputation as composers of Puccini, Mascagni, and Franchetti have enjoyed — Franchetti being an author virtually never performed in current opera and concert seasons. Nonetheless, with *Cristoforo Colombo* he really ascended to the levels of an internationally recognized figure in 1892, one whose personality and fancy hobbies started to be commented about in the newspapers almost as much as his compositional skills and accomplishments.[416] The reasons for this vivid, though short lived popularity may be in part ascribed to the opera subject, and especially to such subject in the context of the Exposition.

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[414] Erkens, *Alberto Franchetti — Werkstudien*, 177–218.

[415] "He is blamed for the excessively severe melodies, the exceptional need for masses on stage, and the complexity of execution. But this is not a fault; it is the principal merit of the *maestro*, who, being obliged to his city for the task they assigned him, did not think about the future of his work from a commercial point of view, and just wanted to appease the city itself, making a great work of art, without paying attention to any external concerns." Cesare Gamba, "Appendice musicale. *Cristoforo Colombo*, dramma lirico del maestro Franchetti," V, *Il Caffaro* 9 October 1892, [1–2: 1].

[416] Mallach, "Alberto Franchetti and *Cristoforo Colombo*:" 25–27.

In order to fully appreciate the extent to which the *Esposizione italo-americana* contributed to the success of *Cristoforo Colombo*, I would like to highlight that the work aroused the interest of its contemporaries not only because of the composer Franchetti, praised by Gamba for his ability to combine Italian and ultramontane characteristics, but also thanks to the Exposition in which it was presented. The Exposition, in fact, was the only context in which *Cristoforo Colombo* — "the last Italian grand opera"[417] — could be staged in its original form, and that for a double reason: the opera required extraordinary staging expenses, which made it difficult to present it with the full American acts in regular opera seasons; on the other hand, the very subject, as it was developed by Illica under the directions of Franchetti, made the opera particularly adapt to the occasion of the Exposition and at the same time less fitted for other opera theaters.

When *Cristoforo Colombo* was set to verses and music, Illica and Franchetti had a long tradition of literary works and operas on the same subject to get inspiration from.[418] In particular, as it has been repeated in scholarly literature, they were influenced by the publication of the *Historia de las Indias* by Bartolomé de las Casas, in which the Spaniards were unequivocally portrayed as invaders and abusers against innocent and pacific indigenous people. The same dynamic between a violent oppressor and an innocent victim of conquest and colonization had been also the basis for other operas such as *L'Africaine* by Giacomo Meyerbeer — undoubtedly a model for *Cristoforo Colombo* — and *Il Guarany*, a work of great success by Antônio Carlos Gomes which premiered at Teatro alla Scala in 1870.[419] In the case of Illica and Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo*, the indigenous were also considered capable of violence, as the attempted ambush organized by Anacoana proves. In this framework, Colombo acted as a pacifier *super partes*, who in his wisdom could appease the conflicts between the two clashing civilizations.[420]

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[417] Mallach, *The Autumn of Italian Opera*, 63.

[418] Jürgen Maehder, "Cristóbal Colón, Montecuzoma II. Xocoyotzin and Hernán Cortés on the opera stage — a study in comparative libretto history," *Revista de Musicología* 16/1 (1993): 146–184; Thomas Heck, "The operatic Christopher Columbus: three hundred years of musical mythology," *Annali d'italianistica* 10 (1992): 236–278; Thomas Heck, "Toward a bibliography of operas on Columbus: a quincentennial checklist," *Notes* 19/2 (December 1992): 474–497.

[419] Zoppelli, "The twilight of the true gods:" 257. Probably, also Verdi's *Otello* influenced the libretto and the staging of *Cristoforo Colombo*: Jürgen Maehder, "Szenische Imagination," 220–226.

[420] Bernardoni, "Luigi Illica," 583–584.

The figure of Columbus is therefore elusive: in the economy of the dramatic action, the character of Colombo really works as a force for reasoning against violent conflicts, and especially against the crimes perpetrated by the Spaniards and the Christianity they represent. In this sense, Zoppelli is right in highlighting how *Cristoforo Colombo* is a product conceived to exalt the values of the liberal Italian ruling class, and therefore permeated by harsh anticlericalism — in the temple's destruction scene, one empathizes with the Indians against the bigoted friars.[421] On the other hand, Colombo is represented as a saint himself, a characteristic that has been highlighted multiple times in scholarly literature: he is solitary, wise, and has prophetic visions. Colombo is not directly involved in the love plot typically at the center of an operatic subject, and the way he doubts himself and is betrayed by his crew before the landing certainly bears some Christological reminiscences.[422]

The static, although tormented character of the protagonist did not make for the easiest subject for an opera (even without considering the apparatus required for the American acts), and subsequent revisions and cuts operated on the original score testify that the work needed to be thoroughly revised to be staged again.[423] Yet, in the context of the *Esposizione italo-americana*, this saint-quality of Colombo could actually become a positive value. To prove this point, I will comment to another case in which an opera subject was not deemed adapt to be set to music and staged, but in the end proved functional to the context of an exposition, namely the first Italian Exposition of Florence 1861 with which I have already illustrated the role of expositions not only as symbols, but actually as components, makers of a nation's and a community's identity.

In 1861, the opera chosen to adorn the celebrations organized for the newly born Italy was *Giuditta* by Achille Peri, on a libretto by Marco Marcelliano Marcello.[424] Unlike *Cristoforo Colombo*, this *Giuditta* had not been composed on a commission coming from the Exposition committee, but it had rather been selected from the season of the previous year at Teatro

[421] Zoppelli, "The twilight of the true gods," 254–255.
[422] Bernardoni, "Luigi Illica," 584–585; Thomas Bremer, "'Guarda, l'oceano m'è dintorno.' Alberto Franchettis Columbus-Oper (Genova 1892): Überlegungen zum Zusammenhang von Geschichsdarstellung und Opernlibretto im italienischen Verismo," in *Columbus 1892/1992. Heldenverehrung und Heldenmontage*, ed. Gerhard Wawor and Titus Heydenreich (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 1995), 57–100.
[423] The autograph score, bearing signs of later modifications, is preserved at Archivio Ricordi in Milan. See: Zoppelli, "The twilight of the true gods:" 252, n. 4.
[424] Marco Marcelliano Marcello, *Giuditta. Melodramma biblico in tre atti. Musica del Maestro Achille Peri. Da rappresentarsi al Teatro Pagliano in Firenze in occasione della grande Esposizione Italiana nel 1861*, libretto (Milano: Lucca, [1861]).

alla Scala in Milan. The reason for this choice is evident at first glance: based on the biblical myth of Judith, the woman who courageously managed to set the city of Bethulia free from the siege of Holofernes, this story could easily match the narratives of liberation from the Austrians and the Bourbons during the independence wars. Yet, the opera had not been unanimously well received when it premiered in Milan the previous year. In the lengthy review appeared on the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, the reviewer lamented the static characters on which the plot was based, but did it so graciously:

> Sarà forse effetto di speciali e difficilmente cancellabili impressioni d'infanzia, ma certo è che i soggetti biblici sembrano svolgersi in un'atmosfera particolare. Oltre alla tinta locale, emana da essi una qualche cosa, un elemento loro proprio, che non si rinviene altrove. E quest'elemento, sebbene non inerente al tema, pur vi si intrinseca in guisa di penetrarlo e dominarlo tanto, che l'avvenimento sembra assumere proporzioni di gran lunga più ampie che in realtà non abbia. Uomini e cose si fan maggiori, s'ingigantiscono, assumendo alla lor volta anch'essi una dignità che realmente sono lungi dal possedere.[425]

The biblical myth was considered insignificant *per se* to become the subject of an opera, but the fact it came from the holy scriptures, and therefore was a fundamental, universally known story, compensated for the scarcity of dramatic content in the myth. The reviewer continued by stating that the biblical context helped to save even the despicable character of Holofernes:

> Oloferne è un personaggio ignobile, inestetico: ma pur si ritempra in questo biblico elemento, s'atteggia ad una specie di grandezza comunicatagli dall'ambiente impregnato d'un profumo divino in cui si muove: ed Oloferne contemplato attraverso la magnifica lente diventa un personaggio musicabile. E chi dice musicabile, dice estetico, dice un'essere che s'aggira in quel campo ch'ha per confini il bello ed il sublime. Ché la musica è inetta a ritrarre il realismo inestetico.[426]

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[425] "Maybe it is the effect of special and hard-to-erase childhood impressions, but it is certain that biblical subjects appear to unfold in a particular atmosphere. In addition to the co*uleur locale*, something emanates from them, an element of their own, that cannot be retrieved anywhere else. And this element, although not pertinent to the theme, intertwines with it, penetrating and dominating it so much that the event seems to assume far larger proportions than it has in reality. Men and things become bigger, they magnify, assuming a dignity that they are far from having in reality." "Regio Teatro della Scala: Giuditta: melodramma biblico in tre atti," *GMM* 1860, 105–108: 105.

[426] "Holofernes is a despicable, unaesthetic character: and yet he is restored in this biblical element, he strikes a sort of greatness conveyed to him by the environment saturated with divine perfume in which he moves: and Holofernes, seen through this magnifying glass, becomes a character which can be set to music. And what can be set to music is aesthetic, something roaming in that field that has the beautiful and the sublime as its borders. For music is inept at portraying unaesthetic realism." Regio Teatro della Scala: Giuditta: melodramma biblico in tre atti", Gazzetta Musicale di Milano 1860, 105–8: 105.

According to the reviewer, it was precisely the complex of memories and cultural references connected to the Bible that made the story worthy to be set to music. But what could become the subject of a cantata or even an oratorio should not be taken for granted as a subject for an opera, which also needs to be staged and to respond to a dramatic urge. This was the warning of the anonymous reviewer:

> Ogni tema dunque spiccato alle sacre carte è di sua natura musicabile: lo è anche indipendentemente dall'indole, dal valore intrinseco del tema medesimo: [...] non però ne consegue che ogni tema biblico possa essere assunto ad ordire la tela di un dramma; [...] giacché [un dramma] vive di movimento, di successione d'affetti, di lotta di passioni, di varietà, di gradazioni [...]. Ed è a siffatta condizione che rade volte rispondono gli argomenti biblici.[427]

In other words, the reviewer considered the myth of Judith as hardly fitting the requisites of an opera subject. The review concluded that what saved the work was the centrality that the librettist had given to the only definite passion expressed by the original myth, that of "patria" [homeland]:

> Forse il solo sentimento di patria può sposarsi a questo senza dissonanze: e ben fece il signor Marcello a renderlo di continuo evidente e predominante nella sua *Giuditta*.[428]

The reviewer's opinion is entirely subjective and actually contrasted with the views of the librettist Marcello, who claimed to have been inspired by the many stage adaptations of the myth of Judith. Marcello considered the story as sufficiently varied in its affects to become an opera subject, but he admitted that he was also captivated by the "aura poetica e misteriosa che spirano i subbietti desunti dalla Bibbia."[429] This aura, which for the reviewer made the subject tolerable on stage, was probably what made it perfect to the occasion of an exposition designed to contribute to the creation of the Italian nation-state. Any opera based on a story of liberation from an oppressor would have pleased the organizers of the National Exposition

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[427] "Therefore, any subject taken from the sacred texts can be naturally set to music: independently of its own nature and inherent value: […] yet it does not follow that any biblical subject can be used to weave the canvas of a drama; [...] for [drama] is alive with movement, juxtaposition of affects, struggle of passions, variety, nuances [...]. And this condition is hardly met by biblical topics." "Regio Teatro della Scala: Giuditta: melodramma biblico in tre atti," Gazzetta Musicale di Milano 1860, 105–8: 106.

[428] "Maybe, only the sentiment of homeland can be paired with this without any dissonance: and *signor* Marcello did a good job in making it apparent and predominant in his *Giuditta*." "Regio Teatro della Scala: Giuditta: melodramma biblico in tre atti," Gazzetta Musicale di Milano 1860, 105–8: 106.

[429] "Poetic and mysterious aura that emanates from the subjects taken from the Bible." See the *Avvertimento* to the libretto, dated Milan, 12 March 1860, in Marco Marcelliano Marcello, *Giuditta. Melodramma biblico in tre atti. Musica del Maestro Achille Peri. Da rappresentarsi nel Teatro Comunale di Trieste, l'Autunno 1865*, libretto (Milano: Lucca, [1865]), [3].

of Florence 1861, but the impact of *Giuditta* in the Exposition certainly increased thanks to the fact that its subject was taken from the Bible, a shared archive of stories that shaped the childhood imagination of most Italians.

Similar qualities characterized also to the story of Columbus and the discovery of America. In the light of the many different influences that converged to make Christopher Columbus a polyvalent, preeminent figure in the Pantheon of Italy's patrons, we can imagine that the story of America's discovery was, not unlike the myth of Judith, part of a common heritage shared by the visitors of the Genoa Exposition and by Italians (and foreigners) at large. As in the case of *Giuditta*, a subject that could leave the spectators perplexed in a regular opera season resulted a perfect choice in the context of an exposition, where not only dramatic functionality and conciseness counted, but also the ability to appeal to the public's shared archive of myths that they had grown up with.

Cristoforo Colombo told a story that could not work in its original form on regular opera stages, but it was characterized by two components dear to the organizers and commentators of Genoa 1892: on the one hand, a powerful orchestral writing, coming from Franchetti's German education and signaling the cosmopolitism of modern Italian opera; on the other, a saint-like figure as the protagonist, whose life and accomplishments were known and shared by virtually every audience member in the Carlo Felice theater — an precious quality for operas in the history of Italian expositions, as in the case of Florence 1861. All this contributed to the success of *Cristoforo Colombo* at its première, with which the *Esposizione Italo-Americana* not only celebrated the inspiration of the whole 1892 celebrations, but also fabricated a patron saint for the future of Italian opera.

Conclusions

In this dissertation, I have focused my attention on the music artifacts and musical events presented at great expositions of arts and industry in *fin-de-siècle* Italy. In this kind of celebrations, typical of the second half of the nineteenth century and still persisting today, the double role of music as something to be put on display but also as an integral element of the celebrations, has allowed to isolate two main functions connected to music that emerged during expositions: in these events, music turned into an object, and it was also at the center of ongoing practices. On the one hand, certain artifacts such as music instruments or scores were commodities by definition, being available for purchase on the market whether they were presented as objects in an exhibition or not. For them, expositions worked as great fairs in which producers, sellers, and buyers would meet and create new business agreements. At the same time, also music performances and musical knowledge could be objectified and labeled, for example as "art music" or "folk music," and be organized in repertoires. This dissertation describes and highlights different examples from this spectrum of musical objects created and exploited by expositions.

On the other hand, music participated in, or resulted from a series of practices constantly appearing in all the expositions analyzed, and established in previous events of the same kind, although with some variations. The composition of anthems for an exposition, the performances of fanfares, the inauguration of the concert halls especially built for the fairs were only some of the many practices that became critical to the assessment of the *grandeur* and success of the exposition itself, but also of the degree of civilization and musical competence of the hosting city. Also opera programming in the local theater and the very act of classifying and displaying music instruments and publications in the music exhibitions became a trend with unwritten, yet fixed rules which became very telling of the city's cultural orientation, whether they were complied with or transgressed. Therefore, the analysis of practices involving music in the context of expositions is what profits mostly from a comparison between the study cases presented in this dissertation. In these conclusions, I will summarize the main

elements emerged from the study of the musical offering connected to three different expositions, and of the discourses and debates it sparked.

I have started my discussion with an overview on the *Esposizione Internazionale di Musica* which took place in Bologna in 1888. An unprecedented model of high intellectual commitment and ambition, Bologna 1888 is especially remarkable because it was not just a part of a broader national or international exposition, but rather it constituted the pivot on which also a National Fine Arts Exhibition and a Regional Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition were launched. Counting some protagonists of Italy's musical life in the late nineteenth century among its organizers and patrons, with figures of the likes of Arrigo Boito and Giuseppe Martucci among others, Bologna 1888 represented a model for subsequent expositions. The number of music instruments, of scores, and even of relics connected to great composers that the organizers of the Music Exhibition managed to gather created a phantasmagoric experience for the visitors. Therefore, it accomplished the ultimate goal of expositions, from which their power to create engagement and enthusiasm for progress derived, making them a powerful tool for the education and discipline of the population.

In the case of Bologna, the objective was to highlight the works and the composers who were considered to be more revolutionary in the history of music, and to connect them to the history of the city itself. Therefore, the Music Exhibition was designed to resemble a temple for the worship of relics of composers, and the far-sighted organizers also proposed the performance of historical concerts and recuperated ancient operas to make the Exhibition's experience richer and more immersive. At the same time, the gazettes commenting on the Exposition — and the visitor's guides produced to accompany their readers through the different pavilions — devoted many pages to re-writing music history as a history of innovations and revolutions, and presenting Bologna as the site where such revolutions had been first and best received in Italy. This attitude towards the musical past of the city had a direct connection to the present of the *fine secolo*, a moment in which Bologna strove to showcase itself as cosmopolitan and progressive, oriented towards the future. The musical epitome of this orientation was of course the predilection for Wagner — instantiated in the staging of *Tristan und Isolde* at Teatro Comunale in the same year of the Exposition — as opposed to the milder appreciation of Verdi's latest masterpiece, *Otello*.

The second study case I analyzed is the *Esposizione Nazionale* that took place in Palermo during Winter 1891–92. Once again a unique case if compared to the panorama of Italian

national expositions, which usually were realized in the major urban centers of Northern Italy, the Exposition of Palermo combined a strong focus on the representation of local identity with the first manifestation of Italy's colonial aspirations. The former was instantiated in the very facade of the Exposition's main pavilion, which reprised elements from the Norman-Arab-Byzantine architectures in the city — a manifestation of medieval cosmopolitism in themselves; the latter was represented by the recreation of an Eritrean village, with people transplanted from Italian colonies in the Horn of Africa and displayed for the visitors' curiosity and amusement.

For Palermo 1891–92, I have chosen an interpretation of the whole Exposition — and particularly of the music exhibition and of the musical events presented during the celebrations — in the light of the crisis affecting Italy's national identity not only at the end of the nineteenth century, but actually from its very Unification in 1861. The sudden annexation of former Kingdom of the Two Sicilies exposed a difference in the socioeconomic structure between Northern and Southern Italy: the *questione meridionale*, a gap that only worsened in the first decades of the modern nation-state. The National Exposition in Palermo was conceived to relaunch the South, but the focus on music reveals how such relaunch did not follow the path anticipated by national commentators. Correspondents for the specialized gazettes based in Milan found indeed a ray of hope in the opera season at Teatro Politeama, and especially in the civilized response of its audience to the staging of modern masterpieces. However, the same could not be said for the actual music exhibition and for the concerts presented in the Exposition's pavilions. Here, the protagonists appeared to be the local aristocracy, who guided the musical offering according to its taste. The music exhibition consisted mostly in the display of countless instruments and methods for all the amateur musicians composing the ranks of the nobility in Palermo, and of the high bourgeoisie who still depended heavily on them in late nineteenth-century Sicily.

The aristocracy at Palermo 1891–92 also took over the inauguration concert of the *grande sala delle feste*, in order to present themselves to the royal family — and by extension, to the nation — on the occasion of their visit to the Exposition, and they did so precisely by performing that amateur repertoire that the most illustrious commentators deemed inappropriate for such an occasion. In addition to that, exponents of the whealthy élite in the city promoted Sicilian popular song as a genre for the population and projecting Sicilian *couleur locale*. Therefore, instead of becoming the temple of musical art in the same way Bologna did,

Palermo took the National Exposition as an occasion to transform itself into a temporary capital of the leisure industry, with the aristocracy at its center, who conflated their interest with that of entrepreneurs and of a growing tourist industry on the island. Even the scientific efforts of a pioneering ethnographer such as Giuseppe Pitrè — who contributed greatly to the Exposition with his *Mostra etnografica siciliana* — became functional to the commodification of Sicilian folklore and of its music, as we have seen in the case of Leopoldo Mastrigli's *La Sicilia musicale*. In the end, the specific Sicilian identity represented in the Exposition became more an attraction for the Exposition's visitors than an active contribution from the city of Palermo to solve the national identity crisis posed by the *questione meridionale*.

A totally different scenario is to be found in the *Esposizione italo-americana* held in Genoa in 1892. Here, the initiative of the city was not financially supported by the Rome, and yet the Government and the royal family had to play their institutional role because of the delicate diplomatic occurrence that accompanied Genoa's celebrations for the fourth centennial of Christopher Columbus's endeavor. The very nature of the commemorations, which were joined in by two continents and were actually contended between at least three different nations, placed Genoa at the center of international attention for the brief months of the Exposition's duration. In the case of Genoa 1892, I have privileged an approach that would highlight another Italian identity crisis affecting the last decades of the nineteenth century — a specifically musical one.

Verdi's scarce compositional activity before the appearance of *Otello* and the lack of new remarkable Italian authors among the many that presented their works on Italian stages towards the end of the nineteenth century was compensated with an increasing import of operas from foreigners, which enriched and influenced the musical taste in the peninsula. However, the higher appreciation for ultramontane composers exposed the scarce success — on a long term — of Italian *operisti*, a financial issue especially for Italian publishing houses which also constituted a deeper cultural one. The Exposition in Genoa had therefore two objectives: on the one hand, to elevate its hosting city to the level of other Italian cities in terms of appreciation of foreign music, namely instrumental music and Wagner's works; on the other, it became a stepping stone to finally solve the crisis of Italian music by producing a new *operista* who could ideally be the heir of Verdi and carry Italian operatic tradition into the twentieth century.

The first of these two objectives was tackled ineffectively by charging director and composer Luigi Mancinelli with the responsibility of providing high-brow musical offering during the Exposition. Despite the attempts made by commentators on the pages of local newspapers, the public did not particularly appreciate such offering, and deserted especially Mancinelli's series of symphonic music concerts, which had to be canceled. On the other hand, amateur music and military music were extremely successful and received good reviews in the same newspapers. In this sense, this kind of musical practices were more integrated in Genoa than in Palermo. Here they testified the good health of at least one part of the city's musical culture, whereas in Palermo they were viewed as not deserving of attention. This different judgement derived partly from the social class that mostly identified with such practices: in Palermo, a conservative aristocracy which was not concerned with presenting the city as an avant-garde cultural hub as much as a garden full of amusing attractions; in Genoa, the lay public who — thanks to the practice of the mandolin or to the activity in a brass band — could take part in the process of music-making and enjoy the latest developments of music instruments' technology. At the same time, their involvement in such practices allowed them to fully appreciate the artistry of the military fanfares performing in the national competition organized for Genoa 1892, a demonstration of the healthy conditions of at least this part of national music.

The second objective was accomplished by assigning young composer Alberto Franchetti the task of writing an opera based on the subject inspiring the whole celebrations, the journey of Christopher Columbus. Franchetti's operatic debut *Asraël* helped to create his reputation as a composer who could combine Italianness — melodic creativity — with a solid German education — evidenced in his treatment of the orchestra and a rich harmonic texture. Such reputation was then combined with the image of Columbus as a universal hero of *genovesi* origins, a figure in which Italian, Spanish, American and even Roman Catholic aspirations could conflate. The opera *Cristoforo Colombo* then consolidated the author's reputation, making him an exceptional personality thanks to the spectacular *mise en scène* allowed by the lavish investments for the Exposition combined with the composer's sporadic use of *Leitmotive* and the presence rich symphonic passages in the score. But what contributed even more to the success of *Cristoforo Colombo* was the opera's subject itself, the focus on a character who transcended national borders, whose existence was portrayed with several references to the life of a saint, and with whom everybody in the audience was probably

familiar with since their childhood. Therefore, thanks to the context of the Exposition in which it was presented, *Cristoforo Colombo* represented an actual sacralization of Franchetti and of Italian music at large.

The creation and staging of a cultural identity appears to be at the center of the three study cases presented in this dissertation. If the Exposition in Bologna constituted a positive, affirmative act made by the city for its own citizens and then for the many national and international observers to witness, in the case of Palermo and Genoa we assist to two attempts to address and react to an identity crisis. Although I have focused more on Italy's sociopolitical and socioeconomic weakness when discussing Palermo 1891–92 and Italian music crisis in Genoa 1892, these two issues are in fact strictly connected and influenced each other. When Mastrigli presented the best fruits of Sicilian folk music in his collection, he did so not only to offer another product of Sicilian culture to the Exposition's visitors, but also to invite a new generation of young Italian composers to find their source of inspiration in the music of the people. On the other hand, the healthy conditions of fanfare music in Genoa 1892 did not only assess the good state of Italian military music, but cast also an optimistic outlook towards the critical conditions of Italian society at the end of the nineteenth century.

Therefore, the identification of specific expositions with specific questions is not objectively reflecting the reality, but it rather served the sake of argumentation. Indeed, a transversal reading of the three chapters highlights several threads running through the whole dissertation which constitute as many research paths. Of strictly music-historical interest is the reception of Verdi's *Otello*, a constant in all the opera seasons of the three cities presented in the chapters, to the point that it was even reprised in two consecutive seasons the same year in Palermo. In addition to that, the peculiar relationship between the reception of Verdi's and Wagner's music is also an element that emerges from the study cases discussed. Starting as a radical opposition between two worldviews which paralleled the antagonistic attitude between rival music publishers Ricordi and Lucca, this relationship evolved into a complementary dichotomy also eased by Ricordi's acquisition of Lucca's catalogue in 1888 and by Verdi's break with operatic conventions in his *Otello*. Both the initial and the final state of this relationship was exploited in the context of Expositions: in Bologna, an inflexible opposition served the city's positioning as a cosmopolitan and progressive center, distancing itself from its previous conditions under the Papal Legations regime and at the

same time also from the influence of Italy's main musical pole, Milan; in Genoa, the integration of these two old masters was a desired outcome that became instantiated in the figure of Franchetti, Italian by birth and by spirit, but also German — and therefore international — by education.

Finally, the establishment of specific musical practices — such as the exhibition of music instruments, the programming of music popularizing concerts, the choir and fanfare competitions — produced a multiplicity of results, depending on where the exposition was taking place and who was in charge of its organization. However, the lack of high-brow instrumental music was always perceived as an issue by commentators, whereas the presence of a rich music scores collection in the music pavilion was always praised. This element underlines the power of music publisher Ricordi to influence Italian musical life during the nineteenth century. Especially after 1888, when Giulio Ricordi succeeded to his father Tito in the administration of the enterprise, Ricordi became a staple in music exhibitions organized in Italy, contributing to a large extent to their catalogue and playing a primary role in shaping Italy's musical identity. In this sense, it would be extremely fruitful to investigate the role of Ricordi in the representation of Italy also in the context of expositions outside of national borders, and especially at the *Internationale Ausstellung für Musik- und Theaterwesen* curated by Guido Adler in Vienna in 1892. In that case, the special committee organized at a governmental level was canceled, thus Italy's section at the exhibition was limited and mostly occupied by Ricordi's catalogue[430] — with inevitable consequences for Italy's image showcased on such an important appointment for the history of music and of musicology.[431]

Finally, the present study also allows to elaborate some critical observations on the phenomenon of expositions itself and on the literature that developed around it in more recent years. Expositions appear as a contended space to display and consequently to produce knowledge, and the figures who are in charge of displaying and producing it are not to be taken for granted. A comparison between the three study cases presented shows that music professionals and specialists active in Bologna 1888 could be easily substituted in the

[430] Theophil Antonicek, *Die internationale Ausstellung für Musik- und Theaterwesen: Wien 1892* (Wien: T. Antonicek, 2013).

[431] For an assessment of the impact of such exhibition on musicological discipline, see María Cáceres-Piñuel, "From Historical Concerts to Monumental Editions: The Early Music Revivals at the Viennese International Exhibition of Music and Theater (1892)," *Musicologica Austriaca-Journal for Austrian Music Studies*, to be published.

organization and intellectual responsibility of other expositions' programming by different social actors. This was the case of Palermo 1891–92, where not only a scholarly figure like Giuseppe Pitrè, but also the music-passionate Marchesa di Ganzeria, competent Tina Whitaker, and other representatives of the aristocracy in Palermo gave shape to the musical events. In addition to that, the different degree of investments from the central Government in Rome also exposes the importance of the organizers: if the state refused to support Genoa 1892 financially, it was still forced to get involved with the diplomatic exchanges caused by such event, thanks to the ability of the city administration in Genoa and of the Società Ginnastica Ligure Cristoforo Colombo to engage in celebrations that became internationally relevant.

The role of networks of dedicated professionals highlighted by Geppert in the creation of expositions worldwide, therefore, needs to be assessed differently from time to time, by looking also at the specific geographic and historical context in which each exposition took place. In Bologna, those professionals could operate effectively thanks to the city's decades-old tradition of progressiveness and musical cosmopolitism, which led to a much-appreciated event with only some disappointment in the public's participation — for example, the reduced audience attending the staging of ancient operas. In Palermo, professionals were virtually excluded from the Exposition's organization, and in fact an initiative such as Martucci's concert series proposed in Bologna was not even planned for the *Esposizione Nazionale*. In Genoa, Mancinelli could rightfully count as a professional and expert, belonging to the number of great conductors who were familiar with Wagner's music and with the practice of educational *concerti popolari*. Nonetheless, his concert series had to be canceled because of the intervention of another exposition function that is neglected by the focus on expositions' networks: the public.

The public is indeed central to my research, although their behavior and reactions are always filtered to my observation through the words of reviewers and commentators. The contingent success or failure of expositions was measured almost exclusively in terms of public attendance and participation, and the alleged malfunctions in the concert programming in Palermo, together with the blatant failure of the symphonic concerts in Genoa, show that the discipline and approval of and from the public was the main matter of concern when an exposition was organized. Therefore, the public expressed a high degree of agency, to the point that I would suggest to revise the traditional exposition model which identifies a group

of active organizers, a (meta-)medium (*i.e.* the exposition), and finally the visitors as the passive recipients of the system of values and knowledge imposed by the organizers. In the specific case of music events, the visitors are traditionally called "spectators," an audience admiring what has been arranged for them on the stage. Instead, I would like to see expositions as the central platform to which a multitude of users contributes to a different extent, according to their agency and capability. In this sense, the paradigm of creation of musical content for an exposition and its consumption by the spectators would be reframed using the concept of "usership" as identified by art historian Stephen Wright.[432]

Wright elaborates his idea of usership as a "new category of political subjectivity" which has become predominant at the beginning of the twenty-first century, with the establishment of social networks but also of democratic polities founded on "the ability of the governed to appropriate and use available political and economic instruments."[433] To apply the concept of usership to late nineteenth-century expositions is certainly anachronistic, since this kind of events cannot be simplistically overlapped with modern social media, where the registered users are also the actual, non-remunerated creators of content for these platforms. Wright's usership is strongly connected to today's era, where the most powerful and widespread technological devices, smartphones, are not even possessed by users: often not directly purchased, but rather obtained as a benefit of a phone service contract, they are designed to work — or to stop working — only in accordance with specific operating systems. Yet, although the economic model at the basis of usership does not correspond to that of nineteenth-century expositions, Wright's description of usership provides with stimulating reflections that can shed new light onto exposition culture as it emerges from my study.

"Usership is neither revolutionary [...] nor is it docile or submissive. It is hands-on, task specific, proximate and self-regulating."[434] The agency of users is inscribed in — and therefore allowed by — the very device they are using: hence, usership is not revolutionary. At the same time, the creative power that derives from the use of a device enjoys a certain degree of freedom which would be limited in the framework of simple spectatorship. Users are not subjected to the same rules that spectators are: they can shape their own experience. Wright

[432] Stephen Wright, *Towards a Lexicon of Usership* (Eindhoven: Museum of Arte Útil, 2013), <https://museumarteutil.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Toward-a-lexicon-of-usership.pdf> (last checked 11 December 2019).
[433] Wright, *Towards a Lexicon*, 66.
[434] Wright, *Towards a Lexicon*, 66.

specifies: "It is expert culture — whether the editors, the urban planners, the curators — which is most hostile to usership: from the perspective of expertise, *use* is invariably *misuse*. But from the perspective of users, everywhere, so-called misuse is simply... use."[435]

The parallels with the commentators of the expositions' musical events are striking. True guardians of the specific musical expertise promoted especially by Ricordi, concert reviewers — but also curators in the case of Boito and Martucci in Bologna and of Mancinelli in Genoa — were busy judging the behavior of the audience in the theaters and evaluating the programs of concerts. In other words, they reacted as Wright's representatives of expert culture, "premised as it is on notions of universality and the general interest."[436] The education of the public and the progress of society were the general interest they represented. Opposed to the experts, we find first of all the aristocracy in Palermo. Certainly, they are the ones who had the money and resources necessary to organize the National Exposition, but they did not entirely own the event. They rather had to play with a set of conventions established long before, and lastly in Bologna 1888, and they faced the objections of experts like Floridia when they failed to comply with such conventions. Yet, they also were not the protesters disturbing the inauguration concert of the *grande sala delle feste*. In fact, Palermo aristocrats can be seen as users of the medium of the exposition, legitimately taking advantage of the celebrations without failing to disappoint experts. In addition to them, we have the public, enjoying a limited agency and yet making the success or the failure of operas and of concerts, influencing the programming trends — with less avant-garde repertoire in Genoa after the cancellation of Mancinelli's series, for example — and freely participating in amateur music practices that represented one of the largest accomplishments of Italian expositions.

To conclude, the concept of usership allows for a more nuanced understanding of nineteenth-century expositions, showing that they did not serve only as loudspeakers for a top-down political and ideological narrative, but rather that they were the inhomogeneous result of a complex interaction of networks, social and historical contingencies, and even a bit of chance — more than anything, the weather could decree the success or failure of a *soirée* at the exposition. However, they constituted unforgettable experiences, left traces in the cities' architecture as well as in the taste of the population, and produced a large number of celebratory documents, including catalogues, lists of prize-winners, souvenirs, anthems,

[435] Wright, *Towards a Lexicon*, 26. Emphasis is in the original.
[436] Wright, *Towards a Lexicon*, 66.

iconography. By doing so, they perpetuated their memories in future generations, memories that were referenced in successive events of the same kind. This system of references has persisted from the nineteenth, through the twentieth, up to the twenty-first century, proving that — in the historicized sense identified by Diana Taylor — expositions truly are a sequence of performances of the cities that hosted them.

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APPENDIX I. Leopoldo Mastrigli's *La Sicilia musicale* — Table of contents

Indice della *Sicilia musicale*

VIII. — Le Cantilene dei rivenditori

Robba abbanniata, mezza vinnuta.

Le voci dei tamburi.

Tùmmina tùmmina sunnu li guaj,
Lu panie e picca e li fimmini assai.

Il Suono delle campane.

Dici la campana di Castrugiuvanni:
Tocca e pisami, scinni e pisami.

IX. — I Zolfataj.

Cci l'baju a diri a lu mè pirriaturi
Ca chistu è l'ultimu e sinni po' acchianari.

I Pescatori.

Stidduzza, chi mi manni lumi e ciati,
Putissimu sta notti
Pri tia pigghiari mirluzzi e linguati.

Il Carcerato.

Quannu vennu li festi principali,
Matruzza, ricurdativi di mia!

X. — La Mietitura e la Trebbiatura.

Si vo bonu siminatu
Cùrcati supra l'aratu,
Ciacca a minutu e dubra 'n grossu.

La Vendemmia.

Cogghi appena matura la racina
Cu bon tempu e asciutta d'acquazzina.

La Raccolta delle Ulive.

L'oliva quantu cchiù penni,
Tanto cchiù renni.

Saggio di Melodie Popolari Sicilane.

PARTE II. — L'Arte musicale in Sicilia (Cenni storico-biografici intorno ai più illustri musicisti siciliani dei sec. XVII. XVIII e XIX).

APPENDIX II. Verdi's commission for *Cristoforo Colombo*

Archivio Storico del Comune di Genova. Verbali della Giunta municipale, 1888, 1090.

2 luglio

"Verdi Gius.[eppe] Circa nuova opera per IV Centenario scoperta America"

3. Il Sindaco dice che in esecuzione dell'incarico avuto dalla Giunta il 15 corr.[ente] mese egli ha aperte trattative col Signor Ingegnere Giuseppe De Amicis amico intimo dell'illustre Maestro Gius. Verdi pregandolo di volerne esplorare l'animo per conoscere se assumerebbe l'incarico di comporre l'opera melodrammatica sul soggetto “Cristoforo Colombo„ per l'occasione del IV Centenario della scoperta dell'America.
Che dal Signor De Amicis ebbe una lettera nella quale parrebbe che l'illustre compositore per ragioni d'età declinerebbe l'incarico: pur tuttavia dimostra tutta la sua gratitudine per la deferenza usatagli dalla Giunta, [1091] e fa intravvedere che avrebbe intenzione di dare qualche suggerimento al riguardo.

Udita questa esposizione

La Giunta ne prende atto e incarica il Sindaco di recarsi presso il Maestro Verdi a fargli l'offerta ufficiale a nome del Municipio e udire le sue determinazioni.

Archivio Storico del Comune di Genova. Verbali della Giunta municipale, 1888, 2790.

27 dicembre

"Verdi Gius.[eppe] — Circa invito scrivere opera per Centenario C. Colombo."

3. Il Sindaco riferisce essersi oggi recato dall'illustre maestro Giuseppe Verdi che da qualche giorno ha fatto ritorno in Genova, ad ossequiarlo a nome della città ed a pregarlo di volersi assumere l'incarico di comporre una opera in musica pel solenne centenario che si celebrerà nell'anno 1892.
Che l'esimio maestro mostrò aggradire al sommo quell'atto di cortesia, ma quanto al comporre [2791] l'opera richiestagli disse sé essere ormai così vecchio da non potersi impegnare in quella fatica, e pregato allora a suggerire altro maestro a cui poterla affidare, nominò Arrigo Boito e poi il Barone Franchetti, accennando però quanto al primo la difficoltà di poter essere soddisfatti in tempo utile. Aggiunge il Sindaco che il suggerimento di un tanto maestro pargli senz'altro da accettarsi, e credendo intanto opportuno designare anche il poeta che dovrà comporre il dramma, reputa sarebbe da incaricarne Anton Giulio Barrili di cui è noto il valor letterario, e che come amantissimo delle cose patrie vorrà forse contribuire in tal guisa volontieri a celebrare un avvenimento che tanto onora la patria nostra[.]

Udita questa esposizione

La Giunta delibera di dar mandato al Sindaco di trattare col mae[stro] [2792] Barone Franchetti perché voglia incaricarsi di comporre un'opera musicale in onore di Cristoforo Colombo per la celebrazione del centenario del 1892, e di vedere se piacesse al Comme[ndatore] Anton Giulio Barrili di comporre il dramma lirico all'oggetto medesimo[.]