

IN MEMORIAM: FERNANDO LIUZZI

(b. December 19, 1884—d. October 6, 1940)

By ERNST T. FERAND

ITALY, the country that has provided such a prodigious quantity and quality of every sort of musical treasure—from folk-song to madrigal, cantata, and opera, from Gregorian chant to the polyphonic mass, motet, and oratorio, from popular dance-music to sonata and concerto—has not proved equally important in the field of scholarly musical research. We are, to be sure, indebted for systematic investigations into problems of notation and counterpoint to a number of great Italian theorists of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance—from Guido of Arezzo, Marchettus of Padua, Prodocimo de' Beldemandi, Franchino Gafori, to Nicola Vicentino and Gioseffo Zarlino, to mention only a few. But musicology proper and music history in particular have been regarded as stepchildren in Italian musical life, notwithstanding such important works as Padre Martini's unfinished *History of Music*, and a number of valuable monographs (by Bainsi, Caffi, Alaleona, etc.), or the excellent editions of old music by Torchi, Cesari, Benvenuti, and others. The research in early Italian music has been done almost entirely by foreign musicologists, mostly German, such as Kiesewetter, Ambros, Riemann, Johannes Wolf, Ludwig, and Einstein; and the badly needed *History of Italian Music* has still to be written.

This being so, it adds one more contribution to the tragic ironies of our age that the untimely death of the Italian musicologist who added most to our knowledge of the earliest stages in his country's music should have passed without due notice in Italy.

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Fernando Liuzzi was born on December 19, 1884, in Senigallia (Sinigaglia), on the Adriatic coast, near Ancona. G. Radiciotti's monograph¹ on the musical life of this ancient Roman town reveals no important contribution on its part to the great past of

¹ *Musica e Musicisti in Sinigaglia*, Milan, 1893.



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Italian music. Liuzzi's musical and cultural background was provided by Bologna, famous old center of music and science, where Liuzzi's family made its home. He received his academic training in the noble and distinguished atmosphere of this city, where in the 15th century such famous scholars as Ramos de Pareja and Giovanni Spataro had lectured on the science of music, whither in the 18th century the greatest European authority of his time on the subject of counterpoint, G. B. Martini, had attracted many young composers—among them Johann Sebastian Bach's youngest son, Johann Christian (the "London" Bach)—, and where Martini had examined the fourteen-year-old Mozart, who was subsequently elected to membership in the famous Accademia Filarmonica of that city.

Towards the end of the last century, Bologna again became the most important music center in Italy. When Liuzzi went to school, Giuseppe Martucci was the director of the Liceo Musicale Padre Martini, named after the great musician, part of whose invaluable library was inherited by the institution. Martucci was a pioneer in organizing symphonic concerts and, being an ardent apostle of Wagner, had conducted the first Italian performance of *Tristan und Isolde* at the Teatro Comunale, a century and a quarter after this theatre had been opened with a performance of Gluck's *Trionfo di Clelia* (1763), written for the occasion.

At the venerable University of Bologna, the great old poet Giosuè Carducci—in his youth an enthusiastic fighter for democratic ideals and an adherent of Garibaldi—was lecturing on Italian literature. From him Liuzzi might well have gained his first and decisive impressions not only of medieval poetry but also of music, to which Carducci was deeply devoted. In an important essay on Italian music and poetry of the 14th century,² Carducci bemoaned the non-existence of an Italian Coussemaker, who would investigate the origins of Italian music, as the great Belgian had studied the beginnings of French music. The old poet could not foresee that one of the youngest and last of his students was destined to fill the very gap he deplored. When Carducci retired in 1903, he was succeeded by another famous poet, Giovanni Pascoli; young Liuzzi attended his lectures also, and later set one of his poems to music.

² *Musica e poesia nel mondo elegante del secolo XIV*, in *Opere*, Vol. VIII, ed. of 1907, p. 310.

In Bologna, Liuzzi studied piano and composition with G. A. Fano, who was a pupil of Martucci's. His musical education was completed at the Reale Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome under the tuition of its director, Stanislao Falchi. In 1905 Liuzzi went to Munich to study with Max Reger and Felix Mottl, and—at the University—with the psychologist Theodor Lipps, particularly known for his “*Einfühlung*” theory. After having won a prize in composition at the Conservatory of Parma in 1908, Liuzzi received the degree of Doctor of Letters in 1909 from the University of Bologna. Following a short period of activity as a symphonic and operatic conductor, he was appointed, as a result of competitive examinations, professor of harmony and counterpoint at the Royal Conservatory of Parma, which position he held from 1910 to 1917. In the years 1912-14 he also gave courses in composition at the Royal Conservatory of San Pietro a Majella in Naples.

In these early years, Liuzzi's first compositions appeared in print—piano pieces, songs, compositions for violin and piano, full of youthful romanticism, and transcriptions of Italian masters of the 17th and 18th centuries. In addition he published articles in newspapers and periodicals. To this period of his life belong his happy marriage to Paola Forti (1913) and the birth of a son, Franco (1915), and of a daughter, Lucetta (1916).

In 1917 Liuzzi became professor of harmony and counterpoint at the Royal Conservatory “Luigi Cherubini” at Florence, a position he held for the following six years. Here again he found himself in a vivid musical atmosphere, which was enlivened by the many important young musical forces that flourished there at the time. Ildebrando Pizzetti was director of the Conservatory and was writing many of his best compositions. Ernesto Consolo was piano teacher. The idealistic planning and enthusiasm of these young musicians is described in one of the “Letters from Florence” by the composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (who later became Liuzzi's brother-in-law), published in Guido Gatti's magazine *Il Pianoforte* (Turin), which subsequently grew into the *Rassegna Musicale*. For these as well as for *La Critica Musicale* (published in Florence), among others, Liuzzi wrote articles on esthetic and historical subjects and reviewed new compositions. These writings contributed much to a musical movement that eventually led to the foundation of a symphony orchestra and paved the way for the inauguration of the annual festival named the “Maggio Musi-

cale Fiorentino". Some of Liuzzi's best compositions originated during these years—a charming and noble Sonata for Violin and Piano, whose lyrical melodic qualities and subtle harmonic background clearly reflect the influence of French impressionism; a colorful and lively Neapolitan Rhapsody for orchestra.

At the time, however, Liuzzi seemed to become more and more attracted by the special field in which he later produced his most important achievements, that of scholarly research in the history and esthetics of music. The decisive turn in his career came when, in 1923, he received an appointment at the University of Florence, which changed his activity from that of a teacher of composition to that of a professor of the history of music. In the subsequent years he lectured also at the University for Foreigners in Perugia. Shortly after his new appointment, Liuzzi published his *Estetica della Musica* (1924), a collection of eight essays on various subjects, dedicated to the memory of Theodor Lipps. The first and most important of the essays is a critical review of Eduard Hanslick's esthetic philosophy in music and of Conrad Fiedler's theory of "pure visuality" in the fine arts (1887), taken up also by Benedetto Croce (in 1902 and 1911). The second essay contains a subtle analysis of "pure romanticism" as revealed in the writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann and Robert Schumann, whereas the third enters into controversy with some casual remarks on music made in 1920 by Anatole France, or rather with the esthetic views of Pierre Lasserre, who was influenced by the philosophy of Henry Bergson. Among the other articles, which are reprints from various magazines, one is of special interest because it contains an early appreciation of Ernest Bloch.

In 1926, Liuzzi was called to the University of Rome as professor of esthetics and of the history of music, and was appointed director of the Institute of the History of Music at the same University. From 1928 to 1932 he was also in charge of special courses in musical esthetics and style, introduced for the first time at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia. In addition, he lectured at the Istituto per Studi Romani in Rome.

In this last, most productive, and successful period of Liuzzi's life, he continued his work as a scholar, but his activity as a composer gave way to his providing creative revivals of medieval music. The selected list of publications, appended to this article, shows the wide range of his scholarly interest. It includes, besides

writings on subjects of general or special esthetic character, others on widely different topics in the history of music, such as early Christian hymnody, the effect upon each other of Italian and Flemish music, the style and influence of Palestrina, Italian folk-song, the humanistic trend in music, Bach, Beethoven. Liuzzi's main attention, however, was focussed upon two kinds of medieval monody, the earliest religious songs in the Italian language (the *laude*) and the melodies introduced into the liturgical drama.

Investigating the liturgical drama, from the 11th century to the 14th, Liuzzi analyzed the important part that music played, for the first time in the post-classic world, as an adjunct to dramatic action, an adjunct used as a means of characterizing the persons of the play. He stresses the considerable expressive power of the melodies. Studying the *Sponsus*-play, based on the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, Liuzzi traced an interesting relationship to the Oriental service of St. Agatha, revealing thereby the Greco-Byzantine roots of this early 11th-century play.

A number of special articles on the *laude* heralded the appearance of Liuzzi's chief publication, the monumental edition, in two volumes, of the *laude* of the 13th and 14th centuries, magnificently printed at the government's expense and published by the Libreria dello Stato, 1935, in Rome.

These first Italian "spirituals", as they might be called, were inspired by the forceful religious movement initiated by St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226). The fact that the "Saint of the Paupers" speaks of himself and his followers as "minstrels of God" (*joculatores Domini*) suggests the possibility of a musical rendition (improvised?) of his religious poetry. The *laude* were sung at the gatherings of the numerous religious societies founded in the 12th to the 14th centuries (*laudesi*, *confraternite*, etc.) and also by the flagellants (*disciplinati*, *battuti*). They were monodic pieces with texts praising Jesus, the Virgin, the Trinity, and various Saints. They are by no means to be regarded as folk-songs, but rather as songs of a popular type, created by poets and composers who, with a few exceptions, are anonymous. Neither should they be confused with the later polyphonic *laude* of the 15th and 16th centuries, preserved in the publications of Petrucci and reprinted in part by Knud Jeppesen (1935).

The chief sources of the early *laude* are the two great codices of Cortona (Biblioteca del Comune, 91) and Florence (Bibl.

Nazionale Centrale, Magl. II. I. 122), both written for the use of *laudesi*, the first at the end of the 13th century, the second, containing magnificent miniatures, at the beginning of the 14th. No other sources of this early *lauda* literature are known, except for a few scattered fragments, one of which, a single leaf of Florentine origin, is owned by the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, while another leaf of the same manuscript is in the Frank C. Smith Collection at Worcester, Mass.

Liuzzi's *lauda* edition contains a complete facsimile reproduction of all the music in the Cortona and Florence manuscripts—i.e. of the first stanza of every *lauda* with its melody (intended to be used for all the following stanzas, which often were quite numerous)—, a transcription into modern notation of all the melodies, and the complete texts. There are 46 melodies in the *laudario* of Cortona and 89 in that of Florence. Friedrich Ludwig published four of them in 1924.³ Confronted with the problem of ascertaining the rhythm of these melodies of a “pre-mensural” type, written in Roman plainsong notation, Liuzzi properly disregarded the possibilities of a “mensural” or “modal” interpretation. He instead adopted Riemann's method, with some modification, as a rule basing the rhythm on a binary pattern that fits the standard line of eight syllables used in the *lauda* poems. The highly satisfying results are evidence of the correctness of this procedure, though, with respect to minor details, as well as to the liberal use of added accidentals, there might be room for difference of opinion.⁴

In his elaborate historical introduction, Liuzzi arrives at important conclusions. He points to the conformity and unity existing between the texts and melodies of the *laude* and draws attention to the great variety in the content of the poems and in their forms (dramatic, narrative, dialogue, etc.) as well as in the music (cast in the litany and hymn forms, and showing traces of the sequence structure). The melodies of the Cortona Ms. are of a more archaic character than those of the Florence Ms., the former showing a greater simplicity of melodic design, whereas the latter displays a

³ In Guido Adler's *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*; 2nd ed., 1929.

⁴ Cf. the reviews of J. Handschin, in *Acta Musicologica*, X (1938), 14-31, and Yvonne Rokseth, in *Romania*, LXV (1939), 383-394. See also the reviews of E. Carrara, *Nuova Rivista Storica*, XX (1936), 269-273; G. Mazzoni, *Nuova Antologia*, CCCXII (1937), 345-347; F. Neri, *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, CIX (1937), 130-135; A. Einstein, “Music & Letters”, XX (1939), 446-448.

trend towards sophistication with a preference for ornamentation. As to the formal structure, Liuzzi lays particular emphasis on his interpretation of the *lauda* as a genuine, original species, a "spiritual sister of the *ballata*", deriving like it, but independently of it, from the *virelai* or *chanson baladée*, chief form of French (and Spanish) lyric poetry in the 13th century. With regard to the performance of the *laude*, Liuzzi takes into account the possibility that solo passages alternated with choral sections, and that instrumental interludes may have been inserted. He emphasizes that the refrain (*ripresa*) was not necessarily repeated after each stanza (consisting of the *piedi* [*mutazioni*] and *volta*), as it appears to have been in the French *virelai*, but could be confined to the opening and closing sections of the whole piece. There are also interesting investigations into the question of Jacopone da Todi's authorship of some of the *laude*, which reveal the likelihood that he was not only a poet but also the composer of at least one of the *lauda* melodies.

With this important publication, Liuzzi reduced a gap that had existed in the history of music in his country between the "Golden Age" of Gregorian Chant and the brilliant flowering of the 14th century; and he thus shed light on a period a whole century prior to that of the Florentine masters of the early Renaissance. Italian *trecento* music, in Liuzzi's opinion, should not be regarded as beginning a development but as closing one that led from the complete unity of poetry and music to accompanied and embellished music of *virtuoso* type, characterized by a marked disregard of the requirements of the text. About 1600, the composers and poets of the *Camerata* introduced their monodic "innovations", thus linking a much later period of music history with the early *lauda* art, one of the important roots of oratorio.

Providing parallels to his scholarly publications on the *lauda* and liturgical drama, Liuzzi made most successful attempts at "popularizing" the fine old music. He selected two groups of *laude*, those in each group being related to each other through their poetic content, and transformed them into two works entitled *Il Passione* and *Laudi Francescane*, each a sort of oratorio for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra. The first was performed with great success not only in concert form, but also scenically at the Scala in Milan, at the Vienna and Budapest operas, in Buenos Aires, etc. This work is based on *laude* from the Cortona manuscript, that deal with the life of Jesus. *Laudi Francescane* derives from pieces,

taken from the same source, that treat of St. Francis. In both, the delicate problem of adding a harmonic background for orchestra has been solved with the utmost discretion and with a perfect sense of color; the monodically conceived melodies are kept in their original form throughout, thus retaining their fragrance and simplicity. In *Le Vergini savie e le Vergini folli*, a "popularization" of the *Sponsus*-play, Liuzzi makes a more elaborate use, particularly in the orchestral part, of the old melodic material. This too received stage performances—in Rome, Florence, etc.

Another attempt at restoration followed when he revived the settings of choral passages in the "Oedipus Rex" of Sophocles, composed by Andrea Gabrieli for the opening of Palladio's famous Teatro Olimpico at Vicenza in 1585. The only existing copy of Gabrieli's work, printed in 1588 at Venice, is incomplete. It consists of five of the originally six part-books; some are preserved at Padua and some at Vienna. Liuzzi reduced the parts to score, substituting for the missing sixth voice a voice of his own, and adding also orchestral sections. "Oedipus Rex" was revived in 1937, with this version of Gabrieli's music included in the production, at the ancient Roman theatre at Sabratha, Tripolitania.

In 1938 Liuzzi was commissioned to prepare a modern stage version of Orazio Vecchi's *L'Amfiparnasso* (1597), to be performed, with orchestral intermezzi and dances, at the Maggio Musicale at Florence. The great success of the transcription of this important madrigal-comedy, generally regarded as one of the pre-forms of music drama, did not prevent Liuzzi's name from being omitted from the official program when the production was repeated the next year. The explanation is simple enough: the notorious racial laws had been introduced into Italy. The scholar to whom his country—indeed the whole musical world—is indebted for fundamental knowledge concerning the early stages of its music, was released in October, 1938, from his activities at the University and from all other official functions. Having been commissioned by the government to undertake research on Italian music in France, Liuzzi had gathered voluminous first-hand material on the subject in the libraries of Paris and had already completed the first part of his work, spanning the period from Venantius Fortunatus to Lully. At the moment when the complete set of proofs (500 pages), reproducing many hitherto unpublished musical documents, was ready for correction, the

printing was suspended by the authorities. Finally, the government which, at great expense, had printed the sumptuous *Lauda* edition, three years after publication ordered all available copies confiscated.

Abroad, however, Liuzzi's scholarly merits had not been forgotten. In 1939 he was appointed visiting professor at the *École des Hautes Études de Belgique* in Brussels and was invited by the American Musicological Society to read a paper at the International Musicological Congress scheduled to take place in New York, the first event of the sort held in America. The clouds of the second World War had already gathered when—on September 16—the convention was opened with the reading of an impressive message received from Romain Rolland. Liuzzi and some other European delegates (Jeppesen, Smijers, etc.) managed to arrive safely; others (Johannes Wolf and Yvonne Rokseth) were unable to come. Liuzzi's paper on the *barzelette* and *canzoni a ballo* of the Italian *quattrocento* (forerunners of the *frottola*) was a by-product of his research on Italian music in France. Delivered in delightful French and characterized by an admirable balance of content and form, it turned out to be one of the highlights of the Congress.

It proved, alas, to be also the last of Liuzzi's lectures. At a reception given in his honor at the Casa Italiana of Columbia University, he delivered an improvised, deeply moving speech, this time in Italian. Then, in January, 1940, he suffered a heart attack. After spending weeks in a New York hospital, he was faced with the hard problem of deciding whether to stay in America, where he had been most cordially received and already had been appointed to give a lecture course at the Columbia University Summer School, or to return to his country in order to rejoin his family. With Italy's entry into the war imminent, Liuzzi decided for the latter alternative, although he was aware that in his condition he might never reach his beloved wife and children and the granddaughter born during his absence, whom he was so anxious to see. He sailed on the "Rex", the last Italian ship to leave the United States, and when, on May 6, his friends in New York saw him off at the pier, they knew that it was a farewell for ever.

Liuzzi at least was not denied the happiness of reaching his home. His health, however, declined steadily. The end came on October 6, 1940, when he passed away quietly in a hospital at

Florence, the city which had been the scene of many happy days in his early career and which later contributed to some of his most important scholarly achievements.

Shortly before his death, after receiving a stimulant to restore him after a heavy heart attack, he reproached the doctor for his ministrations, adding: "*Ho visto una grande luce bianca, bianchissima . . . era bello!*" The vision that he thus described might be regarded as a symbol of his whole life. His students knew him as a splendid and popular lecturer, equally well-versed in the history of music and in that of literature, whose courses at the University of Rome were always crowded. They, like his friends, loved him as a believer in beauty and truth. He was a noble, rich personality and charming companion, of broad interests and full of ideas, endowed with the rare gift of a well-balanced mind and spirit. In all his deeds and utterances, professional or private, in scholarly research or artistic creation, Liuzzi always seemed to be guided by the wonderful "white light" he saw before his death—that of beauty and truth in, and beyond, life.

SELECTED LIST OF WORKS BY FERNANDO LIUZZI

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(Contents: 1. *Visibilità ed udibilità*.
2. *Estetica "kreisleriana"* . . . 3. *Un quesito estetico musicale in Anatole France*. 4. *Opinioni*. 5. *Musica latina e musica tedesca*. 6. "*Ariane et Barbe-bleu*" di M. Maeterlinck e P. Dukas. 7. "*Tristano e Isolda*" come poema drammatico. 8. Ernest Bloch.)
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Gaiola e Marecchiaro. Impresione napoletana. A rhapsody for orchestra. (Comp. 1921.) Piano score, Florence, 1923.

Scamandro. Incidental music to L. Pirandello's comedy. (First perf., Florence, 1928.)

La Passione. For soli, chorus and orchestra. (First perf., Rome, 1930.) Rome, 1932.

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