



## Ethnomusicological studies

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### **Translator’s note**

To translate from one’s own language into a foreign one is often an overwhelming responsibility; and this is the case for the current document, as Giulio Fara’s language is not only obsolete compared to current Italian (he wrote in the first decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century) but is really the opposite of current English in terms of shortness, terseness and clarity. Translating Fara’s essay, so, was an attempt to make a compromise between maintaining something of its original, convoluted and outdated style, and obtaining a clear, comprehensible document. Here are some of the criteria I employed: I broke the sentences as much as possible, even with brackets, in order to have a plain text and to give breath to the reader. For the same reason I had to add and delete commas, add and delete colons, and add and delete semicolons; at the same time, though, I respected its graphic form, with its sometimes weird way of alternating very long and very short paragraphs; I always used the definition ‘classical music’ to indicate what he mentions as ‘*musica dotta*’ or ‘*musica storica*’ (‘cultivated’ and ‘historical music’), and I wrote ‘ethnomusicology’, or ‘ethnic music’ (trying to distinguish, when possible, between the scientific discipline and the real, living music), for ‘*etnofonia*’, or, sometimes, ‘natural music’, which is what Fara means for traditional or folk music. There were also some evident mistakes, both Italian grammar mistakes and mistakes in the spelling of the other languages he mentions in the footnotes, which I corrected. I only utilized ‘he’, when referring, for example, to neuter nouns like ‘musicologist’, as the ‘he/she’ current form often adopted today did not exist at the time and I thought there would be no point in inserting it now. The content of the text reflects, obviously, an old attitude to look at traditional music: nothing was omitted or modified.

G.V.

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## 1. How important they are for art and musicology

Musicologists have always, and in various ways, debated how important ethnomusicology can be for history and what influence it can have on music. Our unforgettable Oscar Chilesotti, conscious of how relevant folk music is, and of its influence on classical music, had set about collecting and studying, with love and courage, the Italian folk music of the 16<sup>th</sup> century; with courage, I say, as few realized the importance of such a thing, when the majority did not even understand its essence.

Only when ethnomusicological studies have been properly developed, and taken the place they deserve, will Chilesotti's studies be fully appreciated. With an enquiry that we hope to be able to publish in due course, we have already ascertained how such studies can be useful to link prehistoric ethnomusicology and that of the beginnings of the history of music, finding in melodic ideas based on musical human feeling, some wonderful points of contact in these two kinds of music worlds.

Not only in that precious collection are there the songs that in the 6<sup>th</sup> century went from mouth to mouth in Italy - who knows how long having already been transcribed by brilliant musicians of the time - but it is also surprising to observe how such songs have currently left their traces in the folklore. Such comparisons between the folk songs collected by the 5<sup>th</sup> century musicians, and those still sung in the Italian districts, is something we will do as soon as we have reached the tranquillity we have long, in vain, yearned for.

Even from this short introduction, it is possible to understand what a prominent role ethnomusicology has in history and in art for the influence it has exerted from the beginning to now on the whole of music, even if the wise man has bustled to destroy every vestige, to break off every leaf of it, as he does with nature in the corrupted urban environment.<sup>1</sup>

So it is the study of ethnomusicology, in the broad sense of the word, that will allow us, better than any other musicological study, to enlighten the most obscure and important points of the history of music.

It is only with the diligent collection of the sounds produced in the European child's strong turmoil of passions, as it is in those of the primitive peoples (and those of the natives of the central Africa, of Polynesia, of Australia, of the populations of Greenland and of the polar countries), that we will be able to have an unmistakable phonic background of the birth of music, because in such sounds lies its origin.

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<sup>1</sup> Not only the original folklore is dissolving everywhere it comes in contact with civilization, but where some parts of it are still alive because of few traditionalists' devotion, most of the citizens, instead of being proud of them, try to get rid of them; and where they cannot do it, they try to hide them as if they were a peasant shame. So the respected pastor of a village of southern Italy, to whom I had addressed to have some information about the local ethnic music, told me, almost offended, that the village he was pastor of is civilized and advanced, so that they would never even dream of having ethnic music, and the peasants had formed their own good marching band, renowned in the outskirts, in Italy and in the rest of the world.

It is in the study of the sound characters, timbre, general average height, cadences, horizontal line with its tendency to go up and down as well as of the rhythmic characters of the languages, of the various families, and of the different nations that we will be able to know the reason of some differential characters in the different types of music. We will also learn of some differences in structures and anatomic proportions in physiological movements and phonetic and respiratory systems.

It is with the study of ethnic music that we will get to connect in a chain, seamlessly, all kinds of music in all times, from the most remote, when music just began, up to our days. And even in the historical period of the so-called classical music, it is always ethnic music, the natural music that is the central thread, the balance for the music historian and the music critic.

Musicologists ascribe to performers' skills, i.e. a combination of hard work and natural talent, and the creation and development of musical forms. I do not mean to deny their merits, of course.<sup>2</sup> But, before them, we should go back to those unknown empirical artists that are to be found among common people even before history began. It is not Monteverdi, nor Scarlatti, Sammartini, Traetta, Salieri, Cimarosa, Verdi, Puccini, Alaleona, or other masters of classical music, but the unknown pre-historical artists, whose legacy is still alive in the folk musicians of today, that created all the forms of the music of our age.

All the forms, the dances, the marches, the symphony, the sonata, the toccata, the variations, the romance, the adagio and the allegro, the imitation from which later derived the canon and the fugue (miraculous expression of technicality come to perfection), all the refinements of such forms, the portamento, the trill, the *gruppetto*, the legato, the staccato, the tempos, the rhythms, the metrical caesuras, can be found in the anonymous music of unknown authors, in pre-historical musical ideas.

So it is by having a complete knowledge of all the ethnomusicological material, by studying the traditional instrumental and vocal music, that we will be able to write a history of the forms and of the attitudes of the whole historical music.

Many theories, many systems, many historical inferences, and many learned disquisitions and complicated explanations will be proved, many others will be discarded. Who cares if the truth will eventually appear?

And then, it is by studying another branch of ethnomusicology, the primitive mechanical sound devices, that we will get to write, with some confidence, a history of the musical instruments taking into account the many changes they have gone through to reach their current shapes; we will be able to better understand the evolution of some music forms and of the enormous contribution that primitive musical instruments gave to the establishing of some particular practices, like the multiplicity of different sounds given at the same time. And it is from this study, that we will get the most useful and unexpected instructions about the history of human progress.

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<sup>2</sup> I already wrote about the necessity to study the performers' influence on forms in "Le Basi della Tecnica del Canto nella Storia," *Cronaca Musicale* (Pesaro:1914).

Ethnographic study of musical instruments will lead to new, original, interesting results, having the chance to join what are essentially spiritual attitudes to material aspects, or religious movements, to some external musical forms.

We will be able to see clearly many things: the connection between the war spirit of the Roman and the use of the *buccina*, of the trumpets, as it was done by this population at war; the aesthetic highness and the cithara unified in the artistic Hellenistic soul; the contemplative Scottish spirit that even at war does not need the metallic ring but, instead, that humming of the bagpipe which, in turn, makes you predict Luther's canticle, the sign of a rebellious religion in contrast with other religions made of meekness. This can explain the need felt by Jesus' new religion to replace the trumpet with the chant, which, with sweetness, had to give the strength to resist even to wild beasts; and this explains the preference given to the organ, even by the priest who admitted it as the sole instrument to take part in the rituals of his cult, as in the magnificence of the sounds the pontifical arrogance finds its pasture, even above that of the kings.<sup>3</sup>

And that is not all. Nowadays ethnology is widely recognized and, although there is still much to do, even this field of study has much improved in recent times. Glottology and archaeology find their support in it, nay, without ethnology they could not progress; in fact, as the history and the chronology of the language cannot be tackled without comparison, they must utilize the studies of the ancient languages still living in the traditions of the savage tribes, in the same way in which some archaeological events, dating back to the prehistoric times, can be explained only by a comparison with customs and traditions in use among people who are still primitive. Among all the branches of the ethnographic science, though, that of sound is the most important, not only in itself, but because it goes to the origins of the word (determinative sound), to the origins of music (expressive indeterminate sound), and even for the priceless control function it can exert on the assertions that the other ethnographic branches provide.

The same glottologists, the archaeologists, and the folklorists feel how important this is, and frankly admit it. So, for example - and forgive me if I humbly put myself forward, being obliged for the shortage of musicologists who took up ethnomusicological studies in Italy - since when I began my modest research on Sardinian indigenous music, illustrious scholars from Sardinia waited with interest - certainly more than what I deserved - for the result I had obtained.

(to be continued)

### **I. How important they are for art and musicology (continued)**

In an important essay about Sardinian folk music, Dr. M. L. Wagner wrote: "if my project - to get the collection of Sardinian melodies published - will be accomplished, we can expect a very interesting collection, which, for its musical part, will

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<sup>3</sup> Nothing more magnificent, by the way, than the powerful description that Guerrazzi does with his style of ringing metals, in the chapter IX of the *Assedio di Firenze*.

allow us to better know the nature of mutu".<sup>4</sup> The illustrious linguist Prof. Pier Enea Guarniero, in a private letter, told me that "even if I am ignorant in music, I must recognize that your ethnomusicological enquiry brings notable comparisons to historical order". And also a private letter of Prof. Antonio Taramelli, royal superintendent to Museums and Excavations of Sardinia, the most prolific writer on Sardinian archaeology, wrote to me that "it is easier to get into the remote conscience of the ancient folk with a shepherds' *sulittu*<sup>5</sup> than with a lot of our discussions". And Prof. Ettore Pais endorses such studies by saying: "So the musical instruments and the singing, still alive in many regions of Sardinia, date back, them, too, to very ancient times and probably offer the way to solve problems, grafts and connections of different civilizations"<sup>6</sup>. And, more clearly, expresses his view by saying that "I believe that research on the origin of such sounds, and a comparison with the sounds and the music of other countries, would produce astonishing aftermath even from the historical-ethnographic side".<sup>7</sup>

Giovanni Patroni, the illustrious superintendent to excavations and museums of Lombardia, in an important essay on the Sardinian Nuraghe,<sup>8</sup> argues to demonstrate that such a manufacture came to Sardinia from the East, finding traces of its passage along the road that, according to him, it has followed. Now, if the musicological research traced ethnomusicological connections that might join the different steps of such a road, this would irrefutably confirm Patroni's theory about the Asian influences, through Africa, on the music of Sardinia.

Now, let us have a look at the advantages the art of sounds may obtain from these studies.

Our illustrious Galli, starting from his own particular point of view, says that "to recall melodies of a given people, and of certain times and countries, is not going to offer a definite ethnographic and chronologic idea if not in someone who is initiated into the knowledge of the artistic symbol, as it is the recognition of certain symbols of secret societies, and as it is of certain conventional writings.

Who, in listening to a rhapsody by Liszt, or to Grieg, Svendsen or Brahms, a composition of Sarasate, or to some pages of Glinka, would think of jubilant groups of Hungarian folk-singers? Who would think of Gustavo Wasa's homeland? Who would run, with his imagination, to the country of the *corrida* or to the Russian steppe? No doubt only the few who know the national music of those countries, that is the erudite musicians, and those who, for some reason, could have an idea of the exotic melodies that inspired the creations of those masters. But music should not serve such a means of trivial convention"<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> This work was published in Eugen Stollreither, ed., *Festschrift zum 12. Deutschen Neuphilologentag* (Erlangen: Junge, 1906), 236-299.

<sup>5</sup> Taramelli hints at my essay "Dello Zufolo Pastorale in Sardegna," *Rivista Musicale Italiana* XXIII (1916).

<sup>6</sup> "Intorno all'età della Stazione Archeologica di Albinì in Sardegna," *Studi storici per l'antichità classica* (Pisa: 1909).

<sup>7</sup> Op. cit. in previous footnote, same page, footnote 2.

<sup>8</sup> Giovanni Patroni, "L'origine del 'Nuraghe' Sardo e le Relazioni della Sardegna con l'Oriente," *Atene e Roma* 211, 212, 213 (Firenze: 1916), 145-168.

<sup>9</sup> Amintore Galli, *Estetica della Musica* (Torino: Bocca, 1900), 45.

Starting from Galli's principle, and applying it to his last consequences, we should leave out various other ethnic features commonly used in the other arts because even those should always remain incomprehensible to anyone who is not initiated to them.

One would say that it is definitely useless to paint the eternal polar ice or the ardent desert sands in a countryside picture because such details would only be understood by those who know what the polar ice and the desert sands look like. The same can be said for that ethnic feature of dressing, so widely used and essential that I do not even know whether it can be mentioned among the conventional signs; for, if I do not know how the Greek used to dress, the characters of a picture representing Athens, or of a play set in Athens, may even be dressed as Turks but I will not be able to distinguish this difference. So as the enriched grocer, who likes going around the galleries of a big city only because he knows that this is what people who like travelling for fun do, before a painting of Salvator Rosa, will not notice the anachronism in which the painter fell by dressing the custodians of the Holy Sepulchre with medieval costumes.

Nor is it possible to take into account the observation that the customs of a population, and of such a population in the various ages, are generally known while very little is known about its ethnic music, because this, in any case, is but a matter of subjective knowledge which proves nothing for the objective problem.

If I go to the theatre, and I know that in the scene an action is going to take place, say, in Spain, even not knowing the Spanish customs, it is obvious that I should think and believe that the characters are dressed according to the Spanish manner. If it is not like this, then it is a trick played against my ignorance as well as against my good faith and nothing else. And, being an opera, it would be stupid to think that all the characters should always sing Spanish music, as the Spanish do not sing to express their feelings in everyday life; the composer has the right and the duty to make them sing music created by their artistic feeling to express universal passions and feelings. I have the right and the duty, though, to believe that if a character dances a local dance, or sings a *stornello*, the author has reproduced the local music. If it is right that a Spaniard dresses in a Spanish manner, it is right, too, that if he is going to sing a folk song, it will be a Spanish song, not a Neapolitan song. If not, it is still a trick against my ignorance and against my good faith.

Giuseppe Verdi, in his *Aida*, has scored dances, triumphal marches, and songs of priests. Still now, musicologists are not able to say if he used ethnomusical features or not, but even those who deny it, recognize that he managed to imitate their character marvellously. Let it be so. But if Verdi himself felt the urge to render at least the national character of the Egyptian music, to imitate its ethnic quality, would not it have been better for him, having the possibility, to use the ethnic countryside features?

Georges Bizet has imitated in his *Carmen* Spanish musical elements; but would it not have been better if he had just given them to us, instead of sophisticated as they appear to be, authentic ones, as he actually did in *Arlèsienne*? Was Pietro Mascagni not more original in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, maybe, than in all his

other works? And is it not just in this work that he introduced loose Sicilian musical elements?

Galli says that ethnic music appears to be incomprehensible as a conventional sign of a secret society to the non-initiated. They will always have to believe that a folk song or a folk dance put into an opera certainly belongs to the place described.

As to incomprehensibility, a fake ethnomusicology would be as incomprehensible as a real one because the listener, listening to a dance (say a dance from the above mentioned *Aida*, real or false Egyptian music) would not think of the empire of Pharaoh's music and it would be, for him, simply a piece of Verdi's music, good or bad as the rest.

What a horrible trick, though, would it be to the aesthetic sense, to the habit of order, of love – what am I saying – to the need of a scientific truth, of those few initiated attending an opera of African subject that, at a given moment, should hear an Egyptian warrior, in need of inciting his comrades to battle with a patriotic song, by singing a Neapolitan song or, maybe, offhandedly, Garibaldi's hymn?

Di Giacomo, in some of his plays<sup>10</sup>, lets his characters sing some Neapolitan song. That is not an obscure, cabalistic sign but, instead, a clear, logical, evident recall to the environment; and it is necessary because even the music should at least have Neapolitan colour. And, mind you, that here we could still be generous and allow the musician to create, because we are still in the field of the popular song and not in the strict ethnic field, in which nothing should be introduced if it is not real, and forgive me for this historical pun, but it will surely have another effect, for the initiated, to hear again a popular ethnic song that may fire the imagination on a colourful scene, full of the life and of reality of the enchanted gulf.

Ethnomusicology, though, is not only good and useful as a touch of local colour, but it is a due, correct quotation, if you happen to be in need of reproducing on stage a march, a dance, or a folk song set to the music that gave it the folkloric spirit of the place described.

Art is not truth, but it is the reproduction of truth through the artist's emotion. And, according to such a definition, the most universally accepted<sup>11</sup>, it is a logical consequence that, ethnic music being the real field of sounds (and some scholars, in fact, call it natural music), someone who did not include it in his work would not produce art. Firstly we should notice, though, that insofar as ethnic music represents the real, it is not the real, neither can it be. All music is art (except

<sup>10</sup> "O voto" Act III, "A San Francisco", "Assunta Spina", Act II, "Quand l'Amour Meurt". Salvatore Di Giacomo, *Teatro*. (Lanciano: Carabba, 1910).

<sup>11</sup> Verdi gives another definition of art, generally less accepted. Writing to Chiarina Maffei, this is what he said about Shakespeare: "Maybe he met some Falstaff, but he hardly met a rogue like Jago and never any angels like Cordelia, Imogene, Desdemona, etc.; and yet they are so real. Copying reality is a beautiful thing but it is photography, not painting".

We, on the contrary, think that art is also a painting copying the truth, when we think nature holds in reproduction something of the artist's soul. You understand how our discussion is limited to those expressions considered art, which, for those who intend to give a broad meaning to this term, includes even its essence. Such broadening of the meaning led to capital theoretical differences of philosophical writings.

for a large part of classical music, which is the product of sheer technique), because it is the reproduction of the feelings through pure sound. Secondly we should notice that a quotation does not diminish the value of a novel, of a poem, of a prayer, so not even that of a symphony or of a melodrama. Thirdly, we should ask whether the products of Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakow, Volkmann, Kantzen Hartmann, Gade, Svendsen, Grieg, Dvořák, Glinka, Hrimaly, Fuchs, Smètana, Balakirew, Stanford, Raff, Hoffmann, Saint-Saëns, Godard, Tsaikowsky, Glazunow, Pratella, Da Venezia, Bordes, Marsik and many others, including the great Chopin, are not art as they contain elements of Russian, Swedish, Danish, African, Arab, Greek, Romanian, Provençal, Polish ethnic music.

And I go beyond: on several occasions, from Jacopo Melani to Haydn, to Beethoven to Wagner, to Mascagni, composers have tried to imitate birdsong. I ask again, if a braver composer, in exchange of such more or less faithful imitations, introduced in a composition of his own a birdsong reproduced from a phonographic record, giving so the perfect illusion of reality, would he not make a work of art same as his predecessors? Whoever is inclined to poetic reverie, and feels the beauty as a natural impulse, will certainly recognize that the authentic birdsong is one hundred times more artistic than all the musicians' ornithological adulterations.

The director of a "Compagnia stabile di prosa"\* had introduced, on the scene, some real wooden doors and some real crystal windows. Who could have complained, and say that a work of art necessarily needs cloth doors and veiled window panes? After all, it would be the same as asking the actors to wear paper and not cloth because cloth suits reality and not art.

At most we may say that an artist, in order to make a work of art with the mark, the style of his own artistic personality, instead of including in his work the ethnic music as it is, had better draw inspiration from it and work on his own, although on the canvas provided by the folklore.

Anyway, even in this case, the knowledge of ethnic music is always essential, as a model to the artist's fancy.

Other musicologists, considering the ethnomusicological issue from a more general and noble side, as it concerns its functions towards arts, believe that ethnic music (or folk music, as they now mistakenly call it) could be a spring of fresh and pure water, to which the palates of our composers should refresh, now that they are addicted to the drugs of insubstantial modern technology.

Torchi is among the most influential scholars who spread such a theory. In one of his learned footprints with which he glossed and illustrated Wagner's books, translated by himself, he expresses his opinion: "The same will happen for the melodrama of the future. Who does not feel the need, in music, that the melodrama may invigorate and refresh to the source of every real expression, the folk song? Here is the secret of future art, the secret of an art devoid of the plethora of today

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\* [The word "stabile" ("permanent") means "not itinerant". It refers to prose theatre groups who worked in a single city, often supported by local administrations, and in the premises of a real theatre as opposed to the old itinerant Italian tradition of the *Commedia dell'Arte*. G.V.]



and living of the only expression necessary to it. The folk song lives and it is beautiful just for the spontaneity, the sobriety of its musical expression. There has been a fleeting moment only in which it manifested itself in the opera, that is when this was born, to reappear immediately suffocated by the quantity of effects of all sorts that the coarse and selfish musician, and the virtuoso singer, pinned on it. The vein of water still flows fresh; lucky those who will be able to cut their way against clusters of every kind that hide it, to finally get to it"<sup>12</sup>.

Torchi's idea is not only right but also precise and correct.

Most of the musical production, so rich in melodic elements acquired with a greater extension given to voices, both human and instrumental, so rich in harmonic resources, in contrapuntal varieties, in instrumental colours, is immensely poor in true, affective elements, missing in passionate spontaneity, or more precisely in sincerity, and terribly poor in abandonment, feeling and heart.

And it is still Torchi who provides us the words to better clarify and develop such a concept by saying: "The one and the other have remained equally barren for us, because, developing the music, they wanted to look for a shape in the external and scientific speculation of the folk song, completely losing sight of the source of its being, that is the folk character. As it is true of Wagner's intuition on this point, so deplorable it is the complex combination that the folk musical element receives in his artwork. Yes: we have to become folk artists, but for that we need a form of art that we can only observe at its source, at the origin of every kind of music, and this is the folk song, which artists have just gone around without penetrating, owing to their inability of intuition"<sup>13</sup>. Folk music is simple but sincere, it is the expression of real heartfelt feelings, it moves because it is the product of emotion. It is sane, fresh, pure, and it can indicate to the artist the real way to follow, lost by too many.

We owe only to ethnic music, or man's natural music, something that happened before and during the development of classical music, if the last one was able to recover from the arid technicality to the highest peaks of art, after being debased by the many Ubaldo [male first name in Italy] and some other similar kin of "great contrapuntists" that had reduced it to a simple sound game; and it is because of true musical souls that, conscious of their human essence, moved closer to the people (singing their passions, but refined by knowledge and, if you like, by the artifice), that ethnic music lived in the life of classical music, too.

A young scholar, to whom should go the thanks of all those who truly love our studies, is the illustrious Mr. Parigi, since he started, with courage and in a difficult moment, a magazine of musical studies so full of lively intentions and of new ideas in Italy, first among all nations in music but so half-hearted in musicological studies. Parigi, writing about Pizzetti, says: "If Pizzetti has gone in search of that richer language he has found, he did not do it just for the love of the language in

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<sup>12</sup> Richard Wagner, *Opera e Dramma*, transl. by L. Torchi, Vol. I (Torino: Bocca, 1894), 159, nota I.

<sup>13</sup> Opera and vol. cit. in previous footnote, page 136, n. 1.

itself, but because he had already a new concept for which he needed a new expression"<sup>14</sup>.

Leaving aside the peculiarity of Pizzetti's artistic personality, which we hold as a very noble one, but which is not in discussion here, who looks for a richer, or, more properly, in most cases, more refined, more twisted, noisier language in the real meaning of the word (namely that it makes more noise than musical sound), does not do it to have new feelings, new concepts to expose, but, uniquely, for the pleasure of subtlety for subtlety. And, in music, which is about nothing but feelings, we really do not understand which the new feelings are, as they are always the same.

Anyway, what Parigi considers Pizzetti's merits are, instead, a common fault of too many, if not of the epoch.

It is the fear of looking childish, or hackneyed, that gives the urge to re-search for something new and that, eventually, suffocating any sincerity, makes us fall into the baroque, into the incomprehensible absurd, misleading and masking one's own self. It is the same illness that in painting created the impressionists, before, and then the divisionists, the pointillists, the cubists, the... everything you want. That in music gave us the Strauss, Mahler, Strawinski, Schönberg and others with their musical names... like their... music. That in literature gave us certain degenerated verbal precocities that are nothing but useful to mask the poverty of their content and that materializes in piling up word upon word, more or less very modern, more or less ancient, more or less proper, always ineffective for the verbal wave in which they follow each other and drown each other.

This illness of the time manifests itself with the terrible symptom of hydropsy, that Parigi, more properly maybe than he himself believes, and certainly with other plans, calls "expansion". So that while once it was held as a merit to be able to express many concepts in the short form of a sonnet, nowadays one can boast, full-throated, to expand half of it in thirty pages.

Tacitus is too far from our spirit; and Giusti, with his own restricting in few words much concept, without making it lose anything of its precision, can, at first sight, look thin, short of breath, a dwarf among giants. But, paying attention, you will see the thin one being full, solid, vigorous, and many of the moderns being giants full of gas, dilated, so that just a pinprick can deflate them and make them fall to the ground pell-mell.

As nature is one, and one is the way the humans look at things, so the human feelings are always the same, and they always respond to the same physiological reactions. That is why Leonardo Da Vinci, Titian, Murillo, Raffaello, and Morelli, having portrayed nature as it is, as we see it, will remain eternal. It is for the same reason that, in the literary field, Dante, Shakespeare, Tolstoj, Victor Hugo, Manzoni, and Guerrazzi rise through artistic truth to the sublime peaks of the absolute and human beauty that never changes. It is also for this reason that Bellini, Rossini, Verdi, Puccini, and Mascagni, having transfused their feelings into their music, nay human feelings, will always remain first rate musicians. Though, none of the

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<sup>14</sup> *La Critica Musicale*, fasc. 6 (1918).

above-mentioned painters felt the necessity to utilize any new technique; none of such musicians felt the necessity to express himself with the most modern cacophonies. None of the above mentioned writers felt the necessity to dig in the glottological ancientness, about or inappropriately, to become precious or, more precisely, artificial. And certainly they were great artists, and everything they did, they did it at their best.

The “New Testament” will always remain the most splendid and great masterpiece of human expression, and yet it is, at the same time, the easiest and the most unadorned text. Absolutely naked of those descriptions that today would look indispensable, yet all the smallest details, every nuance of feeling acquires importance of throbbing originality, so much so that the text is full of truth, so much so that the strength of the facts and of the passions establish themselves and breathe from every single word<sup>15</sup>. And the few Dantesque lines about the kiss of Paolo and Francesca, are more lively in expression, passion and description than the long and tiresome pages of D’Annunzio *Forse che sì, forse che no*, in which a kiss is “expanded” so much that it annoys and cools down the most devoted and warmest reader.

Deep down, with the new praised needs that need new words – I mean even musical words, may they be melodic, harmonic or instrumental – we arrive at a frightening emptiness of content, at an enormous impotence to express ourselves naturally.

As the return to nature is often the remedy to the most terrible mental and even organic illnesses, as the assiduous study of nature is indispensable to everyone who wants to address to any branch of the human knowledge, from philosophy to sculpture, from drama to painting, from poetry to history, to physics, to chemistry, from novel to criticism, so it is only the study of the musical nature, and more precisely of the ethnic music, that can save our artists from the modern illness of expansion. Here is the importance of ethnomusicology, which I like to define with Torchi’s words: “We are convinced that folk song is really genuine and primitive and has in itself, that is in the value of its themes, the germs out of which it is possible to derive a substantial and intrinsic development, that would be in opposition to the formal and exterior one which has caught all modern western music”.<sup>16</sup>

This concept is particular to the one on art [in general] expressed by Leon Tolstoj at the beginning of chapter ten of *What is Art?* where he says: “For the progressive impoverishment of its essence, and for the growing of obscurity into the form, the art of the higher classes has come to strip off of the elementary characters of art, and to be nothing but the forgery of art”. From such an assumption comes the logical consequence that rings like a bell from top to bottom in these pages: it is indispensable, it is urgent that we engage in ethnomusicology.

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<sup>15</sup> Already Leon Tolstoj observed the extraordinary power of the Holy Bible in chapter fifteen of *What is Art?*

<sup>16</sup> Op. cit. at footnote 15, page 77, footnote 1 [The author erroneously refers to footnote 15 here (this is footnote 12 in the original), the context, however, indicates that the quote refers to the book by Richard Wagner translated by L. Torchi, thus footnote 12 (corresponding to footnote 9 in the original. Eds.)]

## II. - Their current state

So far they have mostly been done almost with no aim, no rationale, no order. They have been carried out, with rare exceptions and almost by chance, by musicologists who were normally involved in other fields of music science. It is for this reason that in no region, probably in no country, can we find an organic and complete investigation of the ethnic sounds, from the first sentimental sounds such as the cry or the shout of joy, to the definite sound of the word, to the voices of the beggars, of the street-sellers, of the declaimers, up to the first real musical evidence of the dirge, the lullaby, the love and the war song.

The music of countries with rich customs and traditions of the past and rich civilizations, flourished dozens of centuries ago, has been wisely studied both in musical theory and practice: such theories and practice, though, however old they may be, still belong to the first and to the second period of the history of music, the so-called classical music. Classical music may even draw inspiration, reflexively, from the local primitive taste and from the spirit of the aborigines (being so very useful to study ethnic music), but it is not ethnic music, it is not the music created by the folk unaware of any perfection, not the music of the itinerant shepherd going around the isolated countryside, virgin of contact with any foreign relationship and of the mirage of any flattering civilization; it is not the one that can only be guessed free and true in expression, faithful mirror of the feelings of man directly in touch with nature, whose ethnic differences are slightly modified in his intimacy, and, consequently, in his musical output.

Among the many works about the music of China and of the Asian countries, not one deals with ethnic music. Not directly the musicologists' studies, often the reworking of previous studies, nor indirectly the works dealing in general with the customs and traditions of the Empire of the Sun. Of these last ones, among the many I have gone through<sup>17</sup>, only one<sup>18</sup> mentions quite broadly the music and its specific character: nothing in the others. As to the first ones, that is the musicologists' studies, not only is there nothing in works such as those of Laloy,<sup>19</sup> or in some most valuable books such as those of Grosset<sup>20</sup> and of Knosp<sup>21</sup>, but not even in some of real value, like, for example, those of Amiot<sup>22</sup>, and in the very important

<sup>17</sup> Eduardo Toda, *La Vida en el Celeste Imperio* (El Progreso Editorial, 1887); Pouelas, *La Chine Huit Ans au Ima Nan* (Lille: 1888); Giuseppe de Luigi, *La Cina Contemporanea* (Milano: 1912); Lorenzo Oliphant, *La Cina e il Giappone* (Milano: Corona, 1868); Alvaro Semedo, *Relazione del Regno della Cina* (Roma: Grignani, 1643); Alberto Castellani, *L'estremo Oriente* (Milano: Treves, 1904); Joseph Ferrari, *La Chine et l'Europe* (Paris: Didier, 1869); Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Giro del mondo* (Napoli: Rosselli, 1790); Juan Gonzales De Mendoza, *Historia de las Cosas Memorables, Ritos y Costumbres de la China* (Valencia: Huete, 1585); Joseph Alexander von Hubner, *Passeggiata Intorno al Mondo* (Milano: Treves, 1869).

<sup>18</sup> Ernst von Hesse-Wartegg, *Cina e Giappone* (Milano: Hopeli, 1900).

<sup>19</sup> Louis Laloy, *La Musique Chinoise*, (Paris: Laurens, 1903).

<sup>20</sup> Joanny Grosset, *Contribution à l'Étude de la Musique Indou* (Paris: 1888).

<sup>21</sup> Gaston Knosp, "Notes sur la Musique Indo-Chinoise," *Rivista Musicale Italiana*.

<sup>22</sup> Josef Amiot, *Mémoire sur la Musique des Chinoise Tant Anciens Que Modernes* (Paris: 1780).

contribution of Van Aalst<sup>23</sup> who, to the theoretical learning acquired on others' books, prefers discussing his more precious personal knowledge, the product of direct observations of the music performed in some sort of cabarets, in which there are some examples of ethnic music. Neither is the work of Tiersot<sup>24</sup> satisfactory, although he is one of the most skilful French specialists of ethnomusicology. And Mr. Courant, author of the most important essay on Chinese classical music<sup>25</sup>, frankly states that "le temps m'a manqué pour prendre une connaissance suffisante de la musique populaire: cette dernière recherche d'ailleurs devrait être poursuivie séparément dans les divers groupes de provinces et dépasserait la force d'un seul homme".

The same is for those countries which had, as I already said, some glorious civilization in remote times, India included, whose music has been studied in detail by many people<sup>26</sup>, comprising some local writers, including first and foremost in importance Rajah Sourindro Mohun Tagore, a valiant musicologist, president of the Calcutta Music School, who dedicated many books to the subject, none of them, though, to induced music.

But there is not too much to complain about if, from countries like China and Japan, there still is no precise information about what was probably a pre-historical ethnomusicology, as even in other subjects of this era we know nothing<sup>27</sup>.

Anyway, let us say that again, such studies, which sometimes date back to proto-history, always bring a most valid contribution to pre-historical studies, as it is always easier to ascend one single step, rather than one hundred, in the time ladder of whatsoever subject; and they are intermediate tiers.

In this sense, all the studies that tend to deal with the first evidence of the so-called classical music from 1400 to 1600, in which folk music mirrors itself, are very important. Such music, often, is nothing but the semiographic translation of songs and music which, at the time, was still in the mouth of the people that had learnt it traditionally and that had been in existence for who knows how long. But, also they lack that number and that geographical order which, only, would have given them a well-established plan.

In the more specific field of sound devices, we see, certainly not developed as it deserves, if not neglected, ethnomusicology in its most rudimentary expressions; and even in the richest museums of instruments belonging to the conservatories, you can find many more models of magnificent instruments made of precious materials and refined workmanship rather than musical instruments primitive in material and in form, i.e. clear stuttering of the beginning of instrumental organology

<sup>23</sup> J.A. van Aalst, *Chinese Music* (Sanghai: 1884).

<sup>24</sup> Julien Tiersot, *Notes d'Ethnographie Musicale*, Vol.1, (Paris: Fischlacher, 1905).

<sup>25</sup> Maurice Courant, "Chine et Corée," in *Encyclopédie de la Musique*, vol.1, ed. Albert Lavignac (Paris: Delgrave, 1913).

<sup>26</sup> For a useful and ample bibliography, the reader can consult Grosset's study in *Encyclopédie de la Musique*, vol.1, ed. Albert Lavignac (Paris: Delgrave, 1913).

<sup>27</sup> John Lubbock says: "Quant aux contrées civilisées, la Chine et le Japon par exemple, nous ne savons encore rien de leurs archéologie antehistorique." John Lubbock, *Homme Avant l'Histoire* (1864, Germer-Bailliere), 3.

a thousand times more precious to the history of music. This is the case in the great museums abroad, like those of Brussels, Paris, London, Vienna, and even more so in ours, as nobody has thought yet to collect the various instruments of the different counties of Italy.

The catalogues of the various instrumental museums, important for many aspects, lack chronological order, and this lack goes together with the inobservance with which none has rationally and carefully linked the different rings of the same chain. It is for this reason that we still have not obtained a clear idea, based on real facts, of the history of whatsoever instrument, like, for example, of the double reed, from its beginning up to the oboe, or of the simple reed up to the clarinet; nobody ever followed the evolution of the arch for string instruments<sup>28</sup>, neither of similar instruments of this category; and it seems almost impossible to establish a history of the piano in which its evolution is examined and laid out, how it got to the current point and especially which is the germ, which are the first forms of this popular instrument, so useful although inartistic, since we still do not have it<sup>29</sup>.

As we go backwards to more elementary forms of expressions, in which the musical form weakens or disappears totally to leave room for the sound vibration that is almost exclusively in the verbal form, rarer are works investigating them under the ethnomusicological profile

There are very few musicologists who dealt with the clusters of accentuated syllables, ending in musically prolonged vocals used to regulate synchronically the effort of a team of workers, or with the various shouts of the street-sellers, of the beggars, of the auctioneers, used to attract the passers-by's attention; or with the conventional sounds taken from the sea shells, or from the horns leading the boats along the shores in the obscure nights for the hard work of fishing, or to call the flock, or, among the savage people, to gather the family, or the tribe, or the warriors; or with the thousands of vocal calls. More than real studies, these are always hints and even these are very rare.

Again, further back, it is the field of sound that indicates, points out, the useful sound, the word, the language; and a new science born aside the glottology, the experimental phonetics, could, should, help us with ethnological knowledge. But here, more than anywhere else, the studies are rare, and here more than ever,

<sup>28</sup> Let me say that, for years, where I can honestly do it, I have been introducing some light ideas about the evolution of the instruments in pre-history, like, precisely for the history of the bow, in the essay "Di Alcuni Costumi in Sardegna," *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, fasc. I, 77, 1918, footnote 3.

<sup>29</sup> To be convinced, just read the main history books about this instrument: Cesare Ponsicchi, *Il Pianoforte, Sue Origini e Suo Sviluppo* (Firenze: 1876); Alfred J. Hipkins, *The History of the Pianoforte* (1883); Edward Francis Rimbault, *The Piano-forte, its Origin, Progress and Construction* (1860); as well as some general works like, Henri Lavoix, *L'Histoire de l'Instrumentation* (Paris: Didot, 1878), and Victor-Charles Mahillon, *Catalogue Descriptif de Musée instrumental du Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles* (Gand: Hoste, 1893). Speculations, detached rings of a chain, flashes of light against the most obscure night.

Prof. Arnaldo Bonaventura, in his recent *Storia del Pianoforte*, edited in Florence, magnificent centre for such studies, despite his diligence, accepted what had already been done without adding anything new, which he could have done, had he been allowed to by the new studies published on the piano.

rightly, because such a science is still in its practical first steps, although far ahead in theory.

Attempts to collect the folk songs of savage people, or of customs more or less extraordinary for us, date back a long time and are mostly due to missionaries. Later we find the brave navigators, the bold travellers who go on horseback, by camel, with any other animal or even on foot in the unknown and inhospitable lands; great explorers who threaded the whole globe to give us new materials for our studies. They are the Byrons, the Wallis, the Bougainvilles, the Kooks, the La Perouses, the Bruny d'Entrecasteaux, the La Billardières, the Hamys, the Baudins, the Muntstuart Elphinstones, the Kozobues, the Lulhés, the Saulces de Frecynets, the Durvilles, who, in his *Voyage de l'Astrolabe*, gives interesting information about the music of the Maori; Hall Kane, who, in his *Explorations artiques* briefs us on the Eskimo music; Elis, Egede, who, in their interesting reports give us ethnomusicological first-fruits which will be later confirmed, modified, completed by other following travellers, including De Amicis with his *Marocco*. And so far, unfortunately, before musicologists, such first-fruits were useful for the research of physiologists, psychologists, and archaeologists.

While the German traveller Beckler, in his travel notes, records the songs and the dances that the aborigines of New South Wales perform around their dead, and the learned explorer Dibowsky gives us interesting news about the music of some populations of Central Africa, reporting musical examples from the Banghiri boaters, Alberto Favara, teacher of composition at the Conservatory of Palermo, brings a significant contribution with his *Canti della terra e del mare di Sicilia* and with *Le melodie tradizionali di Val Mazzara*. In France, while the important excavations in Perigord gave us some pre-historic flageolets, in the same region, Chaminade and Casse have collected traditional folk songs<sup>30</sup>, Branchet and Plantadis have collected the folk songs of Limosino<sup>31</sup>, Tiersot those of the Alps<sup>32</sup>, and Ch. Bordes the Basque ones.<sup>33</sup>

In Italy, a very serious study which, as I will show in another essay, gives very important information, is that of the excellent musician Vito Fedeli on the bagpipes of Calabria<sup>34</sup>; different, and unfortunately written without much loyalty to the original, are the collections published by the generic name of "folk songs" of Abruzzo, Rome, Tuscany, Lombardy, Sicily, the work of Tosti, Gordigiani, Marchetti, Gialdini, Frontini, Mastrigli, and Ricordi. These works were done only by heart, not in presence, as they should have been done, and accordingly too much to the collectors' taste: a very refined taste, if you want, and sometimes a skilled musician's taste, but always alien and condemnable, in something that should not have been anything else but "reproduction". And all that, without taking into ac-

<sup>30</sup> Chaminade and Casse, *Chansons Patoises du Perigord* (Paris: 1905, Champion).

<sup>31</sup> Branchet and Plantadis, *Chansons Populaires du Limousine* (Paris: 1905, Champion).

<sup>32</sup> Julien Tiersot, *Chansons Populaires Recueillies dans les Alpes Françaises* (Paris: 1903).

<sup>33</sup> *Traditions au Pays Basque; Dix danses et marches; in Noels populaires : Kantika espiritualak.*

<sup>34</sup> Vito Fedeli, "Zampogne Calabresi," *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* XIII, Jahrg. 3 (1911/1912): 433-441.

count the group which is made in such collections of local ethnic songs, folk songs, and ethnic songs imported from close countries.

There is a fairly good study of the already mentioned Tiersot<sup>35</sup> about the indigenous peoples of North America. We have many works about Belgium, among the most important the learned one of Coussemaker, *Chantes Populaires des Flandres de France* and the down to earth but close to the truth *La Melodie Flamande of Van Duyse*, and the two volumes of Puymaigre<sup>36</sup>. From Greece, among the various collections, the conclusive one is Pachtikos's, who, beyond the luck of being Greek, has the merit of being a musicologist as well as a philologist, an uncommon virtue that allowed him to collect two hundred sixty songs of rare rhythmic precision and of remarkable correct syllabic transcription. Regarding the Finnish songs, Launis's collection<sup>37</sup> is original and instructive; many are the studies that, under the profile of compared ethnography, bring musical examples and important judgements from Corsica, among them I only mention those of Marcaggi<sup>38</sup>, Ortoli<sup>39</sup>, Bairde<sup>40</sup>, Austin de Croze<sup>41</sup>, and Quantin<sup>42</sup>; many songs have occasionally been picked up by simple amateurs and curiosity collectors, and there is also a certain number of ethnomusicological collections in Spain and in the Balearic islands, that is to say in Spain itself. Further, very precious for the ancient era in which it was edited is the Song of Radoslavo<sup>43</sup>, which is about the songs of Serbia.  
(to be continued)

## II. - Their current state

(continues from the previous issue)

Other collections and really important studies are those of Seprödi<sup>44</sup>, Kuhač<sup>45</sup>, Ellis<sup>46</sup>, and Stumpf<sup>47</sup> for the discussions they can arouse. Also important are the studies of Yurvy von Arnold about Russian songs.

<sup>35</sup> Julien Tiersot, *Notes d'ethnographie musicale, 2.e serie. La musique chez les peuples indigènes de l'Amérique du Nord. Etats-Unis et Canada* (Paris: 1910, Fischbacher).

<sup>36</sup> Theodore Puymaigre, *Chants populaires recueillis dans le pays Messin* (Paris: Champion, 1881).

<sup>37</sup> Armas Launis, *Lappische Juoigos-Melodien* (Helsingfors: 1908).

<sup>38</sup> Jean Baptiste Marcaggi, *Les Chants de la Mort Et de la Vendetta de la Corse* (Paris: 1898). Not to boast erudition, I remind the reader of the works of the American ethnologists Muret, Lafitau, Pinkerton, Bartam, Schooberaft, Catlin, Bancroft, Lawson, Morgan, Dall, Powers, Putnam, Powell, Foster, and Jarrow, in which there is important news about the music accompanying the funerary rituals of American Indians.

<sup>39</sup> Jean Baptiste Frederic Ortoli, *Les Voceri de l'Île de Corse*, (Paris: Leroux, 1887, Leroux).

<sup>40</sup> Bairde, *En Corse*, (Paris: 1887).

<sup>41</sup> Austin de Croze, *La Chanson Populaire de l'Île de Corse* (Paris: Champion, 1911).

<sup>42</sup> Albert Quantin, *La Corse*, (Paris: 1914).

<sup>43</sup> The Dalmatian writer Pietro Kektorovich (Hettoreo), in 1556, in the isle of Lesina, collected the text and the melody from the people's mouth and incorporated it into a fishing eclogue that he published in Venice with the printer Gianfrancesco Camotio, in 1568.

<sup>44</sup> *Rivista Transilvana* (Erdelyi Lapoc), 1st October 1908.

<sup>45</sup> The very important Fr. S. Kuhač's work *Juzno-slojenske narodne popievke* (national songs of the Southern Slavs), that amounts now to at around twenty volumes, was start-



Neither can I leave out studies enquiring folk songs from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and even further back, in which especially Italian scholars are to be mentioned: Bonaventura<sup>48</sup>, Oscar Chilesotti<sup>49</sup>, A. Restori<sup>50</sup>, J. B. Beck<sup>51</sup>, Pierre Aubry<sup>52</sup>, Kurt Mey<sup>53</sup>, Schuré Ed<sup>54</sup>, Gius. Zippel<sup>55</sup>, P. M. Masson<sup>56</sup>, as those, I already said, analogous to the ethnic studies.

Although rare, still in ethnic music studies we may find hints of the various types of “work song”, like that of the “pile drivers” in a study by Adaïewsky dealing with some Italian folk songs<sup>57</sup>. Further, we should impatiently wait for an announced “essay about shouts, songs, choirs and dances of the Italian people”, by Pratella, if the too big title did not lead us to doubt its exhaustive value.

Studies about certain peculiarities of sound, timbre, height, cadence in the spoken voice, long begun by scholars of the various sciences, from philosophers to naturalists, from physiologists to singing teachers<sup>58</sup>, have already entered a systematic phase under the flag of experimental phonetics, and already are providing good results owing to foreigners (and, what matters most, to Italians specialized in the subject, like senator professor Luigi Luciani, Rivetta, Biaggi, Baglioni and others).

Finally, we should remember the important new phase in which ethnomusico-logical studies have gone into with the use of the phonograph, which has already been allowed to create some real libraries of vibrated sound, in its essence, in the main cities of the world... except the Italian ones, obviously.

I have randomly mentioned, as long as my memory supported me, and I have already mentioned quite a lot, so much is the material assembled by scholars of every kind. And, still, I have not mentioned but a hundredth part of what has been done so far. Despite all this, there is a lot, there is the most and the best still to be

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ed in 1830 by C. Albrecht Zagreb; it is a real treasure not only for the material in itself but for the way it was organized and compared, and for the really irrefutable conclusions it reaches.

<sup>46</sup> Ellis, *Notes on Siamese Musical instruments* (London: Villian Clowen and sons, 1885).

<sup>47</sup> Carl Stumpf, „Tonsystem und Musik der Siamesen,“ *Beiträge zur Akustik und Musikwissenschaft* 3, 1901, 69-138.

<sup>48</sup> Arnaldo Bonaventura, “Le Maggiolate,” *Rivista Musicale Italiana* XXIV, 2, 1917, 519-534; “Il Boccaccio e la Musica”, *Rivista Musicale Italiana* XXI, 3, 1914, 405-442.

<sup>49</sup> Oscar Chilesotti, *Saggio sulla melodia popolare del cinquecento*, (Milano: Ricordi).

<sup>50</sup> Antonio Restori, “Per la storia musicale dei trovatori provenzali,” *Rivista Musicale Italiana* II.

<sup>51</sup> J. B. Beck, *Die Melodien der Troubadours* (Strasbourg: Trubner, 1908).

<sup>52</sup> Pierre Aubry, *Trouvères et Troubadours*, (Paris: 1909).

<sup>53</sup> Kurt Mey, *Der Meistergesang in Geschichte und Kunst* (1901).

<sup>54</sup> Édouard Schuré, *Histoire du Lied* (Paris: Libr. Internationale, 1868).

<sup>55</sup> Giuseppe Zippel, *I Suonatori della Signoria di Firenze* (Trento: Zippel, 1892).

<sup>56</sup> P. M. Masson, *Chants de Carnaval Fiorentins* (Paris: 1913).

<sup>57</sup> Ella Adaïewsky, “Anciennes Melodies et Chansons Populaires d’Italie,” *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 1909.

<sup>58</sup> Even a singer, but a good one, discusses this with rare perspicacity. See pages 27-38 of the *Compendium Metodo Analitico filosofico e fisiologico per la educazione della voce*, by Leone Giraldoni (Milano: Ricordi, 1889).

done and, what is worst, for all the regions of the globe, because of the absence of a plan of work, in many countries ethnic music has just been touched on, tested, and by no one properly collected, studied, or published.

In our land, though, at least, a weird thing is notable. Not a month goes by, maybe not a week, that a magazine or a newspaper, dealing with music, miscellaneous cultural subjects or politics does not have a small article about the necessity to collect or study the musical ethnos; but none of these columnists, as far as I know, has ever bothered, on their own, to bend their back to pick up a grain of wheat in order to bring it to the empty barnyard waiting in vain.

As Chilesotti complained many times, it is true, if not worse, that to the general repugnance Minerva contributes no help to those who undertake such hard studies.

The French government, for example, has often joined a musicologist to the embassies, and sometimes has sent him on purpose, and in some way or another, supported him largely enough. This is the reason why France owns ethnomusicological studies which are relatively numerous and made by musicologists like Tiersot, Viardot, Borde, Hancourt.

In our country... In our country, not only are they not sent abroad but, for stinginess, they are not even given the necessary means to carry out their job in their own land; and this, not for stinginess only, some years ago, they had thought of commissioning conservatory students to do some of that work in the leisure of their holidays, throwing overboard those who tried to hold the national prestige high at their own expense.

Fancy that!

If Italy has always been the first in musical art, and if it did not even go back in the field of musicology, it is certainly not the fault of the Ministry of Education!

### **III. - Collection and classification**

In the sacramental five minutes in which teachers, between one lesson and another, gather to chat, a well-read professorship companion of mine, asked me, with a sceptical smile, how it is possible, in any way, to recognize what really is ethnic music, and how it is possible to establish, even approximately, the time it belongs to, being the folk song something which does not leave trace of itself and dies away on the very same lips that create it, as it does not have any system of transcription to be fixed with.

The tyrannical bell, that with its ungrateful sound called us to our usual job, prevented me from explaining to my ironic colleague, even shortly, the method I have developed on my own for my personal studies and which, although modest, I hoped could suffice to convince him of the unfairness of his scepticism. Although a year after, not having had the possibility to do it before, I will give him now the required explanation. He is far away, though, so I will give it to him by way of print, hoping that the public exposition of something which cost me a long professional experience can save time and toil to those young people who want to undertake arduous but delightful ethnomusicological studies.

Firstly, and I will say that immediately as it is the stronghold of the whole building of our studies, fearless of any dangerous cracks and ungrateful surprises of various kinds, it is absolutely essential to become conversant with the environment of the area that we want to study before starting to work.<sup>59</sup>

Although I myself have collected, here and there, wherever I had the possibility, folk songs of the various parts of the world, I never gave them any scientific importance. It is essential, I will say so, to get deep into the musical environment of a country before starting to study it; living long in it, becoming familiar with its language and with its dialect, with its customs and its traditions; being customary with its people's friendship and, obviously, more particularly with those who deal with music. The savage, the peasant, the ordinary man, when asked to sing, is either a real artist, a true sensitive of the sound, who then accidentally distorts the tempo, the tune, the way of singing, all that is embellishment and character of the country music, with that natural uneasiness (or, more justly, shame) that every artist feels when he opens the treasures of his own soul before a foreigner;<sup>60</sup> or he is a shrewd journeyman, and then he consciously misrepresents, thinking he is pleasing us by embellishing and ornamenting the "too simple" song according to the supposed taste of "civilized lords". Only when one already holds a rich patrimony of musical and environmental memories, uniquely learnt for having long heard them sung far away in the countryside or in the darkness of the shacks; or under the light of the stars, or whispered, slobbered almost as a prayer by the woman doing her chores, repeated in one hundred ways, in one hundred anonymous places vanished from memory, remembered as scattered in the air: only then, one can start his detective work, his collection, his study. In conclusion, it is firstly essential to have long sips from the natural source of the art of music if one wants to make the divine creek pass through the pots of the science without disfiguring the aesthetic beauty, without altering its intimate essence.

It is almost superfluous for me to say how extremely baroque the idea would be of the musicologist pretending to collect songs only from the mouths of ninety-year-old people next to the grave, as has apparently been done in England and in Scotland.<sup>61</sup> First you would run the risk of finding yourself unable to collect the

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<sup>59</sup> Soon after the environment in general, and by environment, I mean, besides customs and traditions, even the language in its most subtle means, it is essential to become familiar with the regional musical element. Without such familiarity, it is impossible to hope to do something good.

<sup>60</sup> Once I was not able to manage having an old singer "debut" without letting him hide behind a wardrobe which was in the room. Another time a blind beggar, whose accompanying sound to his questing words I was not able to decipher by ear, as he stopped in a too crowded corner of the city, once brought home, stayed a long time without being able to produce, in all sincerity, the requested line: he could not but kneel on the naked earth with a rosary in one hand and holding before him his cap, upside down like a pot, in such a way thinking that he was still on the street.

<sup>61</sup> Mrs. Adaiewsky, one of the usual foreigners that, profiting from our apathy, has come to make us know ourselves by studying ethnomusicological elements from Friuli, is not so absolute in the macabre idea of choosing the moribunds as guides, but, correctly, she loves "consulter les viellards et, mieux encore, le bonnes petites vieilles: ce sont là les vraies gardiennes de la tradition". And these old women, then, are nothing else but the servant she gives the portrait of. *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 1909, 164.

songs of too many countries for lack of singers so kind to have lived ninety years. It may be that there are not too many who come to such an old age, just the rare if not the only ninety-year-old survivor who has never sung in his life (a serious flaw for the music transcriber); and then because, even given the possibility of such longevity, that I wish every singer in the world might have, it seems to me there would be really little to trust of their memory, and very little of their throat, too; being no longer very apt to such a sweet task, in fact, who knows what concerts would be produced, even supposing that the old man next to the grave could sing the aria to satisfy the musicologist.<sup>62</sup> And good for the dying man that it were not the mimicry of dancing to be collected.<sup>63</sup>

I will not discuss when it is the music of the instruments that needs to be collected. There is nothing to choose from, the player in every village is usually one, they are rarely two, and they never reach an old age playing because they must stop before. They lack the agility of the fingers, and the breath even more, before they lack will and spirit.

Anyway, this is neither important nor useful, as ethnic music, apart from the poetical text, is a popular heritage widespread and ideal in such a way that so much knows the twenty-year-old as the ninety-year-old man; and it is not certain that the short time between the two may have been so influential on the purity of the musical theme, which, if it had to corrupt, it has existed for too many centuries to guess that it could have been changed just in that short period of time; and so the research of the rare ninety-year-old man, if not useless and superfluous, certainly is not a *sine qua non*.

So, when I want to start the work of the collector, having already an idea of the music and of the explored region, I firstly try to secretly transcribe all the musical performances while the folk-singer exhales the quivers of his soul in sounds full of feeling, or in public contexts, or in those long jam sessions made for his pure and intimate pleasure, being not even conscious of what a trick the musical civili-

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<sup>62</sup> Daniel Eberlin, weird character born at the beginning of the 1600s, had fun calculating the amount of possible ways to be out of tune on the violin, which gave him the sum of 2007, not one more not one less. But I think not even a Nuremberg brain like that of Mr. Eberlin would have the patience to count how many times a ninety-year-old man's throat, moribund in addition, would be able to be out of tune.

<sup>63</sup> And, jokes apart, all the choreographed mimicry is a very precious element for the study of comparative ethnography that we need to collect. To collect with photographs, with relative description, if not with films, to give the clear idea of the movement. Once before I hinted at that benefit, and, since 1909, I have made a comparison between a Sardinian dance and the dance of the populations of some Greek villages. And Angelo Mosso in his *Escursioni nel Mediterraneo [e gli scavi di Creta* (Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1907)], as far as the various interpretations given by different authors about the figure of a bas-relief carved in a Cretan vase were concerned, comparing the gesture of one of the figures engraved in a golden ring of the necropolis of Festo illustrated by Savignoni (*Monumenti Antichi Reale Accademia. Dei Lincei*, Vol XIV, 578) to that of a dancing man, portrayed in a fragment of a pyx found in Cressa by Evens, to the one that a dancer does in a folk dance still in use in Creta, is inclined to think that it is the figuration of a dance. And, meanwhile, when seeing the identical mimicry of a dance of today in Creta, to compare to that of the Mycenaean era, we do not hesitate to believe that even the music is kept identical and we vow that some musicologist may be interested in it, doing a good job for the sake of music history.

zation is playing on him. Having done that, I address myself to whom is supposed to be the best singer or to those who are supposed to be the best singers of the community, and I ask them to sing purposely, which they do with no problem and willingly, as they know me already and have already sung in my presence but not with the aim of supporting my studies. So, I can review, complete and correct the work done before, and, if it is the case, I can take note of the different variations of the same theme. Knowing how rare it is the possibility for a type of music to be only in one country, I start the same work for the other close countries and I only stop when I realize that a new ethnomusicological range or some new ethnic or melodic types are starting, which will later have to be the object of a new separate study. Then I start again the tour of the centres I have already explored for a check-up, listening to the largest possible number of singers, and not only of singers but of individuals of both sexes, always taking into account the variants that I do not note if not when they are accepted by a certain number of people (as the others I take note of are those of personal skill or those of inability).

Sometimes, in the transcription, you happen to be hindered by some tonal in-decisions, by some sounds that seem to be between a semitone and the other of our tempered system, by some rising and waning notes, by some tremolos, jabbbers, particular melismas, typical portamentos, that seem impossible to render with our notational system and that it would probably be more propitious to render, as an excellent musician wrote to me, with the mediaeval neumatic graphic system, more suitable to give the sound gesture in its preciseness. In the long time dedicated to such studies, though, I have ascertained that, as a matter of fact, this is nothing but the imperfect execution of our singers' throats: badly tuned notes, inaccurate sounds, a bit rising a bit waning, always uncertain, real trills, *gruppettos*, embryonic acciaccaturas, over-stretched portamentos, but nothing new, nothing different by what we already know. All this, it is true, lends colours, gives special features to ethnomusicology; colours and features that no handwriting can render<sup>64</sup> (and which it would be good to pick up with the phonograph<sup>65</sup>) but that must not worry the transcriber at all, who, with some practice, should be able to distinguish which are the real notes that the singer wants to perform and, only if he wants to specify it, will, as the linguists do for their studies on the language, have to use other conventional signs which are not part of the musical semiography now (and that so, for the first times, should be accompanied by explanatory notes).

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<sup>64</sup> And this is not only important for ethnomusicology. Even now, if a musician sets about transcribing the improvisations of a famous singer or of a great violinist, he is embarrassed in rendering all the expressive shades of the sound. And the confirmation is in all that an artist can put of his own when performing a piece, even if he is faithful to the text. And another confirmation of the above-mentioned impotence is in all the explanatory phrases that almost every music has, according to the more or less developed artist's sensitivity, who knows he was not able to communicate, with the music signs, all that he meant with his musical thought.

<sup>65</sup> With the musical collections already made... as they have to be, to have that evidence on the fidelity of the transcriptions, those which, though, it is always essential to make, if we want to obtain a practical result, so as ethnomusicological studies do not become a lab's barren subject.

All this, mind you, does not give any reason to those who believe that every transcription of folk music is a forgery of tones and rhythms, as, otherwise, given the differences that would always occur between the handwriting and the sound interpretation, we should say directly that it is not possible to write music or, better, that all written music is nothing but a forgery of the imagined one, as the sign can never mark all the shades of the sound in the way it is perceived by the composer; and, on the other hand, all the study at the base of every musical knowledge (that of being able to transcribe a given melody) would be useless because it would be impossible to reach the goal. It is necessary, instead, and this is the truth, to recognize that forever and ever, in all music between the sound and the sign there is a trait of conventionalism that unifies them.

Tempo is another difficulty that the music transcriber often has to deal with.

An illustrious musician once wrote to me apropos of this: "In the melopoeia in which the song is built (he speaks about some ethnic songs he kindly gave me), there is neither trace of meter nor of rhythm. One would not know where to locate the *arsis* and the *thesis*, which constitute the metric symmetry, the measure. As a logical consequence it is impossible to discern an *ictus* to mark the beginning of a rhythmic drawing, even latent. So, in my humble opinion, to choke it into the tether of whatsoever measure would mean to denaturalize the whole character of the melopoeia". And when I started ethnomusicological studies, for such difficulties, I was led to believe that closing such kinds of music into the tethers of the measures between bar lines, giving rhythmic units to the songs with periodical returns to the strong and weak accents meant to misrepresent folk music. But if the difficulty sometimes subsists again, in spite of the acquired practice, the opinion about the rhythmic essence of folk music has changed.

Music with no rhythmic accents, impossible to divide into strong and weak movements, in bars, and measures, does not exist and cannot exist.

A first determiner lies in its origin, as its phonic manifestations, which gave origin to music, like, for example, the hiccup, have their own period, their own strong accent, their own syncopes implying the *arsis* and the *thesis*, as without them there is no syncope. A second determiner is in the union of the word, of the line, to the music. The very same fact that the line is a break of the phrase to the width needed by the sound shows how the last one had in itself all the mensural elements that imposed themselves to the concept, which was obliged to break down into periods matching the purely ethnomusicological period. If then you think that the word has had its influence on the sound giving its rhythm to it, otherwise the word would have become unintelligible, you will have to admit that however the verbal syllables may have been stretched, the sound preserved their rhythmic character.

And we have even more. Polyphony is born, parts intertwine and alternate in movement, that is while one or two emit some maintained sounds, another plays various notes. Indispensably, these various voices that weave any drawing bring with them the necessity to allow that the note of a voice equals a certain number of those performed by another, in short to compare, to measure the values.

All this proves how there is no music without measure, or that cannot be measured, and the supposed lack of bars in the Gregorian chant is only apparent, because in it, indeed, as in the whole music, the measure leaves its effect, and the performer puts ideally the bar lines if they are not there graphically.

Amilcare Zanella, among the various... innovations introduced by his *Poema sinfonico* included the abolition of the bar lines. I did not have the chance to be there at the performance of the musical piece, that for the first time was directed by the author himself, but I am sure that, once reached, the adagio of the last part of his *Poema Sinfonico*, to the point where... there would be the innovation we are talking about, Zanella himself will have continued to mark with the used, tempered baton the "entries" of the various parts, the duration of the values... to beat, essentially... And the beat needs to be beaten as the measure is to be measured and so the abolition... was just an intention.

The bar would only be, according to Zanella, an obstruction, as, while the poet can immediately pass from one meter to another, the musician cannot, and must hold the chosen measure.

The argument seems so childish that we hardly believe it to belong to the illustrious director of the Conservatory of Pesaro<sup>66</sup>, but as everybody says it belongs to him, and being able, for the authority of his name, to be influent on the judgement of the young man beginning to study ethnomusicology, it is important to make it clear how the poetical meter really matches something else in music which is not exactly the bar; and how, as far as this is concerned, nothing prevents change of the meter even at each measure.

Even in classic music, times have passed when not only the unit of measure but also that of the tonality was held for a whole piece. Today we change measure and tone, as long as it is useful. And you can find many examples of pieces of ethnic music where bars of three-four and others of four-four, or bars of two-four or of nine-eight alternate regularly.

But even in ethnic music such abstruse songs are not too many. Usually folk music is simpler than one would normally believe and it is usually mono rhythmic and mono tonal. What counts is to be able to find the key... of the bar and of the tone.

Of course, it is not easy, and doubt even exists for those who have been studying the subject for years; but difficult does not mean impossible and with the study and the patience there is no ethnic song, however weird it may seem, which you cannot eventually find the tone and the tempo of, just like of any historical music.

In my notes, I always pick up the name and all the details concerning folk musicians to whom I draw, but I never thought it was useful to share such information, nay, in spite of all the devotion I had, I found childish the habit that the dear departed Giuseppe Pitre had, to note in his books, with painstaking accuracy, the name and the fatherhood of a certain retailer of chickens, photographed at a

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<sup>66</sup> See "Importanti innovazioni del Maestro Zanella" *Giornale d'Italia*, April of the year... I do not remember.

given page, or of a given decorator of whistles portrayed in another. I always found it infantile because it is the custom, not the person, which matters. You sell chickens in that way and you decorate whistles in that way while the people pass and must pass ignored, because they do not represent personalities but are expositors of secular habits, of habits that matter. So, it matters little to know who may be that guy playing a Sardinian instrument that I have portrayed on page one of my study *Su uno strumento musicale sardo*, because what counts is only how the instrument is made and how it is played. And this, I say, not to the former colleague to whom these short notes are dedicated, but to those young above-mentioned musicologists, in case they might read this, so that they may not think to do something useful by holding the reader's attention on the personal data and, perhaps, on what the folk musician eats on Sunday or on Friday.<sup>67</sup> Such indications could not but have the purpose of a proof, but this would not be enough. Either a scholar is believed or it is useless that he makes efforts to be believed. On the other hand, the relative collections of photographs will always be the best proof of the sincerity of the collector.

As to the possibility of establishing, at least approximately, to which epoch a song belongs to, you need to take into account that the time is not to be split into the same equal periods as the other sciences do, but in much larger periods, and which abridge more periods of the division usually adopted for other branches of study. Here is the system I have followed so far.

In the country where there are, and rarely there are not, folk music instruments, the task is much eased. To establish to what age an instrument dates back is, as you know, relatively easy because instruments leave a trace of themselves in their passing over time, and nowadays a lot are the specimens found in the excavations that go from the Palaeolithic age to the age of the decadence of Rome. Now, for the peculiar possibilities of movement in the range of sounds that every instrument has in itself, and that are characteristic for every age, it is not only the instrument that tends to keep the music pure, for itself and by itself created, unwillingly accepting extraneous elements; but even if it is possible to play the music of more recent ages with such instruments, I mean musical ages according to the partition necessary to be done for ethnomusicology (so that the peasant can play some marches or some modern dance tunes on the whistle he has inherited from the Neolithic age), these types of music always acquire such an extraneous character, they are so lame in rhythm, performed in such an approximate way in the melody, with the skips replaced by missing notes, with some legato where it should be staccato and vice versa, that even a simple amateur of the subject understands that such types of music are not at home on this instrument. While, as soon as you play a theme which is contemporary of the instrument itself, you understand it immediately and without any doubt.

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<sup>67</sup> And I do not exaggerate. In an issue of a Variety magazine, of some years ago, there is a small article about the player of that typical Sardinian instrument called *launeddas*. The author was not impressed and he says nothing else about this musician; if not that, being in Cagliari, he ate some cream cookies.



Having had such a basis, such a yardstick, it is not too difficult, in most cases, to establish the age of the songs by comparing the ethnic elements of these songs with those ethnic ones ascertained by the instrumental music.

For rare cases in which there is no instrument to rely upon, I made a basis of vocal music that I will use as a parallel and that does not seem to me a contemptible yardstick.

And I say it does not seem contemptible because, being the music a purely sentimental art, absolutely a spontaneous manifestation, not linked not only to any tool but not even to any material order of things (if not in the instrumental organology), it is the art that better resists the influences of civilization and keeps pure and faithful to the first model.

The savage reader can find it useful to change his primitive arrow with the rifle or, at most, keep them one aside the other. The peasant, for the same reason, goes the same way, welcoming a little bit at a time the improvements that the discoveries of civilization offer to his material life and, step by step, we see him employing the wire mesh for the bed, the new plough and, maybe, the mechanical mower. But why should he welcome new sorts of music? Can they better express his feelings? Obviously not, and that is why the ethnic song is the last to disappear. And the rich owner of the village, who put into practice the material progress and that will maybe be seduced by an automobile, will be bored to death when put in front the most delicious classical music because he will not understand it and, in his intimacy, and mind you that I am speaking about somebody already arrived to the degree of simulating his own mental state, he will prefer one hundred times the song of his mountains.

You can be certain that the music of a people, primitive in its customs and traditions, let us say a people patently stopped at the first degree of the pre-historic civilization, is likewise primitive, nay, more primitive than the rest of its customs.

So, getting in the first place a small group of songs belonging to different people, whose customs had stayed really primitive, I found out I was able to judge some songs that I had to study by always comparing them to those which, in my view, had to be the yardstick.

But I cannot be silent that in such investigations I took profit from the intuition that I sharpened in my studies, so that I can say that every time I trace a song of a certain age, I always found it identical to the original that I previously had in my mind. I have then consolidated such a new and so precious point of comparison with further comparisons between the above-mentioned themes of vocal music and those performed by other savage tribes that, besides the pre-historic habits, had collected modern customs and modern things; maybe, as I said, the modern breech-loading rifle aside the bone-toed or stone-toed arrow.

Important subsidiary proof includes those dances accompanied by vocal music. Just this is proof of the ancientness of the custom, and so of the music. Besides, as I said, in footnote 63, the comparisons between the mimicry of the folk dances of our days and that of the ancient choreographic manifestations (whose memory we have in frescos, mosaics, bas-reliefs, carvings, that from the Middle-Ages date

back to the oldest pre-history), give proof of indisputable safety. And if I find the mimicry of a current folk dance identical to that of an ancient dance, I can certainly state that even the music must exist and, what is more, the very same music that accompanied it, at least in the age it belonged to the oldest figuration of such mimicry.

So, I have a new point of comparison.

In ancient figurations, it is even possible to find some ways of emitting the voice that can be valuable indexes in the chronological ranking of some ancient music. And I am not speaking of the exam of the mouth opening, of the position of the so-called Adam's apple, of the risen or lowered shoulders, of the leaning breast or of the diaphragm in action, but of simpler, clearer, more expressive details.

So, we imagine the primitive man, for instinct or for thought, after observing the voice increasing in volume and in range when collected by a tube or by a shell, putting together his hands to the mouth, in order to gather the sound as in a trumpet every time he needed to project his voice away, having no instrument. This we see reproduced in some old bas-reliefs. And particularizing on such a gesture we can establish that holding a hand near the mouth (almost sustaining a jaw, a habit still common to reinforce the low notes among the folk-singers of some regions like the Sardinian), is already in use in very old ages as we find trace of it in some bas-reliefs carved in Nineveh representing a procession opened by a march performed by an orchestra composed of *nebel*, psaltery and double-flute players and women, among whom one is posing in such a way.<sup>68</sup>

These, in short, are the main points of the method with which I lead my research and which allows me to distinguish between pre-historic and classical music, the natural from the well-read one, and which allowed me to carry out my modest studies on ethnic music that I have had the pleasure to offer to the readers.

Five minutes would have certainly passed had I only had to expose orally what is above, and the bell would have called us to the chair, but I do not know if, after listening to my explanations, the ironic smile of my colleague would have vanished. Anyway, hoping so, I do not insist, as I know that if I had not already convinced him, insisting would be pointless.

#### IV. Characters and melodic forms

The form of ethnic music, which all classic music forms so far in use have developed from, are, nor could it be otherwise, few and convoluted, closed like buds of flowers. If they have neither the splendid colours nor the grace of the forms,

<sup>68</sup> See *British Museum*, 43, footnote 10.

Mr. and Mrs. Virolleaud and Pelagana, with their predecessors, interpret the rows of adult singers as women. But I am not fully convinced. Because that gesture is more apt to reinforce low notes rather than high notes and so used more by men than by women.

A commemoration of the barbaric custom, worthy of the precision and for the splendour of an archaeologist and of a poet at the same time, is made by Gustave Flaubert in the first chapter of *Salambò* when she goes down to her father's garden followed by a train of eunuch singers and players at the same time.

though, yet already have all the scent that the more it is kept in its jealous custody, the more you smell it, and the more voluptuously it makes quiver the nostrils.

And this is quite natural, because it is a sound directly blossomed from the feeling, which is a spontaneous and direct expression of the fundamental feelings of man. More lively and evident they keep the feeling and more directly, so, the ethnic themes impress our soul that, at the unison, quivers with the passionate thrills of the ethnic sound.

“The cry, the pain, the joy (says Angelo Mosso in his *Escursioni nel Mediterraneo*, and it is a doctor and an illustrious physiologist of the body who is speaking) always had the same expressions, as they are nervous, unintentional phenomena that burst with the same physiological changes of the organism; and we can be sure that the music which meant, in those pre-historic times, to express such feelings, was little different from ours. The music takes its expressive value in the modulations which are being produced in the human voice through the passions, and what does not rely on instinct is conventionalism not true music”.

In fact, this is right. And this is the reason why very little of so much classic music, written, praised and celebrated for its depth, nicety of elaboration, power of colour, as a matter of fact, touches us and really moves us. Many themes, technically so well laboured, so wisely harmonized, so elegantly arranged, leave us cold because they are not a true expression of feeling. And where that sympathetic flow between musician and listener is missing, which coming from the feeling makes the two souls vibrate at the unison with the same emotions, with the same passions, with the same anxiety and the same joys, we can still feel an aesthetic pleasure, yes, but that does not rely upon sentimental emotion deliberately arisen by the author, which is the essence of art; rather it relies upon the admiration which it wakens in us, by way of an advanced, comparative argument, all that is elegant, well thought out, decorated, polished, niellated with little touches of patience and calculation; that is an obvious product of reason, of a mind superior for nature and refined for exercise, which is not but artifice, substitute, ersatz, adulteration largely offered and largely accepted, adopted in our times lacking the original raw material: art.

And here is an observation which, in fact, is in contrast with the many, learned ravings of most editors of music histories.

If we admit, and we cannot do differently, that pain and joy manifest themselves always with the same physiological mutations and so they had always to give the same phonic manifestations; and if we add, as a proof to this the collection of ethnic songs that undoubtedly date back to pre-history and that are so entirely musical, that a modern musician could neither do more nor otherwise, willing to express human feelings with truth, I ask what is this will to affirm and reaffirm, by force and against all evidence and in every moment, that in the beginning music had to be a sort of recitative without that harmonic connection that holds the modern melody and makes the sounds pleasant to the ear.<sup>69</sup> Neither I know how some-

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<sup>69</sup> Untersteiner, *Storia della Musica*. Cap. 1, (Milan: Hoepli, 1916), 3.

body can get to the point of stating that the bards of the age of the Trojan War (XII century B.C.) sang almost in a recitative style.<sup>70</sup>

Such a statement is now being repeated even in more modern cultural events, like conferences<sup>71</sup>, with the aggravating circumstance of another mistake: namely to say that the clear traces of the melody that can be found in the plain song testify of the more and more expressive character the melody had been acquiring; while this is precisely what took away every expressive character to the melody, that is every sentimental character the people had instilled in the spontaneity of its phonic manifestations.

Nor could it be otherwise. The mediaeval monopolization of the cult imposed, even in music, the disappearance of that passionate thrill that, in the beginning, the true faithful (hot with faith and love, who really prayed with heart and soul) had instilled in it. It wanted the music to be cold and dry like the heart of a false priest or of a bigot, and made it stagnate in rigid horizontal rows of long and monotone notes that have lost every vitality by losing the varied rhythm, that are nothing more than sound or, it is better to say, half sound, because even this has been castrated, depriving it of any vigour, making it perform soporific sequences in half voice.

Music was always music: it always had all its musical characters and the singing was always different from the recitative and even more from the speech, although phonically derived from it, in the sense that the sound was firstly utilized, forgive me for the expression, in flat form for the word and later in relief for the singing; namely, first with few quantitative differences of vibrations among the different sounds making up the spoken word, then with considerable differences, with more and more distant skips, so to reach the value of melody. However, once the magnification of the ordinary vocal form, recitation and declamation, had been reached to get to the singing, man has continued to differentiate and keep one from the other in distinct forms. When we find in a tribe, savage for customs and traditions stopped at the Stone Age, songs and proper dance motifs neither more nor less of those now composed, why do they want to insist on the silly claim of a song that, still among the Greek, was not but a sort of recitative? And if we have some wind and string pre-historic musical instruments (I purposely leave out the idiophones and those with a membrane because unmusical in the melodic sense), and if we must admit that in pre-history they could create some instrumental melodies, unless we want to reach the absurd and say that even with the instruments the ancient people sang and declaimed, how can we not think that, even more, they had to be able to sing and built melodies with their voices? We have a lot ethnic music and clear pre-historic instruments with precise musical characters. Nor could we oppose the other absurdity, that is the priority of instrumental music, because, even admitting such a case, now definitely out of question, you would always have the natural process of imitation which would have even brought vocal

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<sup>70</sup> Hugo Riemann, *Storia universale della musica: Traduzione italiana del Enrico Bongioanni* (Torino 1912), 191.

<sup>71</sup> "Il Canto nel Sec. XVII. Conferenza di Giulio Silva," *Musica* 10, (Roma: 1918).

music, repeating the skips and the musical themes obtained with the instruments, to the development of the complete form of the sung melody.

When the primitive man blew into a bone or into a shell, when he made a gut string wound up on a log vibrate, even if he just drew one single sound from it, this had necessarily all the properties of the musical sound and of the human voice, imitating, sustaining the sound (music started from the voice sustained, until it became sound and only later, and much later, rhythm, in spite of many historians who believe the rhythm to be the basis of music), as it took its first step in the direction of the melody. Changing the dimensions of the instruments, it found sounds of different pitches, and, as to connecting them, it was easy if not natural. Imagine at the time of the Greeks! The historical studies that want absolutely to refuse the Greeks the knowledge of harmony, then argue that the instruments, even if they did not play real accompaniments, performed the same notes of the singing at the unison and at the octave. So, the *aulos* and the *citharas*, in short the flutes and the oboes, the guitars and the harps, declaimed if not directly recited! This is trivial but it is still part of the stock of knowledge of the dominating trend in the history of music!

Even in the language of today, in the current languages and despite the necessity to write in prose for the pragmatism of modern life, you find not only melodic elements but also tonal and finally harmonic elements. There is a skip of augmented fourth in the questions and the trend to go down from the fifth to the first of the tone at the end of a period; that is the famous dominant and the fundamental of all the classic cadences of the musical pieces.

In the tone slightly brought to musicality by the cries of the vendors, we then have that typical abandonment of the voice at the end of the call, clearly falling down to the octave interval.<sup>72</sup> In the end we have the melodic developments that also come from the speech and clearly manifest themselves in the questing, in the cries of the auctioneers, in the hiccup, in the lullabies, in many other manifestations in which the phonic expression is emphasized because of the movement of internal needs.

Now, if we think about the sonority of certain savage languages, that better than our ancestors come close to the first vocal expression of man (and to the most vividness that the primitive man had to give to all sentimental manifestations, and so to the distinct development that music had to acquire very soon), I ask how it is possible that you dare to speak of a sort of recitative or declamation in music.

Of course, music was simpler, its line was straighter and more horizontal than it is today, because even when it stretched in the highest regions of the sound, it did not get there in a leap or go down immediately but stayed there horizontally, and it was music in all its expression of sentimental sound. And is not the story of Caio Gracco (who, when he spoke in the Forum, had always with him a *phonascus*, that with the sound of an ivory flute called *tonorium* held the tone of the speeches), a very evident and convincing proof of how the singing was already

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<sup>72</sup> So few are the ethnomusicological studies made so far that I am obliged, for the musical examples, to refer the reader to another modest work of mine. "Di Alcuni Costumi Musicali in Sardegna," *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, fasc. I., 1918.

very different from the spoken language and that it was so appreciated that even the public speakers tried, among the oratory artifices, to elevate the tone of the voice to musical dignity?<sup>73</sup>

In his splendid experimental essay on the physiology of the public speaker, Patrizi, summarizing differences and similarities between speaker and singer, and between the sung voice and the spoken voice, puts it this way: "So, in short, the speaker would only differ in degree from the singer, both for the employ of the elementary qualities of the voice and for the use of the tones in the development of the period. But after so many approximations, we should not pass over in silence a difference, noticed by way of a delicate research in the physiological mechanism of the two verbal arts. It is familiar, to most, the vocal photography process consisting in the fixing of the variable contour of a small flame to which the vibrations of the word are carefully transmitted. The physicist Marage, among those photographic images, could distinguish the *sung* vowels from the *spoken* vowels. In the singing, it is the vocal chords which vibrate most and have influence, and the signs of their flickering get printed on a sensitive plate. The configuration taken in this case by the communicating sinuses of the mouth and of the pharynx of the so-called *tube of addition* has an accessory importance: the singers abandon the vocal and hold the note. The speakers, instead (therefore their syllabic neatness) abandon the notes and hold the vocals.

All that, summarily and approximately, could be represented by recalling that the true human melodic language was born on the respiratory-vocal tree a little lower than the prose, than the clear word; the singer is more precisely a larynx virtuoso, the speaker, considered from the outside, is rather a maker of the uvula and of the organs close to it (larynx, nose, buccal cavity, lips). "Eloquent lips" is a synecdoche that, with the accuracy and brevity of an algebraic formula, sums up a scientific reality".<sup>74</sup>

There are common characters, so, but also essential, differential characters. So, we will say that the singing, even being convoluted in the word, once it set itself free from the plain verb, from the precise sign, resembled so much to this as a butterfly can resemble to a chrysalis. And so, once man discovered, or if you like, found the singing, this had always to be the singing and nothing else, neither to be confused in any way with the prose nor with the recite. But so much so, Messrs musicologists, discussing about the origins of the music, keep on discussing the quantity of feeling which is necessary to create the music and they will continue to state, with some Riemann, that in the beginning music was a recitation (splendid contradiction in terms) and that, at the time of the Greeks, it was nothing but a recitation a little resonant, as the great actors that delighted our grandparents used to do.

Forms, obviously, can neither be too many nor various. They dissolve in dirges, lullabies, love songs, marches, dances, and mystical chants. Originated, of

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<sup>73</sup> As you see, the observation that man tunes his voice to the sound environment in which he is absorbed dates a long time back. We should complain that phonetic studies are still so few in Italy and by no means encouraging.

<sup>74</sup> [M.L. Patrizi], *L'Oratore* (Milano: Treves, 1912).

course, in the lament for the dead, in the caress of the new-born, in the sexual need, in the need to get excited for the battle (which has another proof in the need to sing that many feel when passing in a solitary place), by the joy of time. All forms, we find, incidentally, when going back in the evolutionary ladder of the earthly animal life, not only in the savages but in the inferior animal races, too.

Such forms join in a chain of common characters, to pass from the subject of death to that of unrestrained joy for a follow-up of barely perceptible gradations.

And a modern great physiologist, Angelo Mosso, tells us that there have to be some characters of affinity among the different ethnomusicological events, namely the musical sound directly generated and created by the feeling: "In the joy and in the intensive pain there is a degree of feeling in which the intonation of the voice is exchanged, because the nerves that move the muscles of the larynx do not stretch the vocal chords regularly, whence comes the tremolo that is used to exaggerate the pathetic expressions of the singing".<sup>75</sup> Such a tremolo, so, we see appearing in the various genres of ethnic music, from the dirge to the dance. The physiological event that starts as a tremolo sound was then modified in the precise form of two distinct close notes stepwise, quickly alternating, and took the name of trill serving as an embellishment, that is as proof of pure vocal acrobatics. All this while the first form of tremolo is still in existence, always as an element of expression. An element of expression as it recalls our physiological being in certain conditions.

The singing of the tomb and the singing of the cradle have special affinities. The pain, soaring to musical dignity, is stylized and moves close to the lullaby, as to sweetness it almost joins the desire to rock the dead: in any case it rocks itself, easing the distress in that return to childhood in addition to that mechanical action of the repetition of a noise which, as you know, leads some hypersensitive people to self-hypnosis; the singing of the cradle, or better, of the sleep, gets close to the mystery of death, as it whispers, it murmurs to make one fall asleep, to rock. Both the themes are slow, beginning with a skip downward, loose and followed by an almost horizontal line that eventually goes up to a timeless, long note. The sound is better linked than dragged. The tonality is low, to be performed effortlessly and slow. The only gems: the acciaccatura, a phonic expression of the physiological function of the onset channel in the hiccup and whose position is often changed by the popular performer; the tremolo, which enhances the character of sweet melancholy that pervades the two types of singing and comes from the diaphragmatic quiver: showing itself in such cases, it makes the people say, with a happy intuition, that the sensitive man has "tender bowels".

Another difference consists in this: in the dirge, the final note is broken down in various stages which represent the outburst of the cry in a single value: deadening, it goes often down to rejoin the new verse. In this last ethnic form of singing, they use the "piano" a lot, which is obtained with the performance of certain

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<sup>75</sup> Angelo Mosso, *La Paura* (Milano: Treves, 1901), Cap. VIII, 169. Even the rage and the terror have some common characters like, for example, the gooseflesh, the expansion of the pupils, etc. See Charles Darwin, *L'espressione Dei Sentimenti Nell'Uomo e Negli Animali* (Torino: 1878), 27.

sounds, mouth ajar. And it is when you use such an artifice that the range of the lullaby goes bravely high, having still light sounds apt to help sleep.

A typical character of the dirge, that you do not meet but in it, is the mild outbreak of the voice with which every inspiration begins. Such an event derives from the fact that in sobbing you inspire the air in long sips, quickly, like the greedy swallows big bites without chewing. The following and contemporary relaxation of the diaphragmatic muscles, thoracic and laryngeal, produces such a sonorous accentuation. And it is in this way of breathing that produces, even in the inspiration, that preliminary and typical noise of the hiccup which is absolutely forbidden by all singing treatises.

A step forward and we enter the reign of sexual love. The erotic song, for its emotional content and for the competitions in which the various males tend to the conquest of a woman, had necessarily to catch characters that detached it from the other ethnomusicological manifestations. As every lover-singer intended to overcome the others, the erotic song fixated on a very brave pitch. A characteristic, as we saw, that sometimes is even typical of the cradle song.

In this competition, which, in the desire to reciprocally overcome one another through the sharpness of the clear and strong sounds, and in the preference given from the other sex to the one who better has such skills, you may find the first natural basis for the destination of the tenor's voice to the parts of the lucky lover in the melodrama. As by contrary, it is to the baritone's voice that the male expression of the most violent passions is entrusted.<sup>76</sup>

The *andamento* of the phrase is ample. The final high note of impetus with the projection of the voice. It is in this song that, next to the acciaccatura and to the tremolo, the other musical flowers appear; the *trillo*, the mordent, the *gruppetto* of all the species blossom here and there, especially in the cadence in which every singer shows all the beauty, the power, the agility of his voice. And though, as a chronological data, the most daring texture and wealth of embellishments is an index of progress that is of minor antiquity.

A last step and we are to the joy, to the blaze, to the feast, to the singing inciting victory, to the dance. The music of ethnic dances is always in binary tempo because it comes from the magnification of the movement which, on one side, turns into a march and the step can only be marked by a binary movement, and on the other side, turns into dance but with a greater accentuation and acceleration of the movement of the limbs of the body (without, though, a translational motion). Common characters, so, have the march and the dance among the primitives; but a new element appears during the dance: the triplet. An element of motion<sup>77</sup> that, wherever comes into sight, once in a while, exceptionally in any division of values (and as a division into two fourths in three, triplets of crotchets) provides a shock

<sup>76</sup> Patrizi, op. cit., chapter IX about the various timbres of the preachers' voices known as "The tenor's key is less frequent and suitable for elocution, maybe because the high notes, connecting in the mind to the female or to the childish voice or to the soft language of the lover on the scene, seem to be out of tune with the body of the public speaker in whom one likes to imagine, more or less, the manly soul of a fighter and the seriousness of an old man".

<sup>77</sup> About this, see L. A. Villanis, *Saggio di Psicologia Musicale* (Torino: Lattes, 1904).



to the rhythmic balance, giving the sense of the wobble, of the instability. Where it appears, on the contrary, as a stable division of every movement, eight note triplets, at every fourth, it only increases the motion of the sound, leaving to the piece all its static integrity but giving to the piece the chance of a greater character of uniformity.

It is the element of the triplet that often functions as a conjunction ring between this form and the previous ones in which it infiltrates and appears. But, in this case, the singing in which the triplet shows itself, like an echo of the dancing movements, is evidently of a later period compared to the simpler ones. As such, those forms begin to have the waning instability of the so-called Eastern songs, which belong to the sensual and voluptuous pomp of the first Moorish civilizations. In the dance, the triplet appears as a normal element, an element of exception at some time in which, in the frantic shaking of the dancing, they ended up adopting it as a means to move more than in the duple times, i.e. three times instead of two.

In the march, and so in the dance, too, the tempo is naturally more moved but, but the melodic line stays horizontal, turning always around a small group of sounds. More rarely you may find the repetition of the same sound.

The texture is within the normal and does not wander, if not exceptionally, in the high regions of the erotic song. But, every now and then, a skip of the voice, as an exciter cry of revenge or joy, breaks the line and, instilling new energy to the march or to the dance, indicates the upset reaction of the primitive man to strong and unusual excitements produced by the upcoming battle, or by the victory, or by any unbridled joy.

Another of the main types of ethnic music, or natural music if you want, is undoubtedly the mystic one. With no intention to go back to man's lower species (as Darwin did, when he believed to find in them the sentiment of a religion<sup>78</sup>), it is certain that man, since its first appearance, and more at that time than now, felt the need for supernatural protection, imagined the good and evil coming from a superior will and created in his own fantasy some beings representing the natural beneficial and maleficent forces. And in the most precious relics of a remote age you may discover the traces of a divinity roughly portrayed in clay or in another material. And if we think that man mourned the dead and made lullabies to the children, and that in the heat of pain, of love or of blaze, he has raised the tone of the voice up to musicality, we cannot likewise help thinking that man, calling on supreme beings to invoke their graces, did it spontaneously aloud, almost to be heard better, to have his prayers fulfilled completely. And in that, even in this manifestation of mysticism, he raised unconsciously his voice to the tone of singing, letting it acquire something more sublime to the prayer which had so to result more acceptable to the mysterious supreme beings.

So, as the wind instruments, whether wooden instruments played with full mouth or with reeds, flageolets or clarinets, were able to infuse ardour in the hairy chests of the first warriors (which still nowadays pervades the bagpipe of the Scottish troops), so as the minor tone and not the major was in a certain age the martial one, so the primitive religious music, instead of having that slow and monotone

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<sup>78</sup> Darwin, *Origine Della Specie*.

character that we now know, was, on the contrary, lively, of rural genre; and finally, at ceremonies, it had to accelerate the motion that made it degenerate into Bacchic music.

In the customs of the savage peoples, still now existing, if the worship ceremonies begin with songs similar to those used in praise of the dead (the cult of the dead), they always end up with dances. Gods like seeing men toddling in their honour, and the musical priest of the first ages certainly did not make resonate the chords of the divine lyre but blew into the rustic pipes, flageolets or clarinets with a little solemn sound and certainly not apt to perform low-pitched melodies but made to create frisky themes of dances slightly melancholic and rigid in their mimicry.

The illustrious director of the archaeological Museum of Cagliari, taking as a basis a study of mine<sup>79</sup> for an investigation about Sardinian archaeology, genially conjures up the ceremonies that had to be performed in the temples of the Nuragic age: "Grounding on the evidence of some protohistoric statuettes, from which we can ascertain that the primitive peoples of Sardinia knew the musical instruments, I expressed the idea that, to the sacrifice, a sacred music or a dance was connected with the intervention of the senator of the triple tibia, of the typical Sardinian *launedda*, of whom the Ittiri little bronze shows us the very ancient origin. The analogy with the solemn dances, still nowadays associated with religious ceremonies of the living Sardinia, provided me a topic of the most vivid interest, given the great vigour and the persistence of all the traditional forms of the island."<sup>80</sup> And even in the magnificence in which every religious event was encased in the already advanced Egypt, dances and music appeared. "Playing was essentially the duty of the priestesses that, before Hathor or another divinity, tinkled and clamoured with their sistrums or with their ratchets in the same way that the women of the harem used to do in the dance before their sovereign".<sup>81</sup>

The famous hymn to Jupiter engraved on two marble blocks discovered in Delphi in 1903, however you may want to read it, does not mirror at all the mystic soul of an age because it is nothing but the oldest document of the musical elaboration of the learned.

Given the state in which ethnomusicological studies are today, we cannot say to possess any collection of exclusively religious music of the early days. We own, though, musical performances like dances, which were undoubtedly useful for the worship offices. Religious songs, instead, which have characters of grandeur, real or apparent, composed of values of a certain length, like the Sard ones, the Sicilian ones and others, date back at most to the beginning of the historical music, to the dawn of the learned contrapuntal music.

Again another form: the *stornello*, *ritornello* and *mottetto*.

<sup>79</sup> Giulio Fara, "Su uno Strumento Musicale Sardo," *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 1913.

<sup>80</sup> A. Taramelli, "Il Tempio Nuragico ed i Monumenti Primitivi di S. Vittoria di Sferi (Cagliari)" *Monumenti Antichi Reale Accademia. Dei Lincei*, Vol. XXIII, 1914.

<sup>81</sup> Adolfo Erman, *La Religione Egizia*, Traduzione Italiana di Arturo Pellegrini (Bergamo: 1908).

Its content and its poetic form, arrived a long time after the other forms (and that came out from the need to make the work less long and hard), fill the empty hours of mental boredom with the singing, whose elements it took from the already existing songs and which were intended for something else.<sup>82</sup> In the barcarolles, whether they are sung by the boaters of the high Nile, or by the young Chinese girls that lead the picturesque small boats on their rivers with their names not less picturesque, or by the Eskimo able drivers of those strange unsinkable ships made of sealskin, always the echo of the lullabies where they come from rings out, with the same accent of the lulling, maybe only slightly more accentuated. And again, in the songs that accompany man's suffering, the harvest of the fruits of mother earth, the making of work tools, there is always the footprint of the lullaby song, although readjusted here and there. Relieved in the strength of the accents, made energetic by the changing of the tempo, by the quicker performance, by the abolition of the last prolonged note. In these songs, nay, the god Mars peeps out, carrying the bland themes of the cradle in slightly held march tempo.

And here is, at last, the call-and-response refrain, the dialogue in lines, supported by a jingle set free from the musical themes it germinated from, but by which, still now, it is affected in the proceeding; in it, the moderate joy repeats the same line of the preludes of the dances, that seem to get vigour before launching into the boisterous vortex of the tumultuous and unbridled joy. It is the *stornello*, made livelier by the race for readiness, in the reply that the singers support between one another in their answering back the snipes, now gentle, now raw and piercing.

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<sup>82</sup> We are, as the reader can see, very far from the theory of the German economist Dr. Bücher, who thinks that the singing was developed from the observation that musical rhythm, providing the work with more regularity, has a beneficial influence on the duration and on the quantity of the production. The work-song is a derived form, last arrived in ethnomusiological manifestations. On the other hand, as we said elsewhere ("Saggio sulla genesi della musica," *Nuova Musica*, Firenze, 1917) music is sound, it is the need to produce sound, and Mr. Bücher did not think that the rhythm deprived of sound would be unexciting while the sound is the maximum energy factor of music. But now, it is not only the economists, but unfortunately even the aesthetes of music that raise rhythm to first dignity.