

Music, Longing and Belonging:
Articulations of the Self and the Other
in the Musical Realm

Edited by

Magdalena Waligórska

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS

P U B L I S H I N G

Music, Longing and Belonging:
Articulations of the Self and the Other in the Musical Realm,
Edited by Magdalena Waligórska

This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2013 by Magdalena Waligórska and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or
otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-4830-1, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4830-5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	vii
List of Tables.....	ix
Acknowledgements	x
Introduction	1
Music and the Boundaries of (Non)Belonging <i>Magdalena Waligórska</i>	
<i>Part One: Performing the Self, Performing the Other</i>	
Chapter One.....	12
Sing With Us, Spend Like Us! Images of Consumption in East European Musical Films during the Cold War War <i>Oksana Sarkisova</i>	
Chapter Two.....	28
Performing Cosmopolitanism: Gogol Bordello and the Global Underdogs <i>Ana Sobral</i>	
Chapter Three	48
The North as the Self and the Other: Scandinavian Composers' Symphonies in German Concert Halls around 1900 <i>Katharine Leiska</i>	
<i>Part Two: Music and Transnational Identities</i>	
Chapter Four.....	64
Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus and the Aesthetics of Pan-Africanism <i>Mario Dunkel</i>	

Chapter Five	82
The Mediterranean Style: From Pan-Semitism to Israeli Nationalism <i>Tal Soker</i>	
Chapter Six	94
“Between the Jigs and the Reels (in Cyberspace)”: Investigating an Irish Traditional Music Online Community <i>Ailbhe Kenny</i>	
Part Three: Music, Diaspora and Displacement	
Chapter Seven.....	114
Opera as Social Agent: Fostering Italian Identity at the Metropolitan Opera House During the Early Years of Giulio Gatti-Casazza’s Management (1908-1910) <i>Davide Ceriani</i>	
Chapter Eight.....	135
Manuel M. Ponce’s <i>canciones</i> in New York: Mexican Musical Identity and the Mexico Vogue <i>Christina Taylor Gibson</i>	
Chapter Nine.....	157
Longing for Belonging in Forced Migration: Musical Recollections of Germans from the Bohemian Lands <i>Ulrike Präger</i>	
Part Four: Music and Gendered Identity	
Chapter Ten	176
“Ya l’bamour, ya mon amour”: Rai, Rap and the Desire to Escape <i>Heidrun Friese</i>	
Chapter Eleven	202
“As It Echoes South and North”: Girls and Boys Singing Identity into the National Landscape <i>Josephine Hoegaerts</i>	
About the Authors	222

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 3-1: Christian Sinding, symphony op. 21, 1st movement bars 1–4.....	54
Figure 3-2: Christian Sinding, symphony op. 21, 1st movement, bars 59–62.....	55
Figure 3-3: Christian Sinding, symphony op. 21, 2nd movement, bars 53–67	56
Figure 6-1: The OAIM logo	100
Figure 6-2: An OAIM Facebook post	101
Figure 6-3: Screenshot of the OAIM cybersession	102
Figure 8-1: M. Ponce “Estrellita”	137
Figure 8-2: The principal melody to the <i>canción</i> “Me he de comer un durazno”	139
Figure 8-3: <i>Balada Mexicana</i> (Opening)	139
Figure 8-4: Photograph of Mojica, 1929	143
Figure 9-1: Christine Rösch at the Sudeten-German meeting, 2011	158

CHAPTER SEVEN

OPERA AS SOCIAL AGENT: FOSTERING ITALIAN IDENTITY AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF GIULIO GATTI-CASAZZA'S MANAGEMENT, 1908-1910

DAVIDE CERIANI

Introduction

The study of Italian migration to New York City in the early twentieth century has been mainly restricted to the fields of sociology and history. Few studies have taken as their subject the relationship between Italians living in the city and the arts. The handful that have, focus on individual artists—such as composers, singers, conductors, painters—rather than on how they interacted with their community. In the case of opera, biographies and autobiographies of singers are numerous; examples include the baritone Titta Ruffo and the famous tenors Enrico Caruso and Beniamino Gigli (Jackson 1972; Scott 1988; Gargano and Cesarini 1990; Ruffo 1995; Gargano 1997; Inzaghi 2005). However, most of these biographies are anecdotal and do not discuss the impact that these personalities had on New York's Italian community. The same can be said for more academic biographies, like those on Arturo Toscanini. These works place the conductor at the centre of their narrative but do not explore the impact of his presence in America on US-based Italians (Taubman 1951; Chotzinoff 1956; Boccardi and Labroca 1966; Barblan 1972; Della Corte 1981; Horowitz 1987; Sachs 1995; Toscanini and Sachs 2002; Marchesi 2007).

In this essay, I examine how New York's Italian-language newspapers reviewed the performances of two works by Italian composers at the city's Metropolitan Opera House (referred to by many as simply the "Met")

shortly after the 1908 appointments of the Italian-born Giulio Gatti-Casazza and Toscanini as general manager and conductor, respectively. These two performances, which I chose for the acclaim they received in the Italian community, were Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* (staged during the 1908-1909 season) and Alberto Franchetti's *Germania* (staged during the 1909-1910 season). Articles from local Italian-language newspapers show that Italian opera at the Met, as well as the Italian personalities who worked there, played a fundamental role in both shaping and defining the identity of the Italian community in New York during the early twentieth century. In fact, most of these personalities—including singers, costume and set designers, dancers, conductors for both the orchestra and the choir—were not only born and raised in Italy, but also studied and performed there before moving to the United States. Understandably, both their presence in and influence on the productions of these works were met with great enthusiasm from members of the Italian community.

If both operas aroused feelings of national pride, they also provoked intense sentiments of nostalgia (in the case of *Aida*) and patriotism (in the case of *Germania*). In the case of *Aida*, the title character's longing and nostalgia for her lost homeland, Ethiopia, can be read as a metaphor for the situation of Italians living away from their country of origin. In the case of *Germania*, the battle between the German patriots and Napoleon's army suggests a parallel with the Italian fight for independence against the Austrians. Among the Italians living in New York, this onstage fight was also reminiscent of the struggle to preserve their identity in real life. These alternative readings not only help us to rethink *Aida* and *Germania*, but also show how the members of the Italian community living in New York transfigured the meaning of these two operas in order to better reflect their own experiences in that city in the early twentieth century.

The Performance of Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* on 16th November 1908: Its Meaning and Context

On the evening of 16th November 1908, Raimondo Canudo, music critic for New York's prominent Italian-language newspaper *Bollettino della sera*, settled into his seat in the orchestra section of the Met. That evening's performance of Verdi's *Aida* marked the opening night of the opera season. Looking at the six plaques located on the upper part of the proscenium arch, Canudo noticed that each of them bore the name of a different composer. This is how he described what he saw in the *Bollettino della sera* on 17th November 1908:

I raise my eyes. In the grand theatre, I see six names above the stage. In a place of honour, among Wagner, Gounod, Beethoven, Gluch [sic], and Mozart, I read in gold letters: VERDI. An intimate joy makes me feel, more than ever, proud of being Italian, especially at this moment in which Italian art is garnering such serious affirmation among the cold ladies and businessmen of America.¹

Canudo expressed a sentiment felt strongly within New York's Italian community at the beginning of the twentieth century—the desire to publicly assert their cultural pride in order to achieve social legitimization in their new country. This pride found its expression most notably in opera, as the Met, the Manhattan Opera Company, and numerous minor opera companies regularly performed works by Italian composers.

In 1908, the Met became a particular source of Italian pride when it underwent a significant reorganization: the Austrian impresario, Heinrich Conried, was asked to resign, and a new Italian general manager—Gatti-Casazza—arrived from Milan's Teatro alla Scala to take his place.² Gatti-Casazza brought the conductor Toscanini with him from La Scala. Toscanini was to conduct performances from the Italian and French repertoires while the other conductor—Gustav Mahler—was to focus on the German repertory. Gatti-Casazza and Toscanini brought many additional performers and assistants with them from La Scala, reinforcing the Italian presence at the Met. Most of these performers took part in the production of *Aida* in November 1908, turning it into a veritable triumph for Italy on the Met stage.³

¹ This is the original Italian: "Levo gli occhi in alto. Nel grandioso teatro vedo, al di sopra della scena, sei nomi. Al posto d'onore, fra Wagner, Gounod, Beethoven, Gluch [sic], Mozart, leggo a caratteri d'oro: VERDI. Un'intima gioia mi fa sentire più che mai l'orgoglio dell'italianità, specie in quest'ora in cui l'arte italiana così solennemente si afferma in mezzo alle fredde ladies ed ai businessmen d'America".

² Heinrich Conried (1855-1909), a Silesian educated in Vienna, had been an actor before starting his career as a theatrical manager. He moved to America in 1878 and quickly became involved in the New York City theatre and music scene (Moses 1916). Giulio Gatti-Casazza (1869-1940) succeeded his father as director of the Teatro Comunale in Ferrara in 1893. In 1898 Gatti-Casazza was appointed director of the Teatro alla Scala, a position he held until 1908 when the Met hired him. For the first two years of his tenure (1908-1910) Gatti-Casazza shared his position with the former tenor Andreas Dippel. From 1910 until 1935 he was the sole general manager of the Met (Gatti-Casazza 1941).

³ This is the complete list of Italians involved in the staging of the *Aida* performance on 16th November 1908. Giulio Gatti-Casazza (general manager, just arrived from La Scala); Arturo Toscanini (conductor, just arrived from La Scala);

The arrival of so many Italians at the Met was received with mixed reactions: numerous American music critics, including William J. Henderson, Henry T. Finck, and Edward E. Krehbiel, expressed concern that the Met was going through a process of what they called "Italianization". For example, in early 1908 Henderson wrote in the *New York Sun* that "Every sincere lover of operatic art will hope that in the future ... the Metropolitan Opera House ... will not ... [be] committed to the exclusive direction of an impresario whose ideals are altogether Italian" (Henderson 1908). A few weeks later Krehbiel, in the *New York Tribune*, expressed a fear that so many Italians coming to the Met from La Scala might lead to a performance monopoly of operas owned by the Milanese music publisher Ricordi. Krehbiel hoped that "the change in the character of the repertory ... [would] not be the ... result of Italian, or, rather, Milanese domination" (Krehbiel 1908).

These concerns mirrored a broader social anxiety surrounding the growing number of Italian immigrants in America, and particularly in New York. Italian immigration to the United States reached its peak during the first decade of the twentieth century, with more than two million arrivals.⁴ In 1906 and 1907, the two years preceding the arrival of Gatti-Casazza and Toscanini at the Met, the wave of Italian immigration to the United States reached an unprecedented high of nearly 300,000 arrivals annually. Between 1900 and 1910, the Italian population in New York City more than doubled, increasing from 145,000 to 340,000.⁵ Italians quickly became the main target of this anxiety because they arrived in such large numbers and had difficulty integrating with the local population.

Americans' distress over the presence of so many Italians at the Met was matched by an even stronger expression of cultural pride in New York's Italian community. On learning that Gatti-Casazza had been appointed general manager of the Met, for example, the New York newspaper *Il telegrafo* issued the following statement on 12th February

Francesco Spetrino (conductor – Toscanini's vice – just arrived from the Vienna Hofoper); Francesco Romei (assistant conductor, just arrived from La Scala); Giulio Setti (conductor of the choirs, just arrived from La Scala); Enrico Caruso (tenor – as Radamès – at the Met since 1903); Antonio Scotti (baritone – as Amonasro – at the Met since 1899); Giulio Rossi (bass – as the Egyptian King – at the Met since 1908); Angelo Badà (tenor – as the Messenger – at the Met since 1908); Gina Torriani (dancer, at the Met since 1908); Mario Sala and Angelo Parravicini (set designers of La Scala); Sartoria teatrale Chiappa (costume designer company from Milan); Gian Placido Centanini (Gatti-Casazza's personal secretary from La Scala); choir (primarily comprising recently immigrated Italian singers).

⁴ See Table 7-1, Appendix A.

⁵ See Table 7-2, *ibid.*

1908: "We are delighted that an Italian has been appointed as head of the Metropolitan, because this will be beneficial to our [Italian] art".⁶ Other Italian-language newspapers voiced similar sentiments of pride after the 1908 opening night performance of *Aida*. Giuseppe Gullino wrote in *L'araldo italiano* on 18th November 1908:

Expectations [for the opening night of *Aida*] were great, immense, and ... amidst what might seem just the display of two new personalities ... there was also a bit of national pride. It centred around two personas dearest to us, two names that our great art has long smiled on with fortune and success: Gatti-Casazza and Toscanini.⁷

Another article, which also appeared on 18th November 1908 in *Il progresso italo-americano*, demonstrates even more explicitly the Italian immigrants' need to impress the Americans. The article discussed the contribution of Italian performers and the new general manager, and highlighted the American audience's excited responses to *Aida*:

This year, New York high society was feverishly drawn to the Metropolitan Opera House, to see two giants of the Italian theatrical world: Giulio Gatti-Casazza, who has come to America to show the brilliance with which we stage the operas of our musical geniuses in the greatest artistic temples of our country, and Arturo Toscanini, the "wizard" of orchestra conductors ... The feverish anticipation ... could not have been better fulfilled than by the revelation, to the American world, of what the arts of our culture, and our most brilliant masters, are capable of: the opening night of the Metropolitan Opera season, most favourably anticipated, could not have delivered anything but a memorable triumph.⁸

⁶ The original reads: "Noi vivamente ci compiaciamo che a capo del Metropolitan sia stato assunto un italiano, perché sarà tanto di guadagnato per l'arte nostra".

⁷ The original reads: "L'aspettativa [per la prima di *Aida*] era grande, era immensa e ... frammezzo a quello che poteva apparire semplice sfoggio di nuove personali energie ... era dopotutto anche po' d'orgogliosetto [sic] nazionale, che s'imperniava su due nomi nostri carissimi, su due nomi cui la grande arte nostra aveva irradiati da tempo i suoi sorrisi di fortuna e di successo, Gatti-Casazza e Toscanini".

⁸ The original reads: "Quest'anno, la grande società newyorchese era febbrilmente attratta al teatro metropolitano dal desiderio di vedere all'opera due giganti del mondo teatrale italiano: Giulio Gatti-Casazza, venuto in America a rivelare la potente genialità con la quale si allestiscono, nei massimi templi artistici della patria nostra, le opere dei nostri geni musicali, e Arturo Toscanini, il 'mago' dei direttori d'orchestra ... L'attesa febbrile ... non poteva esser meglio appagata dalla rivelazione dinanzi al mondo americano, di quel che possano la cultura artistica ed il genio sovrano dei nostri grandi: la 'première' della stagione lirica metropolitana,

Finally, the four most important Italian newspapers of New York commented enthusiastically on the performance of *Aida* and described at length the excitement that this opera stirred up in New York's Italian community.⁹ These newspapers' comments, along with the previous quotations, show how New York's Italian press used the success of Italian opera among American audiences as a means of combating negative stereotypes of Italians in America. Italians reacted to these stereotypes by supporting anything—including Italian opera—that could show their culture in a positive light. As literary scholar Robert Viscusi has pointed out, this situation was paradoxical. In America, Italian immigrants "found themselves ... far more closely in touch with the culture of Italian nationalism than they ever would have been had they remained in Italy" (Viscusi 2006, 77).

The strong attachment that New York's Italians showed toward the figures and symbols of their homeland reinforces Viscusi's idea. For instance, when a monument to Verdi was unveiled in New York on 12th October 1906, more than 10,000 people attended the event. According to newspaper reports, members of Italian societies marched from Washington Square to the site of the statue in Sherman Square, between Broadway and West 72nd Street. There, a helium balloon lifted a cloth of red, white, and green—the colours of the Italian flag—from the monument (*New York Times*, October 13, 1906; *New York Tribune*, October 13, 1906). This was just one of the many New York events at the turn of the century that were proudly celebrated by the Italian community: lectures were given by Italian scholars, Italian theatrical plays were performed, and other statues were erected in honour of Giuseppe Garibaldi, Dante Alighieri, and, of course, Christopher Columbus. However, these events had limited impact

segnata da auspici altissimi, non poteva, dunque, affermarsi che con un trionfo memorabile".

⁹ See the following headlines: "La 'Prima' alla Metropolitan Opera House / Il trionfo di Caruso, di Gatti-Casazza e di Toscanini / Plebiscito Italo-filo della Stampa Americana", *La follia di New York*, 17th November 1908 (The opening night at the Metropolitan Opera House / The triumph of Caruso, Gatti-Casazza, and Toscanini / Italophile plebiscite of the American press); "Metropolitan Opera House / Il grandioso avvenimento d'arte italiana", *Bollettino della sera*, 17th November 1908 (Metropolitan Opera House / The grand event of Italian art); "L'apertura del Metropolitan Opera House / Serata trionfale", *L'araldo italiano*, 18th November 1908 (The opening night at the Metropolitan Opera House / Triumphant evening); "La riapertura della Metropolitan Opera House / Il trionfo di Giulio Gatti-Casazza e di Arturo Toscanini", *Il progresso italo-americano*, 18th November 1908 (The reopening of the Metropolitan Opera House / The triumph of Giulio Gatti-Casazza and Arturo Toscanini).

for various reasons. Theatrical plays, for example, were usually performed in their original language and thus could be appreciated only by the Italian community. Other cultural events, although well attended, did not take place on a regular basis.

Italian opera attracted attention because it was performed every night and became a fixture of New York cultural life. The music, universally comprehensible, was supplemented with librettos translated into English so that American audiences could follow the plot. The performers featured were often Italians, some of whom became American opera stars—Caruso being the best known of these singers. For these reasons, opera became the principal means of cultural legitimization of the Italian community in New York.

Alternative Reading(s) of *Aida*: The Italian Immigrants' Perspective

The performance of *Aida* not only evoked feelings of pride among the members of the Italian community in New York, but also a longing for their distant homeland. In recent years, a number of scholars have suggested various interpretations of the opera. For example, musicologists Fabrizio Della Seta, Karen Henson, Gilles de Van, and literary scholar Edward Said have demonstrated how *Aida*'s exoticism is articulated in its text, music, and staging (Della Seta 1991 and 2008; Henson 2000; De Van 1995; Said 1993). Others have interpreted the opera as historical, reading the battle between the Ethiopians and the Egyptians as a metaphor for the long struggle between the Italians and their Austrian oppressors during the *Risorgimento* period, as historian Paul Robinson suggests (Robinson 2002). These approaches and many others are discussed in Ralph Locke's article "*Aida* and nine readings of empire" (Locke 2010). The performance of *Aida* in 1908 at the Met, for an audience made up at least in part of Italian emigrants, suggests an additional and to date unexplored reading, in which *Aida* becomes a symbol of geographic and cultural nostalgia.

At the beginning of *Aida*'s Act Three, the title character pines for her country, Ethiopia, which she fears she will never see again. This scene evoked great emotion among the Italian audience at the Met. As the journalist for the *Bollettino della sera* on 17th November 1908 recounted: "When *Aida* sings: 'O patria mia, mai più ti rivedrò,' ('Oh my country, never shall I see you again!') [Emmy] Destinn, with profound yearning in her voice, created an intense emotional response in the Italian immigrant audience. They were transfixed by that song to the last notes of her sad

reminiscence".¹⁰ The "sad reminiscence" about a distant homeland became one of the principal aspects of the opera for Italians, and certainly the major theme of that act.

At first it seems curious that the journalist from the *Bollettino della sera* decided to quote the line in which *Aida* mourns the impossibility of returning to her own country, rather than other lines in which she longs to go back to her homeland, or even when she actually decides to flee to Ethiopia. The following lists the passages, in which *Aida* sings (alone or in duet) at the beginning of Act Three:

EXAMPLE 1

AIDA

Qui Radamès verrà!
Che vorrà dirmi? Io tremo!
Ah! Se tu vieni a recarmi,
O crudel, l'ultimo addio,
Del Nilo i cupi vortici
Mi daran tomba e pace forse
E pace forse e oblio.
O, patria mia, mai più
Mai più ti rivedrò!
O cieli azzurri, o dolci aure native,
Dove sereno il mio mattin brillò

O verdi colli, o profumate rive
O, patria mia, mai più ti rivedrò!
No... no... mai più, mai più!
O fresche valli, o queto asil beato
Che un dì promesso dall'amor mi fu
Or che d'amore il sogno è dileguato
O, patria mia, non ti vedrò mai più!

Radamès will come here!
What can he want to say to me? I tremble!
Ah! If you are coming,
O cruel one, to bid me a last farewell,
The dark eddies of the Nile
Will give me a grave and perhaps peace
And perhaps peace and forgetfulness.
O my country, never,
Never shall I see you again!
O blue skies, O gentle native breezes,
Where the morning of my life serenely
shone
O green hills, O perfumed shores
O my country, never shall I see you again!
No... no... never, never again!
O cool valleys, O calm, happy refuge
That love promised me one day
Now that the dream of love has vanished
O my country, I'll never see you again!

EXAMPLE 2

AMONASRO

Rivedrai le foreste imbalsamate,
Le fresche valli, i nostri templi d'ôr!
You will see again the aromatic forests,
The cool valleys, our golden temples!

¹⁰ The original reads: "Quando *Aida* canta: O patria mia, mai più ti rivedrò, la Destinn, con l'espressione profondamente nostalgica del suo canto, diffonde un'emozione eccezionale negli italiani qui immigrati, che quel canto ammalia fino alle ultime note della pietosa reminiscenza".