Italian Music during the Fascist Period

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'Songs of a Prisoner': Luigi Dallapiccola and the Politics of Voice under Fascism

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Let us start with the old question: what was the relation of music to politics under fascism? At one level — by now well researched — there were specific policies and manipulation: the advancement of some composers, restraints on commissions or embargos on performance, interviews with the Duce or orchestrated criticism. At another level, the question concerns the ideology and aesthetics promoted by those seeking to control the country and regime's cultural production and their impact on musical style and reception. These are the issues at stake in this essay. Did fascist ideology encourage or inhibit modernism in compositional technique and subject matter from the early twentieth century and the interwar decades? Historians have posed the same questions for the arts in general, and for National Socialist Germany (and Soviet Russia) as well as Italy.

Over time, the answers have grown more subtle and differentiated. Historians of culture have come to recognize that fascism encouraged modernist as well as anti-modernist trends. In Italy, the 1930s and initial years of the 1940s witnessed significant achievements in modern architecture, the apprenticeship of postwar cinema directors, and an effort even by official patrons to perform music by such innovative composers as Bartók, Berg, and Webern. Scholars have also come to understand that these regimes, even when allegedly totalitarian, were fragmented and polyarchic structures. Political leaders never overcame personal and bureaucratic rivalries, and they patronized different cultural trends, some modernist, some reactionary, some open to international cultural trends, others intentionally autarkic and nationalist. For Italy, at least, the regime always sent mixed signals about the role of art if only because different leaders (e.g. the party boss, Roberto Farinacci; the house intellectual, Giuseppe Bottai; the spokesmen for such cultural bureaucracies as the Ministry of Popular Culture) had different clienteles and agendas. Composers and artists likewise sought to ingratiate themselves with different sources of patronage. Finally, researchers have come to emphasize that despite official ideology, even under would-be totalitarian regimes, the agenda of artists and critics can never be totally politicized. The struggle between tradition and innovation continues. The more historians research the arts, the more complex a pattern of repression, patronage and accommodation, and outright inconsistency emerges.

At the end, therefore, we are left with a new version of the old question: can we talk about any consistent impact that fascist ideology had on serious musical composition? In what ways, if any, can musical forms (or any art form) be construed as fascist[1]?

This essay addresses the 'old question' about the impact of ideology and regime by examining the early career of the most innovative emerging composer in the late fascist regime, Luigi Dallapiccola, in the context of his contemporaries' music and discussions of music. It also seeks to compare the nature of politicization in fascist Italy with the fate of modern music in National Socialist Germany during the years of close ideological and military alignment between the two countries. It asks what aspirations these fascist regimes — akin in their ceremonials and forms, but still clearly different in terms of national and racial myths — had for music. Dallapiccola grew up bilingual in Habsburg Pisino d'Istria, did his secondary schooling while his family was in enforced wartime exile in Graz, remained an enthusiast of Ferruccio Busoni, absorbed the twelve-tone innovations of the Second Vienna School — even as he put roots down in Florence as his chosen city of adulthood. And it was in Florence and Fiesole during the year of German occupation (September 1943-August 1944) that he and his wife Laura would have to slip from house to house as the Germans (and a reinstalled fascist regime) ferreted out Jews. «Mi sento anch'io più che mai oggi, *un anima solitaria* [...].[2]»

Our aim is to examine how musical composition and discourse responded to political conditions within fascist Italy. What ideological implications did choices of genre, scoring, and harmonic innovation carry? How did Dallapiccola and fellow composers balance international influences in an era of great musical innovation with the Italian artistic legacy[3]? How did the resources of voice and instrumental music appear as stakes in the politics of music? What creative assimilation of international modernism was possible through Dallapiccola's remarkable decade of underground maturation from the mid-1930s to Italy's final liberation in the mid-1940s?

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[1]. See among other recent discussions of issues of modernism, culture, art and music under fascism: *National Socialist Cultural Policy*, edited by Glen R. Cuomo, New York-Basingstoke, St. Martin's Press-Macmillan, 1995; LEVI, Erik. *Music in the Third Reich*, New York-Basingstoke, St. Martin's Press-Macmillan, 1994; KATER, Michael H. *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and their Music in the Third Reich*, New York-Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997; on special subjects, POTTER, Pamela M. *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998; *Richard Wagner im Dritten Reich: ein Schloss Elmau-Symposion*, edited by Saul Friedländer and Jörn Rüsen, Munich, Beck, 2000 (Beck'sche Reihe, 1356). For Italy, STONE, Marla. *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy*, Princeton (NJ), Princeton University Press, 1998. For debates on modernism, CIUCCI, Giorgio. *Gli architetti e il fascismo. Architettura e città 1922-1944*, Turin, Einaudi, 1989 (Piccola biblioteca Einaudi, 515); BEN-GHIAT, Ruth. *Fascist Modernities. Italy, 1922-1945*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press, 2001 (Studies on the History of Society and Culture, 42).

[2]. DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. 'Incontro con Anton Webern *(Pagine di diario)*', in: ID. *Parole e musica*, edited by Fiamma Nicolodi, Milan, Il Saggiatore, 1980 (La cultura. Saggi di arte e di letteratura, 53), p. 235, diary entry of December 3, 1943.

[3]. For musical analyses see KÄMPER, Dietrich. *Gefangenschaft und Freiheit. Leben und Werk des Komponisten Luigi*

Renzo De Felice termed the first half of the 1930s the years of fascist 'consensus'; for Federico Fellini they were the years depicted in *Amarcord*: the dreamy and provincial interlude of 'white-telephone' cinema and art-deco fascism — an anaesthetized interregnum of entrenched and barely contested dictatorship. For music in Italy they remained years relatively unpressured by ideology. The Venetian Biennale's Festival di Musica Contemporanea began in 1930; Florence's Maggio musicale in 1933, with significant non-Italian participation. Its general secretary, the Turin critic Guido Gatti, editor of the journal that would become *La rassegna musicale*, was a staunch supporter of new music, and urged Dallapiccola to submit his *Rapsodia* for voice and chamber orchestra to the 1934 Viennese Emil-Hertzka competition for young composers, whose jury, including Berg and Webern, Egon Wellesz and Ernst Křenek, selected the piece. The summer of 1934 was a period of close political alignment between Vienna and Rome, as Mussolini ostentatiously threatened to protect the threatened Austrian state (already verging toward its own 'Austrofascism') from being annexed by Germany. Perhaps because of its contained following and influence, modern music and its advocates could maintain their immunity longer from ideological pressure. This was soon to change, however.

Between 1935-1936 and 1940, politics became harsher and more intrusive. The war against Ethiopia, unleashed on October 20, 1935, and the self-righteous reaction to the League's ineffective economic sanctions against Italy led to a brief rallying to the regime by many artists and intellectuals who had remained relatively apolitical. It did not require the effusiveness of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's manifesto on the occasion of the war — «War is beautiful because it combines the gunfire, the cannonades, the cease-fire, the scents, and the stench of putrefaction into a symphony»[4] — or a long-term ideological conviction to yield to outraged patriotism. As the composer's widow, Laura Dallapiccola, wrote to the French scholar, Pierre Michel, shortly before her death, artists reacted to the League's half-way economic sanctions of 1936 with chauvinistic indignation even were they not convinced fascists[5]. Over the next years, artists and intellectuals had to confront ever more nationalistic and harsher politics as Mussolini sent troops to Spain on behalf of Franco and aligned himself with Hitler's Germany, even accepting the annexation of Austria in 1938, and enacting antisemitic racial laws in autumn 1938 along the lines of Germany's ugly

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Dallapiccola, Cologne, Gitarre+Laute, 1984; Michel, Pierre. *Luigi Dallapiccola*, Geneva, Editions Contrechamps, 1996; Vlad, Roman. *Luigi Dallapiccola*, English translation by Cynthia Jolly, Milan, Suvini Zerboni, 1957. We were able to consult the insightful study of Fearn, Raymond. *The Music of Luigi Dallapiccola*, Rochester (NY), University of Rochester Press, 2003 (Eastman Studies in Music) only after drafting this essay.

4. Quoted from Benjamin, Walter. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in: *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, New York, Schocken Books, 1969, p. 241.

5. Michel, Pierre. *Op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 29-30.

policies. (Dallapiccola, meanwhile, in defiance of the emerging antisemitic policies had married his companion Laura Coen Luzzatto on April 30. In a later note on his conversion to antifascism, however, he attributed his unease to Italy's bellicose international stance[6].) The 1939 'Pact of Steel' with Germany, the end of Anglo-French appeasement, the outbreak of war over Poland in September, and finally Italy's entry in June 1940, ended whatever traces of Italian ambiguity persisted. Mussolini's policies, of course, proved disastrous for the country and the regime. Over the next five years of political and 'racial' persecution, of military humiliations, with Italians dying in Africa and in Russia and eventually at home, of clamorous defeat and occupation, a new generation of artists and intellectuals began the process of implicit detachment from the institutions and spirit of official culture[7]. Dallapiccola's evolution would exemplify this process of what in Germany would become known as 'inner emigration'.

DALLAPICCOLA, CASELLA, AND THE PATHS TO MODERNISM IN THE MID-1930S

To understand the influence and the limits that ideology might exert on musical composition and reception during the 1930s and early '40s, it is revealing to contrast Dallapiccola's non-conformism not with outright musical traditionalists or politically committed fascists, but with the hedged and cautious receptivity to modernism on the part of the older, well-placed Alfredo Casella. Casella's often ambiguous receptivity to modern music usefully reveals how musical choices seemed charged politically. So, too, did the related musical controversies in which he was often conspicuously involved. The issues included the importance of earlier Italian achievements in instrumental music as opposed to opera; the insistence on 'neoclassical' order as opposed to an allegedly decadent Romanticism; the

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[6]. See DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. 'Prime composizioni corali (1961)', in: ID. *Parole e musica, op. cit.* (see note 2), pp. 380-382. Jürg Stenzl has insisted on Dallapiccola's early enthusiasm for fascism before the racial laws of 1938. See his survey of music and politics, STENZL, Jürg. *Von Giacomo Puccini zu Luigi Nono. Italienische Musik 1922-1952: Faschismus - Resistenza - Republik*, Buren, Frits Knuf, 1990, pp. 153-159. Stenzl's key to interpretation of *Volo di notte* is the discrepancy between a still fascistic political consciousness and a musical affinity for the avantgarde (p. 155). Stenzl may overstate the enthusiasm of the composer for fascism before 1938. MICHEL, Pierre. *Op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 29-30, presents contradictory testimonies. He cites Goffredo Petrassi's 1990 radio interview attributing a zealous fascist politics to Dallapiccola. But he also cites Laura Dallapiccola's correspondence, which describes the young composer's attitude as relatively apolitical or pre-political, i.e. accepting the regime as a given without any real questioning. He grew up with the pro-nationalistic sentiments of the Italian population in Habsburg Istria and retained these until he saw where nationalism was leading the country in the late 1930s. For a strong argument that the early opera was imbued with fascist values see EARLE, Ben. 'The Avant-Garde Artist as Superman: Aesthetics and Politics in Dallapiccola's *Volo di notte*', in the present book.

[7]. See, for example, ZANGRANDI, Ruggero. *Il lungo viaggio attraverso il fascismo: contributo alla storia di una generazione*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1962 (I fatti e le idee, 36).

openness to broader 'international' musical currents, as opposed to a narrower nationalist reception; and the significance of atonal music. In frequent public statements, Casella insisted on a neoclassical program until the mid-1930s, opposed the primacy of opera and most memorably was a firm champion of Italian openness to musical currents, and contacts abroad. He was, however, reluctant to accept atonal music as of long-term significance although he would move to have it performed in Italy and understood that his younger colleague Dallapiccola was an important talent. Dallapiccola, who was hardly a public figure until the mid-thirties and only rarely entered written debates, rejected neoclassicism, was unprepared to dismiss opera, worked increasingly in a atonal and later twelve-tone idiom, but shared Casella's commitment to introducing Italian audiences and composers to the exponents of modernism abroad.

At a moment when Dallapiccola's own compositions were just finding an audience, Casella represented the chief advocate of international participation and receptivity to the European avant-garde[8]. Casella helped to program Schönberg at the Maggio musicale and remained contemptuous of the mediocre composers and critics who exploited fascist ideology to «combattere l'arte nuova con mezzi provinciali di diffamazione e di denigrazione, oppure di derisione»[9]. Both men remained convinced that Italian music must keep up with broader international trends, and toward the end of his life Casella deputized Dallapiccola to renew Italy's representation at the International Society for Contemporary Music. Nonetheless, Casella shrank from open ideological conflict, gave lip service to the regime's rehabilitation of national culture, and tried to channel modernism within safe limits both on grounds of aesthetic preferences and to avoid provoking the philofascist critics and musicians who condemned new trends as a betrayal of Italian traditions and the new order. In short he remained a composer and musical entrepreneur of the *juste milieu*, aesthetically open, politically cautious.

Dallapiccola, recognized as full of promise by the older composer, embarked on a more venturesome, though curiously hermetic aesthetic and personal path with greater political risks. The end of the First World War allowed the young composer to travel to Vienna and participate in Schönberg's small society for avant-garde music. Medieval religious texts would be combined with an emerging modal then twelve-tone compositional technique; the Viennese combination of solo soprano (assigned ever more daring vocal leaps) and

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[8]. Alfredo Casella to Luigi Dallapiccola, May 28, 1946, in: *Luigi Dallapiccola. Saggi, testimonianze, carteggio, biografia e bibliografia*, edited by Fiamma Nicolodi, Milan, Suvini Zerboni, 1975, p. 71.

[9]. Casella, Alfredo. 'Problemi della musica contemporanea italiana', in: *La rassegna musicale*, VIII/3 (maggio-giugno 1935 [XIII]), pp. 161-173: 172. Casella published two almost identical versions of this survey within two years. The second, 'Problemi dell musica contemporanea in Italia', in: *Rivista musicale italiana*, XLI/4-5 (1937 [XV]), pp. 460-469, was the text of a lecture to the Viennese *Kulturbund*, Nov. 17, 1936. Henceforth cited respectively as 'Problemi (1935)', *Rassegna*, and 'Problemi (1937)', *Rivista*.

chamber ensemble steered between the traditionalists' paeans to opera and Casella's hopes for a revival of instrumental music[10].

Neither of these men spoke for a return to tradition or the defense of Italian musical achievement as did the ten signators (Ottorino Respighi and Ildebrando Pizzetti among them) of the December 1932 manifesto, attacking the «strombazzature atonali e pluritonali, dell'oggettivismo e dell'espressionismo [...] quest'arte che non dovrebbe avere e non ha nessun contenuto umano, che non vuole esser e non è che gioco meccanico e arzigogolo cerebrale»[11]. Gian Francesco Malipiero and Casella were the clearest targets. Pizzetti had quarreled with Casella in 1913-1914 as to the authority of Verdi, and Pizzetti and Malipiero had clashed in 1921-1922 about the role of Romanticism in conservatory curricula.

Dallapiccola heard the fall 1932 broadcast of Malipiero's *Torneo notturno* as a revelation (just as *Der fliegende Holländer* at age 14, and *Pierrot lunaire* in 1924 had been epiphanies for him), and right after his own *Tre studi* was presented at the Festival di Musica Contemporanea at the second Venice Biennale in September. His *Partita* (1930-1932) performed in Florence in January 1933 revealed a debt to Mahler (whose First Symphony he had heard in Vienna in 1930) with its burlesque movement, and to Schönberg's Second Quartet of 1908, with its solo soprano, daring atonality and theatrical passages: a challenge to Casella's calls for neoclassical and sunny classicism.

Neo-classicism had, in fact, become the slogan of the serious composers who sought to combine artistic independence within the limits of resurgent Italian nationalism after the First World War. As even Casella would later admit, it became an almost mantra-like summons to a moderate sense of innovation, one, however, designed to set clear limits on musical experimentation. When at the end of the 1920s he sought to publicize his concepts of neo-classical order (and his own composition in this spirit, *Scarlattiana*) — in part as a rejection of an atonalism he believed had peaked —, Schönberg remained detached, but Theodor Adorno responded by declaring it a repressive musical program in the service of repressive rightist politics[12]. In fact, the fascist musical slogans of the 1930s, as exemplified

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[10]. KÄMPER, Dietrich. *Gefangenschaft* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 16-24, for Dallapiccola's early musical development. For an alternative emphasis on the distinctiveness of Dallapiccola's dodecaphonic development, stressing inspirations from earlier Italian traditions as well as tendencies in the modern novel (Proust and Joyce) rather than Schönbergian rationality, see SANTI, Piero. 'Dallapiccola e la cultura musicale italiana del primo Novecento', in: *Dallapiccola. Letture e prospettive. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi: Empoli-Firenze, 16-19 febbraio 1995*, edited by Mila De Santis, Milan-Lucca, Ricordi-LIM, 1997 (Le Sfere, 28), pp. 89-100. Fiamma Nicolodi provides a meticulous chronological reconstruction in 'Luigi Dallapiccola e la Scuola di Vienna. Note in margine a una scelta', in: NICOLODI, Fiamma. *Orizzonti musicali italo-europei 1860-1980*, Rome, Bulzoni, 1990 (Biblioteca di cultura, 406), pp. 231-282. Also Dallapiccola's own well-known 'Sulla strada della dodecafonia (1950)', in: DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. *Parole e musica*, *op. cit.* (see note 2), pp. 448-463.

[11]. Cited in NICOLODI, Fiamma. *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, Fiesole, Discanto, 1984 (Contrappunti, 19), pp. 141-143. See also pp. 10-11.

[12]. See the excellent discussion of Casella and the controversy over neo-classicism in *ibidem*, pp. 235-271: 246-250. The discussion peaked on an international level in 1929 with Casella's article '*Scarlattiana*', in the

in choices of programming and the activity of the Ministry of Popular Culture would stress more populist offerings for the musical theatre (*melodramma*) and leave Casella's neoclassical program irrelevant and isolated. By the 1930s Casella was devoting major effort to defending the importance of international musical culture. In the spring of 1933, he addressed the first Maggio musicale and the 'Primo congresso internazionale di musica' with a resounding rejection of cultural autarky (at a moment the regime was emphasizing policies of economic autarky). Still, the older composer was a political trimmer. Surveying the achievements of contemporary Italian music in the mid-1930s, Casella praised the contribution of fascism to Italian arts and music such that «raggiunsero — liberandosi da ogni residuo di influenza straniera — quella totale indipendenza di pensiero e di forma»[13]. He endeavored to walk a fine line. Although music had to follow national forms, these could not be simply imposed:

> [...] non può essere in nessun caso il risultato di uno sforzo di volontà[14]. [...] L'ultimo dei grandi problemi di attualità per la nostra musica — e senza dubbio il più importante — è quello del rapporto diretto che intercorre fra la musica e la vita politica e sociale che ci circonda: problema che esprime la necessità di creare una musica che corrisponda al clima fascista della nazione fascista. È un problema delicatissimo[15].

Casella mocked those musicians who had been non-entities before the war and now hoped to make their career by donning a black shirt. Not they, but a new generation of young composers was restoring the greatness of Italian music. But they were doing so by returning to an austere classicism, not by spurious innovations:

> Assistiamo oggi ad un vero e proprio ritorno alla normalità in arte [...] la calma rinasce in musica. Chiuso il ciclo dell'atonalità, come terminato è parimenti nel campo pittorico il periodo cubista [...] Il *jazz*, che parve per lunghi anni dover costituire la principale salvezza della musica, è oggi rientrato nelle sue originarie funzioni di arte pratica limitata al *dancing* [...] L'era della musica complicata è finita [...] Tramontato quel falso modernismo[16].

Viennese journal *Anbruch*, XI/1 (1929), pp. 26-28, explaining the concepts behind his own piece *Scarlattiana*, defending the need for 'order' in art, and incautiously declaring the end of the atonal 'intermezzo'. The review invited responses: Křenek criticized the contrast between romantic disorder and classical order and the need for revivals ('Zu Casellas Aufsatz *Scarlattiana*', in: *ibidem*, XI/2 [1929], pp. 79-80); Adorno compared the scheme of tonic-dominant with the fascist corporativist hierarchy of industrialists and workers. ('Atonales Intermezzo?', in: *ibidem*, XI/5 [1929], pp. 187-193). Schönberg wrote a thorough dissent later, 'Il fascismo non è un articolo d'esportazione (1935)', in: Schönberg, Arnold. *Analisi e pratica musicale. Scritti 1909-1950*, Italian translation by Giacomo Manzoni, edited by Ivan Vojtěch, Turin, Einaudi, 1974 (Saggi).

[13]. 'Problemi (1935)', *Rassegna*, p. 162.

[14]. 'Problemi (1937)', *Rivista*, p. 463.

[15]. *Ibidem*, p. 466.

[16]. 'Problemi (1935)', *Rassegna*, p. 171; *cfr.* the somewhat less explicit attack on atonalism — but the clear

Despite such judgments, Casella was no cultural reactionary or musical censor. The lines of opposition were far more complex. Dallapiccola began as the more politically innocent, revealing little concern about the nature of the regime. Moreover, Casella sponsored modernist composers even as he sought to guide them toward more classical and less radical forms of absolute music or *musica pura*. He supported the festivals of contemporary music in Venice and highlighted the avant-garde compositions of Berg and Schönberg, even if they were foreign to his own preferences. In the face of a stentorian traditionalism, Casella intervened for those whose work, as the modernist critic Luigi Rognoni wrote, had been systematically excluded from the repertory ever since the *Pierrot* performance of 1924, «con uno slancio di ignoranza e di imbecillità veramente commovente». He felt it important to have even those compositions performed in Italy from which «la sua sensibilità e il suo gusto di compositore sono completamente lontani»[17]. The real enemy was an ideologically enforced provincialism. Casella, recalled Dallapiccola later, taught us that political boundaries had little or nothing to do with art[18].

Dallapiccola welcomed his older colleague's internationalism but discounted his critiques of romanticism and avant-garde music. Whereas Casella wrote off atonal development and emphasized the post-1918 revival of neoclassicism, Dallapiccola remained inspired by the Romantic tradition and felt the insistence on neo-classicism was a threat to innovation. He would later recall, «Si, dans le *Pierrot lunaire*, j'ai eu l'impression de envisager l'avenir de la musique (nous étions en 1924) [...] je dois à Gustav Mahler (1930) de ne pas avoir céde aux attributs du néo-classicisme», at a moment when being neo-classical (he cited Malipiero) «constituait un passeport san-pareil au sein des organisations musicales de l'Europe». Mahler «était l'homme [...] qui voulait exprimer à tout prix— coûte que coûte — la tragédie de notre temps»[19]. In 1934 — at the 12th Music Festival of the International Society for New Music — Dallapiccola could hear Berg's *Lyrische Suite*, and in September in Venice he met the composer himself and heard Hermann Scherchen conduct his aria *Der Wein* with its «malinconia senza nome»[20]. Dallapiccola dedicated his *Divertimento in quattro*

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reference in the Vienna lecture to Austro-German 'subversion' — in 'Problemi (1937)', *Rivista*, p. 467: «È innegabile che l'epoca attuale è, in arte, caratterizzata da un ampio 'ritorno alla normalità', che è comune a tutte le nazioni e che si verifica persino in quei paesi che in altro momento sono stati all'avanguardia del sovversivismo artistico [...] Oggi si può coraggiosamente affermare che si è chiusa l'epoca della musica complicata, dell'arte incomprensibile».

17. ROGNONI, Luigi. 'Il quinto Festival Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea', in: *Rivista musicale italiana*, XVI/6 (1937), p. 583. At this festival, «finalmente il ghiaccio è stato rotto e per questo dobbiamo ancora render grazie a Casella [...]».

18. DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. 'Casella maestro (1947)', in: ID. *Parole e musica, op. cit.* (see note 2), pp. 337-339: 337.

19. ID. 'Parmi les dates les plus importantes de mon développement musical [...]', Ms LD.LV.24, after October 1951, Item 392, in: *Fondo Luigi Dallapiccola. Autografi, scritti a stampa, bibliografia critica con un elenco dei corrispondenti*, edited by Mila De Santis, Florence, Edizioni Polistampa, 1995 (Gabinetto G. P. Vieusseux, Archivio Contemporaneo «A. Bonsanti». Inventari, 5), p. 112.

20. ID. 'Ricordo di Hermann Scherchen *(Berlino, 21 giugno 1891 - Firenze, 12 giugno 1966)*', in: ID. *Parole e*

esercizi (soprano, flute and piccolo, oboe, clarinet, viola and cello), based on early dance forms, to Casella, who would conduct it at the1935 Prague festival of the International Society for New Music (ISNM). The youthful composer himself attended and returned, singularly impressed by Webern and encouraged to venture further toward dodecaphony[21]. Rognoni hailed Dallapiccola's *Tre laudi* at the 1937 Venice Festival as the most important new piece work presented along with pieces by Bartók and Schönberg[22].

For Casella, the anti-romantic reaction of the early post-1918 period was less an aesthetic choice than a political one. The real meaning of the anti-romantic movement conducted by our generation, those coming of age after the First World War, he wrote, «era in realtà una vasta battaglia non contro quanto il Romanticismo aveva in sé di grande e di durabile, ma invece contro la sua decadenza e soprattutto contro la falsa tradizione create dal tardo Ottocento, e contro la retorica e l'accademia dell'epoca piccolo-borghese e demo-liberale dell'ante-guerra»[23]. This rationale was probably a tactical retreat on Casella's part. By the late 1930s (as Casella himself admitted) the classical-romantic controversy had spent its force; but the defense of modernism was still crucial. And the younger spokesmen for modernism — Luigi Rognoni and Ferdinando Ballo — condemned neoclassicism as a trivial reaffirmation of the *status quo*. Dallapiccola, they understood, was no mere neo-classicist:

> Dallapiccola [...] non va messo sul piano neoclassico: giacché egli non si adatta a rifare, sia pure per esigenza polemica, i modi di Bach, o a copiare Frescobaldi, ma sente vibrare nella musica dei primitivi nuovi timbri e nuovi colori che nascono dalla sua sensibilità di artista moderno[24].

In fact the avant-garde seemed to be winning rightful recognition among critics from the mid-1930s on, despite the general tendency toward a xenophobic autarky. Sympathetic critiques of Schönberg and the Second Viennese School appeared in the *Rivista musicale italiana* and Gatti's *La rassegna musicale* after 1935, along with harsh critiques of Casella's earlier hobby-horse of neoclassicism. Casella's own programming for the festivals of contemporary music in Venice highlighted the avant-garde compositions of Berg and Schönberg, even if they were foreign to his own preferences. Responding to Alfredo Parente's lament about the «cattivi musicisti [at the 1939 Florence Festival of Modern Music] [...] all'avanguardia

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Musica; *op. cit.* (see note 2), pp. 171-177: 174-175; Kämper, Dietrich. *Gefangenschaft* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 3), p. 16.

[21]. Dallapiccola, Luigi. 'Incontro con Anton Webern *(Pagine di diario)*', *op. cit.* (see note 2), p. 230.

[22]. Rognoni, Luigi. 'Il quinto Festival Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea', *op. cit.* (see note 17), p. 565.

[23]. 'Problemi (1935)', *Rassegna*, p. 168.

[24]. Rognoni, Luigi. 'Luigi Dallapiccola, *Sei cori di Michelangelo Buonarroti il giovane* (Prima Serie)', in: *Rivista musicale italiana*, xi/3-4 (1936), pp. 340-341.

della rivoluzione tecnica e dei suoi sviluppi», Dallapiccola retorted: «Ma non conosce egli quei musicisti, infinitamente più cattivi, che sono alla retroguardia?»[25].

The historian of culture can usefully distinguish between two different agendas and mechanisms for shaping an aesthetics for fascism. The German National Socialist authorities, at different levels, from Goebbels on down, imposed an exclusion (with some exceptions) of modernist (and, of course, Jewish) composers and performers as well as the stifling of critical debate. In Italy, fascism led to insistence that idealized expressions of national traditions be safely immunized from foreign or avant-garde influence. In both countries, the self-policing of the musical community was more important than ideological pronouncements of party officials. (Of course, distinctions can break down at the margins, still the contrast is instructive.) Whereas in National Socialist Germany, spokesmen for the regime had developed an agenda for music — one based not only on racial criteria but on a generation of debate over modernism — in Italy it was more artists and critics who sought to mobilize the regime to enforce their own rivalries. As Dallapiccola himself later recalled,

> In Italia non ci furono divieti veri e propri, in questo senso: tutt'al più qualche *esteta* (critico-compositore, si capisce) accusò pubblicamente l'uno o l'altro dei compositori cosiddetti d'avanguardia di *internazionalismo*, il che, nel linguaggio corrente di allora significava *antifascista* o, più esattamente, *comunista*[26].

Official aesthetic preferences were harder to enforce south of the Alps and remained contested or debated with less risk. In April 1938, Goebbels himself wrote to the Italian Minister of Popular Culture, Dino Alfieri at the time, to assure Italian support for Germany's stance against 'decadent' music and 'pernicious influences'; but the Ministry's General Directory for Theater and Music moved slowly and partially, allowing Bruno Walter to conduct at the Maggio musicale the same spring, excluding Jewish participation in 1940 and enemy (modern Anglo-Saxon or Russian) works after 1941[27]. As late as 1940, a sympathetic review of Hindemith could appear in the *Rivista musicale italiana* despite recognition that he had been ostracized in National Socialist Germany and *La rassegna musicale* could explore Schönberg's work in 1942. That same year the Ministry could sponsor Berg's *Wozzeck* (to be

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[25]. DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. 'In margine al recente Congresso Internazionale di Musica di Firenze', in: *La rassegna musicale*, XVII/6 (Giugno 1939-XVII), pp. 288-291: 289; and PARENTE, Alfredo. ['Risposta del Prof. Alfredo Parente al maestro Dallapiccola'], in: *ibidem*, pp. 291-295. See KÄMPER, Dietrich. *Gefangenschaft* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 27-28 on the new appreciation of the Vienna School.

[26]. DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. 'Sulla strada della dodecafonia (1950)', *op. cit.* (see note 10), p. 451.

[27]. NICOLODI, Fiamma. *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, *op. cit.* (see note 11), pp. 26-28. Nicolodi does point out that particular theaters were dropping Jewish artists and composers even before official enactment of the racial laws: the discussion of Walter's appearance revealed the rising tide of official antisemitism. See p. 26 n13.

praised in *Musica d'oggi*) and Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin*[28]. Stravinsky was performed and discussed appreciatively; When the influential voices blustered and complained, the implicit threat was less one of a public denunciation that portended harsher penalties (a Soviet as well as National Socialist weapon) than an equivalent of artistic *confino*, or marginalization — so long as the racial issue was not involved. The racial laws of 1938, however, made the persecution of Dallapiccola inevitable no matter how apolitical the composer had remained hitherto, although a direct physical threat to Laura remained suspended until the German occupation of northern Italy after September 1943. 1938 would transform the dangers of confinement from the psychological to the political and the physical. Explaining his long silence to Casella in 1946, Dallapiccola wrote:

> [...] vorrei tu pensassi però un momento [...] all'inferno che è stata la mia vita dal 1938 in poi. Che cosa potevo fare? Vedevo che intorno a me tutto si chiudeva, a poco a poco, ma inesorabilmente. E allora mi sono chiuso più che mai in me stesso, cercando soltanto nel lavoro e nella famiglia quello che altrove mi sembrava di non poter trovare[29].

This experience of isolation remained the major difference between Casella's experience of the late fascist era and Dallapiccola's. Neither was a resistor; neither was a political beneficiary, and as Mussolini opted for a grandiose and aggressive nationalism, both composers discovered their shared sense of loss. Nonetheless, the choices that Dallapiccola made, whether personal in the case of his marriage or musical in his resolute experimentation, assured a far more radical sense of isolation. The impact of politics on an individual artist is never a simple one, but the twilight totalitarianism of 1938-1945 in Italy certainly confirmed Dallapiccola's more striking capacity for innovation. Age matters when it comes to the intersection with history. Casella came of age when the crucial issue for composers seemed to be renewing a national musical role for Italy before and after the First World War. By the second decade of the fascist regime that priority seemed to have been resolved by one program or another for different composers, writers, and political patrons. As he reached maturity, therefore, Dallapiccola no longer had to be preoccupied by validating Italian music; the challenge was musical creativity and innovation more generally. For all the conformity encouraged by fascism, it was the semi-openness of the musical

[28]. 'Il nuovo Hindemith' and 'Vita Musicale' [unsigned], in: *Rivista musicale italiana*, XLIV/5 (1940), pp. 414-416. Reviewing the music with enthusiasm, the anonymous author sought to explain that Hindemith was not ostracized because of dodecaphonic heresies (which in any case he explained had medieval origins). Rather his rupture with the «morale musicale» of the preceding generation was more that of a cynical or playful effort «per spezzare i vincoli fatali d'una tradizione schiacciante». On the Schönberg reception, see Sachs, Harvey. *Music in Fascist Italy*, London, George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987; New York, W.W. Norton, 1988, p. 198.

[29]. Luigi Dallapiccola to Alfredo Casella, May 31, 1946, in: *Luigi Dallapiccola. Saggi, testimonianze, carteggio, biografia e bibliografia, op. cit.* (see note 8), p. 72.

regime until the early 1940s that allowed the younger composer to have transformative encounters with the music of Mahler, Berg, and Webern, which impelled him beyond the effort to rework the Italian musical heritage that seemed so necessary for Malipiero and Casella. At the same time, it was the regime's repressiveness and militarization that confirmed his trajectory.

SYMPHONY, *MELODRAMMA* AND THE IDEOLOGICAL STAKES OF GENRE

Issues of 'race' aside, was there a correlation between ideology and the reception of modernism? Granted the Italian regime did not try to silence the enthusiasts of the avant-garde, was there any logical alliance between Italian fascism and forms of music? The musical spokesmen for the totalitarian regimes of the 1930s and 1940s all criticized 'formalism' and spoke out for harmonic exercises readily acceptable by the masses. But as efforts to reinvigorate national traditions (and the Soviet regime, too, would turn toward Russian nationalism as war with Hitler threatened), each of the party-states emphasized art forms they thought particularly expressive of the national genius.

In German musical discourse, it was the symphony that over the course of the nineteenth century had come to embody the genius of the nation. Wagner's operas might remain a supreme attainment, but the long tradition from Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and Bruckner was a collective national artistic achievement without parallel. The symphony, moreover, served as a metaphor of group harmony that eminently suited the fascist concept of forging a grandiose collective whole under the authoritative leadership of a single commanding leader. Alfred Rosenberg and Goebbels used the analogy of the symphony from the 1920s; by the time the Nazis came to power Goebbels invoked the 'orchestra principle' to suggest that each participant played his own instrument and part according to plan under one director. As Hermann Ambrosius, a Pfitzner student and radio planner advised, operas were accessible but the symphony «bestows shape to the emotional life of the German soul in a much purer and more immediate manner [...] The inner contemplation demanded by the Führer [...] must inevitably lead German composers to the greatest and most beautiful creation of the pure German spirit [...] to the symphony»[30]. When nationalist and then Nazi critics discussed great operatic achievement, they discovered that opera offered the structural coherence of the symphony. Over the course of the 1930s, German musical commentators in effect strove to subsume the operatic qualities of work they admired, whether a music drama by Wagner or Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, into a concept of absolute or symphonic music. Underneath the politically appropriate

[30]. AMBROSIUS, Hermann. 'Die moderne Sinfonie im deutschen Musikleben', in: *Deutsche Musik-Zeitung*, XXXV/5 (May 1934), p. 36.

operas — so Wagner enthusiasts had affirmed from early in the twentieth century and so would Pfitzner's and Hindemith's champions insist in the 1930s — were symphonies waiting to emerge. Structure was key: for rightist and then National Socialist musical commentators, the symphony represented a coherent sculpted musical whole[31].

Insofar as Italian composers and critics praised the symphonic tradition, they looked to an earlier body of pre-Romantic work and appealed to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century instrumental achievement to counter the pro-fascist apologists for nineteenth and early twentieth-century opera. As was the case in Germany, the debate over genre was hardly new in the 1930s. Casella's 'generation of 1880' had embraced a national populism before the First World War and called then for a revival (a musical Risorgimento) of Italy's sixteenth and seventeenth-century polyphonic and symphonic traditions[32]. For Italian musical conservatives, on the other hand, the long operatic tradition of *melodramma* represented their country's counterpart to the Austrian and German symphony. Under fascism, and indeed from the death of Verdi on, opera had become a national icon. The aging Mascagni, champion of verismo and one of the regime's trophy composers (though tiresome even for the Duce), pronounced opera to be Italy's national musical genre above all others. The most militant *ras*, former Party Secretary Farinacci, insisted on staging an official Verdi festival in his home province of Cremona. Casella, however, emphatically rejected Mascagni's claim that Italy's natural talent lay in opera. The nation, he insisted, was fortunately recovering its earlier attainments in *musica pura*, (including symphonies and chamber music): uniting the symphonic and lyrical traditions in the harmonious coexistence they had allegedly shared in the seventeenth and eighteenth century before their long eclipse by opera. Opera, for its critics in the thirties, had little to do with Risorgimento vigor, as the fascists claimed. Rather it was the sentimental creation of a humanist petty bourgeoisie.

This sort of allegedly sociopolitical analysis allowed the dissenting critics to couch their rejection of melodrama in terms that the fascists themselves had used to condemn democratic liberalism. Whereas German nationalist critics had often condemned modernist musical trends as embodying allegedly alien Jewish traits — a facile use of counterpoint or a reliance on thematic progression rather than a deeper structural unity — Italian critics, fascist and non-fascist, deployed concepts of class and status rather than race to marginalize the native musical output they thought inferior. Such a sociopolitical exclusion followed from the contested interpretations of the Risorgimento, which was itself an ambiguous legacy in the ideological conflicts of the twentieth century. For critics of fascism, the Italian

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31. *Cfr.* Painter, Karen. 'Symphonic Ambitions, Operatic Redemption: *Mathis der Maler* and *Palestrina* in the Third Reich', in: *The Musical Quarterly*, lxxxv/1 (2001), pp. 117-166. For a survey of the concept of structure in the postwar period, when it took on leftwing implications, see Kämper, Dietrich. '«Struttura»: un concetto chiave nella discussione estetica del Novecento', in: *Musica e storia*, x/1 (2002), pp. 355-367.

32. Nicolodi, Fiamma. *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, *op. cit.* (see note 11), p. 128.

national revival was interpreted as a democratic movement with a broad popular base. Many fascists tried merely to coopt this idealized Risorgimento revolutionary nationalism as a pedigree for their own party. But others stressed that fascism was a movement to roll back democratic excesses, and they tended to praise a true national elite and condemn an allegedly 'petty bourgeois', sometimes materialist, self-interested and parochial lower middle class culture. This view of an Italy that had to be redeemed from a vulgar mass politics was in turn easily adopted by both radical and reactionary cultural critics. The 'verismo' or naturalism that had been welcomed as a liberation from pseudo-historicist opera at the turn of the century, could itself appear as evidence of a socio-cultural decline into banality for Casella.

Dallapiccola, however, was unprepared to jettison the legacy of opera. Born two decades after Casella, he had escaped the bruising controversies with Mascagni, or the stultifying fascist compositions of Umberto Giordano. Moreover, he had an early and abiding natural affection for opera and had absorbed Wagner by age fourteen during the family's political exile in Graz. «Perché amo sopratutto l'opera? Perché mi sembra il mezzo a me più adatto a esporre il mio pensiero»[33]. Opera ransomed 'pure' ideas to necessarily 'impure' productions because the theater, more than the concert hall, remained hostage to so many possible imperfections and distractions. And for all the earlier strictures on the part of the avant-garde of the 1930s, twenty years after the end of fascism, Dallapiccola would find kind words for opera as «melodramma». *Melodramma*, musical theater built around human aspirations, failings and passions, had appropriately expressed the heroic aspirations of the Risorgimento. *Melodramma* filled the gap in Italian literature left by the absence of a true romancticism. Verdi had fused the personal and political, instantiated conflicts of authority and liberty in sung drama.

> Non c'è un altro periodo della storia della musica italiana che possa essere paragonato a quello del melodramma: mai, né prima né dopo, il popolo si trovò così profondamente, così decisamente all'unisono con il compositore[34].

Verdi's diminished sevenths for moments of shock and horror and malediction; his brass for triumphs, his staccato for conspiracies, served as the composer's Homeric epithets; they made the great age of *melodramma* into the «*periodo epico* della musica

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[33]. DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. 'Appunti sull'opera contemporanea (1960)' [originally published in *Opera*, London, XII/1 (1961)], in: ID. *Parole e musica, op. cit.* (see note 2), p. 119. On the teenage absorption of Wagner, and the decision «to devote myself entirely to music» after hearing *Der fliegende Holländer*, see ID. 'The Genesis of the *Canti di prigionia* and *Il prigioniero*: An Autobiographical Fragment', in: *The Musical Quarterly*, XXXIX/3 (July 1953), p. 360 [today 'Genesi dei *Canti di prigionia* e del *Prigioniero* (1950-1953)', in: ID. *Parole e Musica, op. cit.*, pp. 399-417: 405].

[34]. ID. 'Parole e musica nel melodramma (1961-1969)', in: ID. *Parole e Musica, op. cit.* (see note 2), pp. 67.

italiana»[35]. But that heroic age was gone; it could not be wished back into being. Its music was a closed chapter. Viable opera had to be constructed on a new basis.

Difficult as it was to find new inspiration for vocal music outside the stale framework of *melodramma*, the younger artist could see the limits of Casella's program for finding inspiration in early *musica pura*. The line between recuperating early music for purposes of genuine aesthetic renewal and merely pressing it into sentimental service — as had earlier Respighi (*Antiche arie e danze*), Casella himself (*Scarlattiana*) or even Dallapiccola's admired Malipiero (*Gabrieliana, La cimarosiana, Tre commedie goldoniane*) — was a precarious one. Finding the genius of the people could too easily become merely *mode retro*. Dallapiccola's answer, his supporters felt, was to retrieve early-music vocal traditions but renew them in an uncompromising form. Forms genuinely rooted in a historical period deserved respect, but they could not be simply recycled. Dallapiccola's music, wrote one admirer, «ci sembra l'unica visione concreta d'una *musica sacra* come *musica moderna*»[36]. Vocal music would be at the center of this project: the human voice increasingly left on its own, in terms of thematic matter as it faced inscrutable and arbitrary authority, and on its own musically as it experimented with all the harmonically unmoored choices that first modal and then dodecaphonic composition allowed.

The Politics of Voice

In retrospect one can discern that the operatic creations of the late fascist period allowed Dallapiccola to take the political themes of Verdi without concession to the *melodramma*, staging Carlo, in effect, without Eboli or Elizabeth. His earlier work allowed him to be seen as a rising star of modernism, to be celebrated as such by non-fascist interpreters. He could redeem opera from imputations of petit bourgeois humanism.

Still, the issue for the younger Dallapiccola was less opera as such than voice and even sound, as he would admit by 1940. If the regime's stalwarts and musical traditionalists insistently praised the legacy of Italian opera, those open to international modernism were not willing to surrender vocal music to *melodramma*. The nature of vocal music as such, and not just opera, was itself a stake in the aesthetic struggles under fascism. Italian musical ideology was to incorporate a struggle over the meaning of voice. For in a sense the

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[35]. *Ibidem*, pp. 75-76.

[36]. Rognoni, Luigi. 'Il quinto Festival Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea', *op. cit.* (see note 17), p. 585. *Cfr.* Rognoni's appreciation of the *Sei cori* in the 'Luigi Dallapiccola, *Sei cori di Michelangelo Buonarroti il giovane* (Prima Serie)', *op. cit.* (see note 24), pp. 340-341: «Sono queste pagine di un giovane musicista che sente in modo prepotente e geniale le possibilità della tradizione italiana inserita nel gusto più ampio e attuale di una tradizione europea alla quale convergono, per una decisa difesa dal caos della retorica, del dilettantismo della falsa accademia neoclassica, i migliori artisti dell'epoca nostra [...]».

issue would become: what purposes did voice serve. Without voice, the fascists felt music was incomplete. But could the avant-garde recapture voice without lending it to fascist purposes? No matter how ardently Casella might champion instrumental music, and no matter how blatantly the fascists sought to ideologize opera, music that carried a political message required voice. But as the critic Ferdinando Ballo said, voice without any illusions of serenity, clarity or pure form — «illusione sgonfiatiasi», by the Second World War, Dallapiccola would recall, «e ora [...] piombata nel dimenticatoio»[37].

For Dallapiccola the choice for voice went back to the years 1932-1936, when he set six choruses from the poetry of Michelangelo Buonarroti the younger, a grand nephew of the sculptor and painter. As Dietrich Kämper observes, the choruses, based on baroque polyphony, drew a line against Casella's call for a sunny classicism and opted for the pessimism he found in Malipiero's work, then incorporated in the latter's opera undertaken with Luigi Pirandello, *La favola del figlio cambiato*. The composer described this as his last politically 'unencumbered work'. Ferdinando Ballo, who wrote a major appreciation of Dallapiccola's choral works in *La rassegna musicale* in 1937, focused on the *Sei cori* and his *Tre laudi*, some of which went back to 1929, but which the composer reworked and completed in March 1937 with a combination of diatonic and twelve-tone structures to underscore the themes of return and repentance. The score was almost immediately adapted into the major project of later 1937, an opera based on Saint-Exupéry's *Vol de nuit*[38] Kämper claims that this creative effort accompanied Dallapiccola's gnawing reassessment of fascist politics and his now open affiliation with the musical innovation of Alban Berg and following another revelation in 1935, of Anton Webern. The work coincided with the new receptivity on the part of Italy's leading musical journals and their editors for atonal music and their open critique of the older generation's neoclassical program[39]. At a moment, in short, when German musical criticism was being muzzled under Goebbels' orders, Italian criticism was becoming more open and feisty.

Nonetheless, as Earle documents elsewhere in this volume, *Volo di notte* is still imbued with sentiments that were Nietzschean or fascist commonplaces. At one level, it is an opera about the heroics of the solitary aviator and the resoluteness of the company director

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37. BALLO, Ferdinando. 'Musicisti del nostro tempo: Giovanni Salviucci', in: *La rassegna musicale*, X (1937), p. 11; DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. 'Prime composizioni corali (1961)', *op. cit.* (see note 6), p. 376; KÄMPER, Dietrich. *Gefangenschaft* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 3), p. 28.

38. On Dallapiccola's conversations with the author in Paris, in June 1937 to win his permission for the project, see DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. 'Due incontri con Antoine de Saint-Exupéry', in: ID. *Parole e musica*, *op. cit.* (see note 2), p. 156. For a valuable survey of the early reception of twelve-tone music in Italy see SOMIGLI, Paolo. '«Atonalità» e «Dodecafonia» in Italia nella prima metà del Novecento', in: *Musica e Storia*, X/1 (2002), pp. 331-354.

39. KÄMPER, Dietrich. *Gefangenschaft* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 27-28.

who must transcend humanitarian sentiments for the sake of an allegedly higher goal. The themes include existential heroism and male bonding, the summons to follow orders, and the loneliness of leadership — all fascistic enough, although the composer bitterly noted that the fascist critic for *Il popolo d'Italia* wrote that his opera undermined the heroic stance fascists sought to encourage[40]. But it is also a meditation on the limits of voice and communication. The central characters on stage are the director of a Buenos Aires airline, who has inaugurated and will persevere with dangerous night flights to expedite the mail, his radio dispatcher, and the wife of the flier buffeted by the tempest along his route. The messages exchanged between flyer and dispatcher are intense enough so that the latter becomes the operatic voice for the doomed flyer whose reports arrive only in Morse code. The pilot remains an implicit protagonist deprived of direct voice, his transcendent epiphany channeled through the dispatcher; neither can he be returned to safety.

Dallapiccola does not simply situate the drama onto an operatic plane, on which the range of human emotions has a musical language of its own, in large part historically determined. Rather, he expands the possibilities of sound production, drawing on the *Sprechstimme* of *Pierrot lunaire* and *Wozzeck*. As part of the score, Dallapiccola exploited four kinds of sound production, apart from operatic singing. With this, he pushes the limits of the human voice in music, erasing the old boundaries of operatic illusion and realism. The novel uses of the voice range from total freedom in pitch and rhythm, except coordination at the beginnings of measures, to rhythmic declamation on determined pitches with a trace of songlike qualities. The conflicts between mission and mere sentiment are recapitulated by male *Sprachgesang* against female singing.

Dallapiccola did not conceive of *Volo di notte* or *Il prigioniero* as musical melodramas. Musical innovation and text together made them abstract epics of struggle against the restrictions on human emancipation. Opera without melodrama was possible, of course, because of what was not present in Dallapiccola's concepts, namely the world of eros. The great themes of Verdi's 'private' world, jealousy and sexual passion, remain notably absent. Women are crucial figures of loyalty and, like the Madonna, stand for a world of humane and intimate — but not sexual — attachment. In *Volo di notte* love is described as a distraction from real achievement and both in that early opera and *Il prigioniero* the only female figures must watch as their beloved — husband in the case of the aviator, son in the case of the prisoner — are sacrificed to an abstract sense of mission. The politics

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[40]. See the composer's sarcastic report on reaction to the premiere at Florence's La Pergola on May 18, 1940 (by which time Dallapiccola had clearly turned against the regime). Now in *Luigi Dallapiccola. Saggi, testimonianze, carteggio, biografia e bibliografia, op. cit.* (see note 8), p. 121. Also Dallapiccola's own summary of the drama, its origins, and the problems he wanted to resolve in Dallapiccola, Luigi. 'Per la prima rappresentazione di *Volo di notte*' [1940], in: Id. *Parole e musica, op. cit.* (see note 2), pp. 385-398. On male fantasies in opera of this period, see Tambling, Jeremy. *Opera and the Culture of Fascism*, Oxford-New York, Clarendon Press-Oxford University Press, 1996.

of gender in these operas is finally more Christian than modern: women are empowered only as witnesses and nurturers. The overriding 'public' themes of liberty and authority — never simply in opposition, but always dialectically interdependent — are very much in the Verdian tradition.

The inquisitor who manipulates the hopes and ultimately the limits of freedom, in *Il prigioniero* resummons, as the composer must clearly have intended, Don Carlo's Inquisitor back in all his implacable and almost omnipotent power. And not only the Inquisitor, but Mozart's Commendatore, whose role as thematic anchor and final authority figure — «l'occulto protagonista», the embodiment of conscience, the only one to escape the merely erotic bondage exercised by Don Giovanni — Dallapiccola wrestled with periodically from the late 1940s to the mid 1960s[41]. Dallapiccola did not want to sully the issue of spiritual and political freedom with that of erotic dependency, or perhaps he could not really handle the fusion, or perhaps it seemed ultimately less important. For Wagner and Verdi, of course, the spheres of politics and sexuality could not be separated, and while Dallapiccola recognized the greatness of that achievement it was not one he sought to emulate. Indeed, there is a signal departure from both Verdi's Inquisitor and Mozart's Commendatore. These implacable authorities are deep bassos, whereas the Inquisitor who comes for the Prisoner at the end of Dallapiccola's opera enfolds his victim lovingly in his arms and sings in a higher register than the creature he both loves and tortures. The voice of the Inquisitor sounds not with the stern bass cadence of judgment but the unmoored sonorities of false assurance. The prisoner finally confirms the ambiguity of this vocal signal as his last enunciation of «Libertà», becomes an interrogative.

In the cycle of prisoner songs and the opera that would culminate his growing rejection of fascism, the composer draws upon, but transforms, the Verdian problematic of the value of liberty and the tragic appreciation of the limits on liberty — recall the «Libera me» fugue from Verdi's *Requiem*. The same plea arose in his *Preghiera di Maria Stuarda* (1938-1940), based on the Scottish Queen's prayer: «O Domine Deus! speravi in Te. O care mi Jesu! nunc libera me [...]». Neither for Verdi nor for Dallapiccola is liberation really possible: both composers sense the intractability of authority and the frustration of liberty. God or his agents come to demand and extract an implacable submission; and recognition of that authority is the closest, so the two composers both suggest, that one can come to a state of freedom. Still, Verdi's tragic sense of limits on the Risorgimento's celebration of liberty is more straight-forward, more bass and basic, than Dallapiccola's psychological despair with fascism, authority, and violence. Dallapiccola's operas — so Fearn points out — offer in effect two climaxes: The first comes with the state of exaltation exemplified by the aviator

[41]. DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. 'Considerazione in margine alla scena della statua nel *Don Giovanni* (1949-1969)', in: ID. *Parole e musica*, *op. cit.* (see note 2), pp. 39-65; the reference to Kierkegaard's interpretation, pp. 46, 52.

Fabian's vision of the heavens before he perishes, or by the prisoner's 'liberation' before his execution, or even Ulysses' home-coming (in the last of his three operas), which precedes his renewed journey and death. But thereafter intervenes a recognition of irrevocable vulnerability, whether as insisted on by Rivière, or accepted by the prisoner or by Ulysses, who, following Dante's version, reembarks to accept a death at sea[42].

In a neo-Marxian reading, Luigi Pestalozza has suggested that the concept of liberty or liberation for Dallapiccola (as he demonstrated by making a question of the final word of *Il prigioniero*) is always posed in the interrogative, and that, in effect, twelve-tone music was an expression of a bourgeois culture aware of its own historical limits as a force for liberation[43]. True, Dallapiccola's idea of liberty remains in the interrogative mode, but, as with Verdi, not because the composer awaited a Marxian post-bourgeois redemption, but because the pre-bourgeois world of redemption, grace, and the possibility of non-redemption, of a return to the dark night of the soul, always remained present. From a Marxian perspective, fascism and the claustrophobic experience of 1938-1945 were deformations of bourgeois politics. But for Dallapiccola, as for Verdi and such other exponents of bourgeois culture as Thomas Mann, fascism and its prisons were part of a continuing claim of the primeval and hardly just a phase of recent history. They must always be paid their due. Spanish authority rules the prisons in *Fidelio*, *Don Carlo*, and *Il prigoniero*, as Pestalozza has observed, not because fascism would persist longer in Spain, but because Spain continued to embody an archaic world of inquisition and empire as well as efforts at dramatic radical challenges to tyrannical authority. Liberation is always in doubt (as Dallapiccola praised Busoni for insisting and as the final interrogative of *Il prigioniero* makes clear[44]) because of the nature of individual man, not just society. Although he rejected any identification as a conventional Catholic, he nonetheless remains a profoundly Augustinian composer, aware of weakness and vulnerability, hopeful for grace.

But doubt about the possibility of liberation did not mean the composer accepted the legitimacy of political authority. After 1938 the composer could no longer reconcile a lonely choice of aesthetic modernism with an earlier vision of an aestheticized heroic fascism. The role of the vocal revealed Dallapiccola's trajectory. For German music in the National Socialist period, voice had to become ever more 'formed', and 'shaped' and expressive of the voluntary harmony under one director. For Dallapiccola, voice incorporated the possibility of resistance to *Gleichschaltung*. It could do so either in the form of opera or as a beleaguered

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42. Fearn, Raymond. *Op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 42-43.

43. Pestalozza, Luigi. 'Liberazione e prigionia nelle opere di Dallapiccola', in: *Dallapiccola. Letture e prospettive, op. cit.* (see note 10), pp. 101-118. Even if one cannot accept the neo-Marxian framework, this essay is filled with acute insights, including an analysis of how the post-Liberation cold-war world sought to interpret Dallapiccola's twelve-tone method as tonal enough to be safe for a restorative project (p. 113).

44. «Il *dubbio* è entrato nel Teatro d'Opera», referring to Busoni's *Doktor Faustus*, in: Dallapiccola, Luigi. 'Appunti sull'opera contemporanea (1960)', *op. cit.* (see note 33), p. 118.

solo strand. Figaro, Fidelio, Posa, Pirate Jenny subverted or challenged the political order, although not always successfully. The National Socialists could accept opera that glorified challenges to authority (*Fidelio* being one of Hitler's favorite operas), if the authority were depicted as traditionalist and conventionally reactionary. For the Italian fascists the earlier Risorgimento assertion of Italian nationalism could also make the political message of resistance acceptable. The anti-hero could be accommodated: what was difficult to allow or to perform was the opera built around the non-hero, the marginalized, the pessimistic. The solo voice implicitly threatened the collective consensus. Lieder had traditionally allowed the most personal and intimate of emotions, but were also constructed around the ironic twist, the lyric turn of heartbreak. From Schubert to Mahler, the solo voice had carried the burden of loss and hopeless commitment, whether the abandonment of lovers or the elegiac death of children. Dallapiccola added a political dimension to that of personal loss. His world of song — the songs of the prisoner — use their intimacy to establish not a world of effective resistance, but political victimhood. As he wrote the choreographer Aurel Miloss, his collaborator on the ballet *Marsia* composed in the summer of 1942, the victim was more important to him than the triumph of the good[45]. Whereas the Nazis could take opera, with its potentially subversive protagonists (recall Figaro or Fidelio) and render it safe for fascism, Dallapiccola eventually took early traditions of Italian vocal music to reaffirm the possibilities of dissent. But the dissent was never social or conventionally political: it was an affirmation of the private and religious self, to be achieved through the continued purification of musical sound.

While the solo voice was an obvious instrument for this goal, Dallapiccola was ultimately able to draw on the resources of choral music to confirm individual isolation although arriving at this role for the chorus involved a hesitant course. To deploy choral music as an expression of dissent had to be a wager at a time when both Italian fascist and German fascist regimes could so easily exploit the rhythmic and collective power of the chorus. Jürg Stenzl has analyzed Goffredo Petrassi's *Salmo IX*, composed in 1934-1935, as an ideologically drenched composition: a massed chorus, without a single soloist, praising Jehova's harsh judgments and destruction of the enemy, a work of «static monumentality»[46]. But for all the appeal of massed collective voices for the regimes of the 1930s, scoring for a chorus did not determine a particular ideological message. Vocal solidarity might serve, as Beethoven most famously had demonstrated, a message of political emancipation. Dallapiccola, as Kämper reminds us, always loved the choral voice and in fact ignored Casella's warnings about reverting to choral music when he composed the breakthrough

[45]. Cited KÄMPER, Dietrich. *Gefangenschaft* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 3), p. 55 and FEARN, Raymond. *Op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 67-68.

[46]. STENZL, Jürg. *Op. cit.* (see note 6), pp. 143-149, citation p. 146. Stenzl in effects deconstructs the fascist choral emphasis by citing burlesque qualities and treats Petrassi as a sort of 'accidental' fascist.

Cori di Michelangelo Buonarroti[47], some of whose choruses come close to the rhythmic force of Orff's *Carmina Burana*. It was not sound itself that determined whether choral music served intensely individualistic or massed political and potentially fascist ends. Dallapiccola's choruses could send a message of overbearing power or a confession of isolated despair or the consolation of redemptive solidarity. At the moment the young composer was still under the spell of Nietzschean aesthetic values in *Volo di notte*, the chorus speaks for a crowd unwilling to accept the unpitying, indeed authoritarian decisionism of Rivière's determination to persist with his dangerous aerial missions. Dallapiccola would use a chorus to speak for God in *Job*. In the final opera *Ulisse* the powerful chorus of shades in Hades suggests the grip of the inner compulsive force that will drive Ulysses as the questioning and questing hero of *Inferno* xxvi («fatti non foste a viver come bruti, ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza») to his lonely death at sea. Dallapiccola's choruses eventually bring messages neither of triumphalism nor of simple despair, but of the need to resist even though resistance can not yield physical emancipation. Even after the fascist period had long ended, Dallapiccola's music and chosen texts focused on the inevitable cost of moral struggle and what paradoxically can be termed the necessity of choice. Indeed this synthesis of freedom and determinism allowed Dallapiccola to retain a warm relationship to Luigi Nono, whose Marxian protests might seem so alien to the older composer, but which combined the similar contradictions of determinism and struggle. In this sense, too, Dallapiccola could understand the air and the sea — in Wagner's *Tristan* and his own operas — as protagonists[48]. Musically invoked by echo and contrapuntal reworking, they were the ether, so to speak, in which hopeless but heroic activity had to unfold. The chorus summons the individual to a never ceasing struggle to inform despair with hope. It insists on historical agency even as it foretells the sacrificial costs involved.

Dallapiccola queried what musical strategies would allow the chorus to express liberty, dissent, and the vulnerability to arbitrary power. The chorus, he recognized, always had the same face, whatever sentiment it would be asked to express. Indeed the listener would rarely understand its sung words at first hearing. Twentieth-century music, Dallapiccola recognized, had made listeners comfortable with dissonance, which was tantamount to recognizing music as *moto*, a term that suggested the political notion of 'movement', or upheaval, and not just 'motion'. *Moto* was a concept with the implications of potential challenge. For Dallapiccola, therefore, the chorus implied no effort to monumentalize the crowd or freeze emotions in time or sweep singers and listeners into some non-rational state of collective assent or orgy. It was intended to indicate a community's responsiveness, either to inner spiritual states or to the unfolding revelation of events. As he wrote in 1940,

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[47]. Kämper, Dietrich. *Gefangenschaft* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 3), p. 15; Dallapiccola, Luigi. 'Prime composizioni corali (1961)', *op. cit.* (see note 6), p. 372: «[...] viveva ancora in noi l'orrore delle primedonne e dei tenori, [...] con l'arbitrio della loro capricciosa e superficiale musicalità, col loro cattivo gusto [...]».

[48]. Fearn, Raymond. *Op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 4, 236.

«Il chiarificarsi dell'espressione, il purificarsi della materia, il procedere, il progredire, sono in fondo le cose che più m'interessano; direi anzi le sole cose che m'interessano. Questo sento di avere in comune col Signor Rivière»[49].

The postwar would confirm Dallapiccola's choice even though he persevered alone. Serialism, championed by Adorno and based on the work of Schönberg and Webern, who along with Berg were so important for Dallapiccola, was increasingly dominant at Darmstadt, although Dallapiccola did not take part in these gatherings. Still, he continued to explore and refine the twelve-tone idiom. Luigi Nono and Luciano Berio would, in turn, recognize and build on Dallapiccola's technical achievements even if Nono's political orientation was far more imbued with postwar Marxism[50]. Dallapiccola himself would continually renew the themes of confinement, struggle, and liberation, above all in the *Canti di liberazione*, and later in *Ulisse* or in such cameo explorations of destruction and hope as *Tempus destruendi/Tempus aedificandi* of 1970-1971. Not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, as the prophet learned, for Dallapiccola the Lord remained in 'the still small voice', choral or solitary, defiant, betrayed, or finally illuminated.

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[49]. DALLAPICCOLA, Luigi. 'Per la prima rappresentazione di *Volo di notte*', *op. cit.* (see note 40), pp. 396-397. For an emphasis on the authoritarian dimension of this identification see EARLE, Ben. *Op. cit.* (see note 6).

[50]. For a critical take on postwar German serialism, see KORDES, Gesa. 'Darmstadt, Postwar Experimentation, and the West German Search for a New Musical Identity', in: *Music and German National Identity*, edited by Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002, pp. 205-217. See Luigi Nono's admiring 1948 description of Dallapiccola's twelve-tone method as a «concezione musicale veramente totale», in: NONO, Luigi. *Scritti e colloqui*, edited by Angela Ida De Benedictis and Veniero Rizzardi, 2 vols., Milan-Lucca, Ricordi-LIM, 2001 (Le Sfere, 35), vol. 1, p. 3. For a brief period in the late 1940s Dallapiccola himself analyzed his own work in a Marxissant idiom, which was in line with much of Italian cultural output.