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A Singer’s Guide to the Songs of Ildebrando Pizzetti

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ABSTRACT

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Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880–1968) composed approximately forty songs for voice and piano, thirty-three of which were published during his lifetime. Although many of his songs are of high quality, they have not become a part of the standard repertory. This guide is designed to make Pizzetti’s songs more accessible to singers. Toward this end it is organized in the following manner. The paper begins with an introduction that reviews the need for a guide to Pizzetti’s songs; it also details the methodology followed in creating the main part of the document, entries on each song. Chapter two briefly discusses Pizzetti’s life and provides information on the songs in general. The next three chapters contain detailed descriptions of each of the songs (they are organized according to publication dates). Each song entry contains: (1) a section that lists facts about the song, such as the name of and dates for the author of the text, the composition date, publication information, and other useful information specific to the music of the song, such as range, key, meter, tempo, etc.; (2) a section that contains the text of the song, a word-for-word translation of the song, and an IPA transcription of the song; and (3) a brief discussion of the song that includes information about its inception and first performance (if known), its music and text, and its musical and vocal difficulties. In some cases, suggestions for performers are included. The remainder of the paper includes a complete listing of Pizzetti’s songs (Appendix A), an annotated bibliography.
of resources in English that deal with Pizzetti’s songs (Appendix B), and a new idiomatic translation of Pizzetti’s *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti* (Appendix C).
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Chapter 1

A SINGER’S GUIDE TO THE SONGS OF ILDEBRANDO PIZZETTI

Purpose of this paper

Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880–1968) composed thirty-three songs for voice and piano that were published during his lifetime. This number does not include his many vocalizzi, that is, songs without words, nor does it include songs composed for voice and other instruments, of which there are a few. Most of his songs are of high quality, yet today few of them are performed outside of Italy (and by all appearances infrequently even there), and North American performances of all but a handful of Pizzetti’s songs are rare indeed. This project was originally conceived while researching potential repertoire for a chamber music recital in the midst of working on my doctoral degree at Rice University and was written with the purpose of making these songs more available to singers, especially English-speaking singers.

In the preface of the book Italian Art Song, the authors express their regret at the relative neglect of Italian art songs on song recitals in the United States and abroad when compared to the German Lied or French mélodie. Their book, published in 1989, was intended to bring to light the wealth of Italian art songs that, in the authors’ estimation, merited much more attention and performances by recitalists.1 The purpose of A Singer’s Guide to the Songs of Ildebrando Pizzetti is similar to theirs but more focused, since this paper is intended to bring to light the songs of but one Italian composer. It is this

1Ruth C. Lakeway and Robert C. White, Jr., preface to Italian Art Song (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), vii.
author’s belief that Pizzetti’s songs are of timeless quality, but for various reasons are too often overlooked by singers and teachers when planning recitals.

The reasons behind this neglect are many. One of the most practical of these obstacles for the modern performer is the difficulty in locating and obtaining these songs. Even with the expanded resources of the internet and online library catalogs, tracking down less well-known Pizzetti songs can be a challenge. But why were these songs abandoned in the first place? Certainly one can point to the considerable rhythmic, musical, linguistic, and vocal challenges that are present in many of them. There is hardly one song of Pizzetti’s that a voice teacher would feel comfortable assigning to a beginning-level voice student, especially a student that is not fluent in Italian. Then there is the significant issue that many modern voice teachers have a preference for “traditional” art songs in French, German, or English when programming their students’ recitals. Thus, Italian liriche, or art songs, are rarely a consideration for many. And then, of course, there is the possibility that a singer (or a voice teacher) is totally ignorant of Pizzetti’s songs. In this paper, the intent is to address each of these issues by making Pizzetti’s songs more accessible to singers who might otherwise not have sung them at all.

Format for the song entries

Each song entry contains: (1) a section that lists facts about each song, such as the name of and dates for the author of the text, the composition date, publication information, and other useful information specific to the music of the song, such as range,
key, meter, tempo, etc.; (2) a section that contains the text of the song, a word-for-word translation of the song, and an IPA transcription of the song; and (3) a brief discussion of the song that includes information such as interesting facts about the first performance and inception of the song (if known), a description of the music and/or the text of the song, and a concluding section discussing the musical and vocal difficulties for the song in question and, in some cases, offering suggestions for performers. I decided that including complete musical analyses of the songs was beyond the scope of this project, and so they are not included. Similarly, I have elected not to include musical examples in the song entry portion of this paper, but to instead refer to measure numbers in the printed scores. Publication information for all of Pizzetti’s published songs is listed in the bibliography of this paper.

The songs appear in this paper in the order of their publication date, rather than by composition date, so as to keep songs that were published in sets together in the text. This is important because some of Pizzetti’s songs that were published together were actually composed many years apart. However, when the year of publication is the same for songs that are not part of the same set, then the year of composition has been used to “break the tie” and place them in chronological order. I have divided the song entries into three chapters in order to help the reader understand the chronology of the songs and also to break up this lengthy section of the paper into manageable parts.
About the translations

In creating the new, word-for-word translations that appear in each song entry, I have primarily relied upon the two excellent Italian dictionaries listed in the bibliography for this paper and on my own understanding of and skill with the Italian language. On numerous occasions I have also asked the advice of native speakers and experts such as Dr. Edward Anderson, former Professor of Humanities at Rice University, and Margaret Howell, retired Professor of Italian at Belmont University; the latter has also proofed each song translation for mistakes. I have read other translations of these poems whenever possible, though not all of them appear in English translations elsewhere. Unlike most or all previously published translations of these songs, the word-for-word translations that appear in this paper are not idiomatic, and therefore often do injury to the beauty of the Italian poetry. I have made no effort to avoid this somewhat regrettable result. Instead, the goal in creating these translations has been accuracy of meaning, if not always authentic poetic sentiment. For example, in the song “Sera d’Inverno,” I have rendered the beautiful Italian phrase, “S’alza la nova luna su’l puro velario del cielo e la gran coltre nivea scintilla di vivido argento” as, “It rises the new moon on the pure curtain of the sky and the great blanket snow white sparkle of bright silver.” This is awkward English prose, at best, but since each translated English word is directly underneath the corresponding Italian word from the original text, I believe that this method aids rather than hinders the singer’s comprehension of the text. In no way are

2The most significant sources for other English translations of some Pizzetti song texts include: Rachel Jensen, “The Songs of Ildebrando Pizzetti” (DMA diss., University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, 2001); Ruth C. Lakeway and Robert C. White, Jr., Italian Art Song (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989); Bonnie Pomfret, “Six Songs of Ildebrando Pizzetti: Text Setting and Form” (DM diss., Indiana University, 1991).
these translations intended for use in the performance of the songs in translation or for incorporation into program notes for a recital. Of course, when writing translations for program notes, the translator must relay the meaning of the text while still attempting to capture something of the poetic sentiment and style of the original poem. I have struck no such compromises in the word-for-word translations in this paper.

I have tried to print only the word-for-word translation whenever possible, without reordering the translated words for the sake of the reader’s comprehension. However, I have sometimes felt it necessary to include a supplemental translation in parentheses below the word-for-word translation in order to clarify the meaning of the Italian phrase. This was the case especially when word order might have been confusing enough to mislead the reader or when a phrase was a colloquial one in which the word-for-word translation missed the real meaning of the text.

No attempt has been made to keep the Italian poetry in its original format, nor have I strictly followed the composer’s musical setting in deciding the layout of the text in this document. Rather, I have tried to be economical and place as many words on each line as possible, while still maintaining (and not undermining) the meaning of the words.

As is always the case when translating from a foreign language, words in Italian often have more than one possible meaning. Furthermore, there were often times when translating these songs that I felt that an abundance of English words could authentically capture the intent and meaning of the Italian word within the framework of the poetic phrase. When faced with this dilemma, I have tried to choose the word in English that I thought would make the most sense in context to the modern singer. As such, I have avoided many archaic words that might have made for a perfectly good translation of the
Italian but might have required the singer to further “translate” the already translated English text.

For one set of songs, *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti*, I have also included idiomatic English translations that I have used as a part of program notes for various performances. They were created under the guidance of Italian expert Dr. Edward Anderson at Rice University. These idiomatic translations can be found in Appendix C.

**About the IPA transcriptions**

First of all, what exactly is the IPA? Kathryn LaBouff, in her excellent book entitled *Singing and Communicating in English: A Singer’s Guide to English Diction*, offers an excellent, concise definition of the IPA: “The International Phonetic Alphabet, known as the IPA, is a pronouncing alphabet that indicates the exact sounds of all languages regardless of their spelling.”¹ This pronouncing alphabet is primarily made up of familiar Roman alphabet symbols, but it also includes some unfamiliar additions. The IPA was created by the International Phonetic Association, a group that is composed of scientists who work with language and phonetics, active since 1886. The purpose of the Association is “to develop a set of symbols which would be convenient to use, but comprehensive enough to cope with the wide variety of sounds found in the languages of the world; and to encourage the use of this notation as widely as possible among those

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concerned with language.” In the world of classical singing, the IPA has become an important tool in teaching, singing, pronouncing, and understanding the languages in which we sing. Lyric diction classes around the world use the IPA as a basis to help teach the rules of pronunciation of the singing languages. Furthermore, many books and journal articles have been published that contain transcriptions of operas and songs into the IPA in order to facilitate the learning of those pieces, such as Nico Castel’s popular volumes of opera libretti. This paper will make use of the IPA in much the same way as these resources have done. Since phonetic transcriptions of Pizzetti’s songs have not previously been available, it was crucial that they be included as part of this paper.

Sometimes IPA transcriptions are instead referred to as IPA “readings.” The use of this term reveals a subjective aspect of the IPA and its inherently non-definitive nature. Put another way, no two IPA transcriptions are identical. This phenomenon has many contributing factors, not the least of which is human error. Other factors include the transcriber’s personal preferences as to which symbol to use for which sound in the given language, the inclusion of certain other IPA symbols, such as the long and short symbols, which may or may not be used in certain languages (Italian is a language in which the long and short symbols for vowels and/or for consonants are sometimes, but not always, included), the background and education of the person creating the “reading,” and other variances of methodology through which the transcriptions are produced.

Therefore it is necessary when studying an IPA transcription that one learn something about the transcriber’s point of view and the methodology on which the

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transcription is based. The following is a description of the methodology used in creating these transcriptions. I have chosen to primarily discuss the specific elements of this methodology that may differ from other resources of this kind, but I will also cover those that I deem to be generally important for the reader to know in order to maximize the usefulness of these transcriptions.

There are certain resources, such as the aforementioned volumes of opera libretti by Nico Castel and John Moriarty’s standard college textbook entitled Diction, that include IPA transcriptions and recommendations that adhere to the rules of the Italian language, while also making allowances and adjustments for vowel modification in extremities of vocal range and for perceived vocal limitations of singers. In contrast to the theories espoused in these resources, I have chosen in this paper to follow the rules of the Italian language as they are represented in the Zingarelli dictionary in most cases, not making allowances either for range or other vocal considerations, since these vary from voice type to voice type and from singer to singer. I have also relied upon David Adams’ more modern take on lyric Italian diction in his book, A Handbook of Diction for Singers: Italian, German, French.

I have elected to use the phonetic symbol [a] for the written vowel a. This differs from some other resources, which use the symbol [ɑ] instead for this sound, but is in accord with recent texts that deal with phoneticizing the Italian language. The reasons for this shift in modern IPA usage are probably many. Perhaps the main reason is as an

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attempt to accurately represent the fact that the Italian $a$ sound is closer to the same sound in French or German, both of which are usually written phonetically as $[a]$, than it is to the somewhat darker $[a]$ that is present in English and in some French words. Of course, choosing to use a different symbol for this sound does not change the sound itself; a discussion of the difference between the two symbols and which is preferred in Italian is therefore somewhat pedantic. Nevertheless, the fact remains that $[a]$ is a more accurate representation of the articulatory formation and the actual sound of the Italian $a$.

Perhaps an even more contentious issue surrounding phonetic renderings of Italian vowel sounds is in regards to the two un-phonetic vowels, $e$ and $o$. The issue at hand is whether or not all unstressed written letter $e$’s and $o$’s should be rendered (and sung) as closed vowels, as they are in standard spoken Italian. There are respected resources and pedagogies that state that these vowels should be opened in some unstressed positions for one reason or another. The various reasons given for this practice include:

- the perceived habits of one or more famous Italian singers
- the more relaxed manner of speaking employed by modern Italians directly related to the opening of otherwise closed, unstressed vowels
- the need for singers to modify closed vowels (i.e., open them) due to range and other considerations
- the perceived difficulty of singing closed vowels
- the unfortunate habit of American singers to make diphthongs of final, unstressed, closed vowels

I have carefully considered each of these deviations from Zingarelli and found them all lacking for various reasons.

First, no single famous Italian singer, or even a group of such singers, should change the way we think about a language or how we should sing in that language.

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9 It should be noted that I am using the word *un-phonetic* to describe the only two vowels in Italian that have more than one possible vowel sound.
Instead, the entire pantheon of singers, coaches, conductors, teachers, and other experts on the subject should be consulted and studied in order to formulate a uniform method for approaching proper diction in any language. Of course, no unanimous resolution can be found when consulting such a wide array of sources; however, certain trends do begin to emerge.

That Italian speakers today are more relaxed when it comes to closing the unstressed e and o vowels may well be the case. Nevertheless, this has no bearing on how we should phonetically transcribe or sing Italian songs, with the possible exception of very recent songs. Even then, one would need to be judicious and use this modern, “relaxed” version of the language only if it seems appropriate to do so.

The idea that the rules for IPA transcriptions in Italian should be uniformly altered to accommodate vowel modification for singers can only be a proposal put forward by someone who has but a cursory understanding of the concept of vowel modification. In fact, no two singers modify their vowels in exactly the same points in their voices in exactly the same way. As a result, vowel modification is a trial and error process between student and teacher, and methods of executing this facet of vocal technique vary from pedagogy to pedagogy and even from singer to singer. The variables regarding vowel modification include how to modify the vowel, how much to modify the vowel, at what point in the voice to modify the vowel (i.e., how high or how low), and even whether to modify the vowel at all! In addition, there is the physiological fact that men and women modify vowels differently and in different areas of their vocal ranges. Various voice types, even among singers of the same sex, do not all modify vowels at the same pitch level. Therefore, in the IPA transcriptions in this paper, I have
not altered the pronunciation of words from their standard spoken forms, as represented in Zingarelli, to accommodate vowel modification for singing. It is expected that the singer performing these songs will make prudent choices regarding vowel modification with respect to closed e and o, as with all other vowels in Italian.

There is an unfortunate but persistent view that closed vowels are more difficult to sing than open ones (and that therefore IPA transcriptions of sung Italian texts should open vowels—particularly unstressed e’s and o’s—that would otherwise be closed). This notion is perhaps the least supportable reason for straying from the standard, spoken version of the Italian language. Looking at the issue from a logical standpoint, if the closed versions of orthographic e and o (represented in the IPA as [e] and [o], respectively) are so challenging to sing, then how is it that singers are able to successfully sing the vowels [i] and [u], generally considered to be the most closed vowels, without complaint or sustaining vocal fatigue and injury?

With regard to the bad habit of some North American singers to make a diphthong of closed [e] and [o] when singing in Italian, I would suggest that this is a defect that is to be systematically worked on and conquered, rather than to let this bad habit, however common, influence our perception of and method of transcription for authentic Italian lyric diction. The authors of *Diction for Singers*, while discussing the topic of closed, unstressed [e], state: “It is certainly possible for American singers to overcome their own speech habits of diphthongizing . . . the closed [e] sound.”¹⁰ I would go one step further and say that it is more than possible—it is compulsory. However, some authors on the

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subject use this vocal defect to reinforce their assertion regarding the necessity of opening certain Italian vowels in singing that in the spoken language are closed.

Within the context of a closed or open vowel, there are many possible vowel choices depending on range, volume, and desired vocal effect. There is no absolute, perfect closed [e] or [o], since all sung vowels, in whatever language, are subject to musical and vocal context. There are often choices to be made, and the correct vowel for each singer will, in the end, be the one that is most vocally free and yet is heard as the real vowel in Italian.

It is also true that the closed and open vowel sounds in Italian are nearer to each other in quality than their counterparts in other languages, notably in French and German. So, while the issue of whether or not to sing closed [e] and [o] for all unstressed e’s and o’s in Italian is important to address here, especially since I will be making use of this distinction throughout the song entries in this paper, it should not be misconstrued as being the most critical issue facing the student of lyric Italian diction. Again I find myself in agreement with Adams when he points out that “other aspects of Italian are more fundamental (for example, the purity of vowel sounds and appropriate articulation of single and double consonants) and should be perfected before a great deal of time is spent learning the intricacies of open and closed e and o.”

Since some well-known resources deal with the issue of intervocalic s somewhat differently than I do in this paper, it is important that I address this issue here. First of all, in the different regions of Italy, intervocalic s is pronounced in various ways. According to Evelina Coloni, author of Singers’ Italian, Italian speakers in the northern part of Italy tend to voice intervocalic s (phonetically transcribed as [z]), while Italian speakers in the

11Adams, 35-36.
south tend to unvoice it (phonetically transcribed as [s]). Further complicating the issue, in Tuscany, the area of Italy that is primarily the source for the standardized version of the Italian language as we know it today, speakers both voice and unvoice intervocalic s, but without any consistency or pattern.\textsuperscript{12} This randomness is reflected within the pages of the Zingarelli dictionary, where one finds some words, such as cosi and cosa, phonetically transcribed with an unvoiced [s] sound, while many others in which s appears in nearly identical situations are transcribed with a voiced [z]. For the IPA transcriptions in this paper, I have generally adhered to the concept of intervocalic s as being best sung as [z] in lyric Italian diction. Nearly all Italian diction texts are in agreement about this, presumably because the voiced [z] sound carries better and is less likely to interrupt the legato line.\textsuperscript{13} Adams also recommends the use of the [z] sound for intervocalic s, with only a few exceptional situations.\textsuperscript{14} When an exceptional situation such as these arises in a song text in this paper, I have included an explanatory footnote below the text.

The difference between a flipped r and a rolled (sometimes called a trilled) r has been represented in IPA transcriptions in various ways. In the transcriptions in this paper, I have used the [r] symbol for flipped r and the [r] symbol for rolled r. An r that is a doubled consonant is written as [rr].

In spoken Italian, orthographic n has a variety of possible sounds and is sometimes affected by whatever consonants follow it. When an n makes a sound other


\textsuperscript{14}Adams, 25.
than [n] based on the consonants that follow, this is commonly known as an \( n \) assimilation. The situations in which \( n \) assimilations occur are: (1) when \( n \) precedes a [k] or [g] sound, the resulting sound is [\( \eta \)], as in the words \( stanco \) and \( lungo \); (2) when \( n \) precedes a b, p, or m, the resulting sound is [m], as in the phrases \( un\ bacio,\ un\ piatto, \) and \( in\ me \); and (3) when \( n \) precedes f or v, the resulting sound is the nasalized [\( \eta \)], as in the words \( informazione \) and \( invano \).\(^\text{15}\)

Sources differ greatly as to whether to include \( n \) assimilations in song transcriptions or not; some use all of the possible \( n \) assimilations all of the time, some use them only selectively, some only use the [\( \eta \)] sounding \( n \) assimilation, and others do not include them at all. I have chosen to include them throughout these transcriptions. However, there is a great deal of flexibility in their usage, as there is with many of the finer points of good, authentic-sounding lyric Italian diction. Non-native Italian singers should seek the advice of a capable authority on the subject when deciding whether or not to make use of \( n \) assimilations.

Some Italian consonants, though written as single consonants, are actually pronounced as doubled consonants and are therefore represented in these IPA transcriptions as doubles. There are four cases in which this occurs, and these are the sounds associated with the written letters or combinations of letters \( gn,\ gl,\ sci \) and \( sce \), and intervocalic \( z \). Here are some examples of words in which this issue arises and their IPA equivalents, taken from Pizzetti song texts:

\(^{15}\)For a more detailed discussion of how to execute \( n \) assimilations and where to employ them, see: Adams, 32, 61-62; Castel, xvii.
In some situations, a single, initial consonant of an Italian word may be pronounced as if it were a doubled consonant when following a word that ends in a vowel. This is called *raddoppiamento sintattico*, which can be translated as phrasal or syntactic doubling. It usually occurs following short, monosyllabic words, such as *già*, *che*, *ma*, and many others, and after words that end in a vowel that is marked with an accent mark, such as *perché* or *sarà*. There are also other words that end in a vowel that do not conform to the two categories above that can cause phrasal doubling in the word that follows it. However, phrasal doubling is not obligatory in every case; in fact, overusing this device can cause the sung text to sound very un-Italian. Rather, it is a choice left up to each singer as to how often and where to incorporate this important feature of the Italian language, based on the dramatic situation or desired emphasis on the text being sung. Given that its use varies from singer to singer, even among Italians, I have decided not to incorporate phrasal doubling into my transcriptions at all. Instead, I trust that the interested and eager student will seek out a knowledgeable vocal coach or other expert in the Italian language for advice about specific instances in these songs for which the use of *raddoppiamento sintattico* may be appropriate.

Word stress in Italian is extremely important, and Pizzetti took great care in how he set the texts of his songs musically, so that proper Italian word stress was not obscured by the music. It follows then that it is crucial that the singer of Pizzetti’s songs be aware

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16 Adams, 41-45. There are many resources that describe in more detail the art of applying *raddoppiamento sintattico*, many of which are listed in my bibliography. My favorite, and perhaps one of the most concise, is David Adams’ discussion of this important feature of the Italian language.
of which syllable is stressed within each word. There is more than one way to show word stress in an IPA transcription, but in this paper, word stress will be indicated by a vertical stress mark before the stressed syllable. For example, the word *pastori* is transcribed as [pasˈtori], *mattina* as [matˈtina], and *mondo* as [ˈmondo].

When two pronunciations of a word are possible, as indicated by Zingarelli, the first and most common pronunciation will be printed in the IPA transcription with no comment to indicate other possible pronunciations.

The following is a list of good resources for more in-depth discussions of Italian pronunciation. Though they represent a variety of viewpoints on the intricacies of the language, together they comprise a very thorough treatment of the topic of lyric Italian diction. Listed here in alphabetical order by author’s last name, they are:

- *A Handbook of Diction for Singers: Italian, German, French* by David Adams
- The introduction to *Italian Belcanto Opera Libretti* by Nico Castel
- The introduction to *Phonetic Readings of Songs and Arias* by Burton Coffin, et al.
- *Singer’s Italian* by Eva Colorni
- *Italian Diction for Singers* by Ralph Errolle
- The introduction to *Italian Song Texts from the 18th Century* by Martha Gerhart
- *Diction* by John Moriarty

A complete bibliographic listing for each of these works appears in the bibliography of this paper.

The reader who uses this guide to aid their learning of Pizzetti songs will still need the guidance of a competent professional to advise the singer on the many issues involved in singing idiomatically in the Italian language. There is a great deal of nuance required in order to sound authentic and pronounce (and sing) beautifully in Italian, and very little of this kind of subtlety can be conveyed through IPA transcriptions. Seeing a visual representation (in this case, an IPA transcription) of the sounds of a given Italian
text is no substitute for hearing the words spoken by an expert Italian linguist, preferably a native speaker. The IPA is a useful tool, a resource used to put visual symbols with what could otherwise be only communicated through sound—but it is not the same thing as hearing an Italian speaker or singer pronounce these words. Likewise, a singer’s work with a voice teacher and/or vocal coach on these songs is irreplaceable. Instead, the IPA transcriptions in this paper are included as a starting point for singers as they begin their work on these songs. They will also tend to make learning Pizzetti songs easier, since I have already done a great deal of the research that singers would otherwise be required to do on their own.

Pizzetti composed a handful of songs that have texts in languages other than Italian. Of these, six were published. One song (one of his first composed) is in French, two of the songs are in the Neapolitan dialect, and three are in Latin. The Neapolitan songs are not included in the song entries in this paper (see “Inclusions and Exclusions” below). For the song in French and the songs in Latin, I have relied upon the following resources for my IPA transcriptions, all of which have a complete bibliographic listing in the bibliography of this paper:

- For the French song:
  - *A Handbook of Diction for Singers: Italian, German, French* by David Adams
  - The introduction to *French Opera Libretti: In Two Volumes. Vol I.* by Nico Castel
  - *Singing in French* by Thomas Grubb

- For the Latin songs:
  - *Singers’ Liturgical Latin* by Robert S. Hines
  - *Diction* by John Moriarty
  - *Diction for Singers* by Joan Wall, et al.
Format for texts, translations, and IPA transcriptions

For the song entries in this paper, I have chosen to use the now standard format made popular by Nico Castel’s opera libretti volumes and others. Entries are presented as three lines of text: the top line is the IPA transcription, the middle line (in bold) is the actual song text, and the bottom line is the word-for-word English translation of the text. As mentioned above, if the word-for-word translation needs clarification, I have parenthetically added a fourth line in order to make the meaning of that section of text more clear. I have not included verses of poetry that were present in the original text but not set to music by the composer.

Inclusions and exclusions

With a few exceptions, which will be enumerated below, I have chosen to include all published songs by Pizzetti written for voice and piano. I have used a very broad definition of the word “published,” as well, since I have included those songs that appeared in magazines during Pizzetti’s lifetime but were never commercially published. Excluded from this paper are a number of songs that the reader might otherwise have expected to see here. Pizzetti’s Due inni Greci, composed for soprano, chorus, and orchestra, was published in 1937 by Ricordi and was also published in a reduction for piano and voice. However, this last version was arranged by Maffeo Zanon, not by Pizzetti, and so I have not included it in my specific discussion of Pizzetti’s songs for voice and piano. Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti, also published in 1937, is a set of
songs that had a similar inception. These songs were originally written for baritone voice, violin, viola, cello, and piano, and were later published in a version for only voice and piano. Again, the later arrangement was by Zanon. Nevertheless, I decided to include these two songs in the song entries in this paper. I have made this exception because I have performed these songs several times in recital and researched them extensively. Though they do not technically fit the usual criteria, my expertise and personal history with these songs argued for their inclusion.

Two other songs that fit the requirements for inclusion in this paper but are nonetheless excluded are the Due liriche drammatiche Napoletane, which were first published for piano and voice by Forlivesi in 1918. However, due to my lack of proficiency with the Neapolitan dialect in which these song texts were written, I have elected to omit these songs from this paper. Instead, I leave them for some later scholar who may have more understanding of and ability in this language.

Pizzetti composed numerous vocalizzi, or songs without words, that, while beautiful and important in his compositional output, I chose to exclude from this paper. Since much of this project has been focused on translating and phonetically transcribing the texts of Pizzetti’s songs, including these vocalizzi would not have been consistent with the paper’s overall thrust.

How to use this guide

For those who are interested in Pizzetti, his music, and his songs as a whole, this paper will likely be relevant from its first page to its last. For others, who may only be
interested in information regarding a particular song or set of songs, this guide may be used as a reference work. Each song entry can be located by page number in the table of contents. Additionally, each entry is meant to be complete, in and of itself. This means that when information is given regarding an entire set of songs, some of the same information may appear in each entry for each song published in that set. Alternatively, I may occasionally refer the reader to the first song of the set for more information about the set as a whole when it seems prudent to do so. Other useful parts of this paper include the complete listing of Pizzetti’s songs, located in Appendix A; the annotated bibliography of resources in English that deal with Pizzetti’s songs, located in Appendix B; and two new idiomatic translations of Pizzetti’s *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti*, located in Appendix C.
About Pizzetti

Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880–1968) was born to Odoardo and Teresa Fava Pizzetti in Parma, Italy, on Monday, September 20th. When he was only four years old, the family moved to Reggio Emilia, not far from the city of his birth. Though Ildebrando would become one of the most well-known and respected Italian musicians of his generation, early in his life his interests were more focused on theatrical endeavors than with musical ones. Nevertheless, when he was fourteen years old, Ildebrando went against his father’s wishes and began studying music with Guglielmo Mattioli (1857–1924), who was at the time the director of the school where Odoardo Pizzetti, by trade a piano teacher, taught solfege. It was apparently from this moment that Pizzetti’s dedication to realizing an authentic, unified form of expression between music and drama can be traced. Later on in this same year of 1895, encouraged by Mattioli and apparently much to the dismay of his father, young Pizzetti enrolled in the Conservatory in Parma, where he studied composition with Telesforo Righi (1842–1930). He also became familiar with the music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries at this time through the tutelage of Giovanni Tebaldini (1864–1952), a pioneer in the field of musicology and a scholar credited with rediscovering the music from these time periods when few others in Italy were interested in doing so. This study of Italian Renaissance music would shape Pizzetti’s compositions.

\footnote{Bruno Pizzetti, \textit{Ildebrando Pizzetti: Cronologia e Bibliografia} (Parma, Italy: La Pilotta, 1980), 11–18.}
for the rest of his life, though the influence of Tebaldini specifically may have been overstated by many of Pizzetti’s biographers and perhaps especially by Tebaldini himself.  

During his lifetime, Pizzetti gained international acclaim as a composer, teacher, conductor, and music critic. Then, as now, composers often held positions as teachers at universities and conservatories. Pizzetti’s teaching career involved faculty and administrative positions at the Parma Conservatory, the Istituto Musicale of Florence (which later become the Conservatory of Florence), the Conservatory of Milan, and the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, where he also served as president from 1947–1952. Among his students were many of the following generation of great Italian composers, including Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, who credited Pizzetti with influencing and guiding young Italian composers, “even those who were not directly taught by him.” Pizzetti’s career as a conductor was limited, most likely because he was not an enthusiastic performer by nature. After he received his degree in composition from the Parma Conservatory in 1901, he accepted an appointment as assistant conductor at the Teatro Regio di Parma, but he probably did so out of financial necessity or career planning rather than out of a real desire to conduct. Nonetheless he could occasionally be found conducting later in his life, especially in some of his own works. He also

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accompanied on the piano many of the debut performances of his songs. Perhaps his most significant occupation and contribution to the field of music, besides his career as a composer, was his work as a critic and author. His numerous critical essays cover a wide array of composers and topics; among them are articles on the expected composers for an early twentieth-century Italian music critic, such as Puccini, Mascagni, Bellini, Rossini, and Verdi, but also the less-expected ones, including diverse composers such as Monteverdi, Frescobaldi, Rameau, Debussy, Ravel, Massenet, Gounod, Mendelssohn, Stravinsky, Schönberg, Liszt, Wagner, Schubert, and both Clara and Robert Schumann.22 Such was Pizzetti’s broad knowledge of music and musicians. Additionally, he authored many reviews of performances of works by all the afore-mentioned composers and others, as well as numerous articles defining and defending his methods of composition and musical ideals. One contemporary of Pizzetti referred to the composer’s critical writings being as central to his art as were his compositions and that “the two elements are so intimately associated that . . . the artist’s qualities are revealed no less by his criticism than by his music.”23

As a composer, Pizzetti belonged to a group of Italian composers who were born around the year 1880, referred to as the generazione dell’ottanta (“generation of eighty”). Far from being unified by a singular style, these composers included Franco Alfano (1876–1954), Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936), Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882–1973), Alfredo Casella (1883–1947), and, of course, Ildebrando Pizzetti.24 They would, despite their very different aesthetic ideals, play important roles in preparing the way for the next

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22Bruno Pizzetti, 399–492.

23Gatti, Ildebrando Pizzetti, 103–107.

24Lakeway and White, 20.
generation of Italian composers, many of whom broke away from traditional Italian styles. One characteristic that set Pizzetti apart from his contemporaries was that he never studied outside of Italy, unlike the other members of the generazione dell’ottanta. Therefore, he is perhaps the most intrinsically “Italian” of all of these composers, since his education was steeped in the traditions and techniques of the old Italian school. His domestic education probably also explains his “preoccupation with emerging from Italian musical provincialism,” an objective that would remain a life-long concern for him.25

Pizzetti’s first major work was incidental music for La nave (1908), a play by Gabriele D’Annunzio (1863–1938). His collaboration with D’Annunzio marked the beginning of a close friendship, one that would propel young Pizzetti to the attention of Italian audiences and critics. The poet, in his inimitable style, even nicknamed the composer “Ildebrando da Parma,” a moniker Pizzetti was apparently quite fond of, since he used it instead of his own name on numerous early compositions, including the Cinque liriche (published in 1916) and others. D’Annunzio’s extravagant and overtly sensual writing style would not seem to mesh well with Pizzetti’s more staid, conservative, and sober musical sensibilities, but the collaboration nevertheless resulted in some of the composer’s most inspired works. Among these are his most famous song, “I pastori,” (1908) and one of his most successful operas, Fedra (1912).

Are we to consider Pizzetti to be a revolutionary composer or a conservative one? His complicated history makes the answer to this question less clear than it might seem on the surface, but the truth is that he probably falls somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. Two manifestos, both signed by Pizzetti, reveal this dichotomy. The first,

signed by such forward-thinking composers as Vincenzo Tommasini (1878–1950), Francesco Malipiero, and Alfredo Casella, in addition to Pizzetti and three others, was included as a kind of preface to a printed program for a concert of compositions by these so-called “young Italian school” composers in 1914. The signatories sought to revitalize the national music of Italy, “in spite of the lethargy which has blighted the natural development of the 17th century melodrama, smothered the germs of 18th century chamber music and dried up (or almost) the sources of folk-song. . .” The authors continued by announcing that “this concert. . .is being given in order to prove the birth of a new musicality in our country.”

Pizzetti’s association with this group of composers and his signing of this document would seem to place him at the forefront of the modern musical movement in Italy, a movement far removed from the stodgy conservatism of the verismo and old bel canto schools.

In 1932 we find Pizzetti signing a manifesto that is very unlike the first, one that places him in a different camp altogether. This time, Pizzetti aligned himself with Respighi, Zandonai, and various other conservative musical figures to sign a notorious manifesto that essentially condemned experimental music and encouraged a return to the established musical tradition of Italy. This manifesto caused great upheaval in an already complicated and tense period for struggling Italian composers, creating a situation in which “the Italian musical world was soon divided into pro and contra camps and sub-factions.”

Ironically, this document was likely aimed at the signatories of the 1914 manifesto, specifically Casella and Malipiero. It is surprising that Mussolini, often the

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advocate for Italian tradition, actually sided with the modernists after this manifesto surfaced. Pizzetti later recanted his signing of this document, perhaps in response to confrontations by musicians such as Malipiero—who in 1934 wrote to Pizzetti condemning the manifesto and its ill effects on all modern composers, even those that signed it—but his signing does shed light on either the composer’s change of position over the course of three decades or his proclivity for rejecting alternate musical ideologies that did not correspond to his own artistic values.

Another possible explanation for Pizzetti’s signing of both of these documents is that the composer’s own style changed very little over the years. What was “modern” in 1914 was no longer so in 1932, especially considering that this was a period of great upheaval and change in the musical world both in Italy and abroad. Pizzetti’s stylistic consistency has been viewed both positively and negatively. For instance, Gatti described this unchanging style as a “constant unity of direction,” adding that when discussing Pizzetti’s career and musical style, “one can only reveal how a system of thought and an original poetic theory steadily matured and grew in profundity.” He also rightly pointed out that Pizzetti avoided many of the fads and experiments of so many contemporary composers. However, others have pointed to this steadfastness of style over such a long musical career as a hindrance to creative output in his later years.

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28 Pizzetti’s association with Mussolini and his compliance with or even opportunist exploitation of the fascist regime is a topic that is discussed little in published resources. In the interest of keeping these introductory comments on Pizzetti for this chapter brief, I avoid the topic altogether, leaving it for some future researcher whose work will be more focused in this area. Two resources in English that do delve into this topic are: Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987); Franco Sciannameo, “In Black and White: Pizzetti, Mussolini and Scipio Africanus,” *The Musical Times* 145, no. 1887 (Summer 2004): 25–50.

29 Bruno Pizzetti, 241–243, Lakeway and White, 122; Pomfret, 4; Sachs, 26–27.

For example, in Pizzetti’s obituary in *The Musical Times*, J.C.G. Waterhouse stated that although “Pizzetti’s later compositions rarely stand comparison with these early pieces, it would be wrong to condemn them outright” and later, scathingly, that “one suspects that if he [Pizzetti] had stopped composing in, say, 1930 the general history of Italian music would have been little changed.”³¹

Ildebrando Pizzetti died in Rome on February 13, 1968. He was one of Italy’s most revered musicians, especially for his compositions, his teaching, and his scholarly writings. The composer Goffredo Petrassi (1904–2003), quoted in translation by Sciannimeo, had this to say upon the event of the elder composer’s death:

> The departure of Ildebrando Pizzetti has left us with great sadness. He has been one of the Maestri to whom my generation looked up with fervent and admired respect, getting nourishment from His very high example. . . . Pizzetti’s œuvre not only demonstrates the tenacious and polemic faith of his own ideas. It is, above all, an example of integrity, neither towards the ephemeral and precarious aesthetic of the moment, nor toward the banal commercial attitudes of the music market. This is the sense of his very firm dictum, ‘I will never change!’”³²

### General information about Pizzetti’s songs

The songs of Ildebrando Pizzetti are unique in the long history of song composition. Never has an Italian composer expressed such a strong emphasis on the texts of his songs. Pizzetti’s varied methods of responding to text make for beautiful, highly individual works in this genre. He was not a composer who was content to compose music that was guaranteed to be a success with his audiences. Instead, he

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³²Sciannimeo, 49–50.
challenged himself to compose thoughtful settings that arose from the elevated poetry that he consistently chose to use. If some of his greatest songs are also his most rhythmically and musically challenging, one need look no further than Pizzetti’s efforts towards realizing an authentic, idiomatic rendering of his texts to discover the reason for their complexity. His many other influences and interests, of course, also play important roles in his compositions. The resulting songs are so characteristically “Pizzettian” than virtually none of his songs could be mistaken for having been written by any other composer. In the best of them, he essentially created an entirely new kind of Italian song (which he called liriche), one in which word and music were perfectly wedded to form something greater than its parts. Pizzetti’s amazing and unusual songs richly deserve more recognition and modern-day performances because they reveal a remarkable balance between text and music, and because they are uncommonly beautiful.

In discussing Pizzetti’s songs and their characteristics, it is probably easier to point to general elements of his style that are consistent throughout his life than it is with many other composers. This is due to the fact, mentioned above, that his overall style of composition changed little over the years. What follows is a discussion of Pizzetti’s musical style in his songs, beginning with the most broad, general, and pervasive elements, and finishing with some less important or consistent features of his work.

The most universal and important characteristic of Pizzetti’s song composition style is his focus on the text. Early on in his career, he began to direct his attention toward achieving an authentic musical setting for Italian texts. This came as a reaction to composers of Italy’s past and present, as perceived by Pizzetti, who obscured the texts they were setting for various musical reasons, but especially for the sake of melody. He
also felt that composers of the recent past had chosen to set inferior poetry, largely due to the ease with which it was possible to set such simplistic, metrically regular verse. In identifying these problems, Pizzetti set for himself the objective of writing songs that were absolutely faithful to the words in every conceivable way, a goal that influenced nearly every aspect of his songs.

This ideal also led Pizzetti to seek out modern and traditional poetry of high quality for his songs. His texts come from three basic sources: 1) modern Italian poetry, 2) ancient and historical sources, including biblical texts and poetry and texts by Petrarch (1304–1374), Michelangelo (1475–1564) and Sappho (born c.650 B.C.), and 3) folksong texts. By far the largest source of poetry for his songs comes from modern Italian poets. Some were famous, such as Gabriele D’Annunzio (1863–1938) and Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888–1970), who were two poets that inspired some of the greatest Pizzetti songs (“I pastori” by D’Annunzio and the later work, Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti), while others were lesser known, such as Mario Silvani (1884–1913), who authored “Sera d’inverno,” and who happened to be from Pizzetti’s hometown, Parma.33

Pizzetti’s careful attention to text setting had many results. The first was that his songs eschewed traditional melodies in favor of vocal lines that followed the natural spoken inflection of the Italian language. Thus, longer, higher notes, especially those that fall on the strong beats of the measure, tend to be found on the stressed syllables of important words; unstressed syllables of less important words in the sentence fall on lower notes and are shorter in duration. In fact, in certain songs one can almost imagine

33Two resources that have explored Pizzetti’s choices with regard to texts and poets in greater detail are Jensen, 22–34, 200; Pomfret, 21–35, 106.
Pizzetti creating a hierarchy of words in each sentence in order to establish his vocal “melody.” Emotional outbursts in the text are consistently set as high notes, usually preceded by an unprepared disjunct leap. Generally speaking, though, his vocal lines are stepwise in nature, making these excursions distinctive because they leap out of an otherwise speech-like texture that falls within a limited vocal range. Example 2-1 is a short excerpt from “Erotica,” a song filled with sensual images and erotic themes. In this example, there is only one intervallic leap in the vocal line—the surprising leap upwards on the word “piacere” (“pleasure”). Other, less important words in the phrase are set to lower pitches and aside from the one leap, the vocal line moves by step. This climactic

34Ildebrando Pizzetti, “Erotica,” text by Gabriele D’Annunzio (Bologna, Italy: Francesco Bongiovanni, 1924), 5.
moment in the music corresponds to the important moment in the text, and places the stressed syllable of this word on the highest note of the song.

As one might expect, the texts themselves are usually set syllabically, with only a handful, such as the late song “Surge, propera, amica mea,” serving as aberrations from the norm. Furthermore, Pizzetti’s strict adherence to the natural spoken inflection of the Italian language often resulted in very complicated rhythms. In some of his songs, it is not unusual for a single measure to take up almost an entire line of the score, so filled is this measure with sixteenth-notes, thirty-second notes, sixteenth-note triplets, and thirty-second note triplets. Examples of these kinds of rhythmic complications abound in his Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti, especially in the first song, “La Pietà” (see example 2-2).

Also characteristic is Pizzetti’s varied use of mixed meter, which manifests itself either as a consistent fluctuation in meter as a basic characteristic of the piece (one example is the song “Remember”), or as a polymeter between the voice and piano (“Vorrei voler, Signor, quel ch’io non voglio”), or both (“I pastori,” and “La madre al figlio lontano”). Example 2-3 is an excerpt from “I pastori” in which the voice and the piano are written in polymeter and both parts frequently change meter throughout the piece. The meter of the vocal line is not indicated but alternates between 2/4 and 6/8, while the piano part alternates between 9/8 and 3/4.

It is not at all surprising to discover that Pizzetti never composed a purely strophic song, even among the unpublished songs. This is largely due to his rejection of musical text settings that distort the Italian language but also to his reaction against what he considered to be the easy popularity of simple, strophic songs with saccharin melodies
Example 2-2. “La Pietà” from *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti,*” mm. 103–107.\(^{35}\)

![Sheet music of "La Pietà" from *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti.*](image)

that were so prevalent in his day and historically in Italy. However, his near total rejection of traditional melodic patterns and familiar song forms may have contributed his songs being somewhat overlooked during his lifetime and their relative obscurity today.\(^{36}\)

A second important characteristic of Pizzetti’s songs is the incorporation of Medieval and Renaissance elements into the overall musical conception. Many authors, when discussing Pizzetti, have pointed to his use of modes in his music, though there are, in actuality, relatively few instances of Pizzetti using any historical mode in his songs.

\(^{35}\)Ildebrando Pizzetti, “La Pietà” from *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti* (Milan, Italy: G. Ricordi, 1937), 14.

\(^{36}\)Jensen, 22–34.
Example 2-3. “I pastori,” from *Cinque liriche*, mm. 51–55.\textsuperscript{37}

Instead, Pizzetti often adapts characteristics from the music of these time periods to suit his specific needs, imitating without replicating exactly any specific modality or other defining qualities. Generally, when it seems that Pizzetti is relying on some mode that is ancient sounding or, at least, not familiar to modern ears, it is likely that Pizzetti has actually composed the “mode” himself. In this way, Pizzetti adopts a method of suggesting historical modes in his songs without making use of any particular one. Example 2-4 is an excerpt from “Scuote amore il mio cuore” in which Pizzetti has

\textsuperscript{37}Ildebrando Pizzetti, “I pastori” from *Cinque liriche* (Huntsville, Texas: Recital Publications, 1997), 6.
created a scale from which much of the piece is derived. The poetry is by Sappho (born c.650 B.C.), and it is likely that Pizzetti composed this “mode” in response to the ancient and exotic elements of this text.

Example 2-4. “Scuote amore il mio cuore,” from Tre canti d’amore, mm. 3–8.38

Pizzetti’s fascination with early music also contributed to the most characteristic aspect of his songs—the “flexible arioso” style that pervades much of his song output. The melodic flexibility of Pizzetti’s style was influenced in part by his knowledge of Gregorian chant, a feature often mentioned in contemporary accounts of Pizzetti’s music.39 There are times when the music strays from an overwhelmingly syllabic style;

38Ildebrando Pizzetti, “Scuote amore il mio cuore” from Tre canti d’amore (Florence, Italy: A. Forlivesi, 1960), 1.

generally when this is the case, it is to introduce a melismatic element that recalls characteristics from Medieval chant. One need look no further than the famous song “I pastori” for an example of this, since almost every phrase is entirely syllabic until its end, in which the vocal line engages in a brief, chant-like melisma, usually on the penultimate, stressed syllable of the final word of the phrase (see example 2-3, above).

A third and extremely important characteristic of Pizzetti’s songs is his reliance upon one or two themes (or motives) on which to base a song. This is true in almost every one of the songs written in his maturity (after, say, 1908, the year in which “I pastori” was composed). These themes are very often presented in the piano in octaves or in multiple octaves in an introduction to the song, and they may continue only in the piano part as the song progresses or they may be sung, as a whole or in part. They do not normally undergo development, per se, except to be truncated at times and to be presented in different keys. Since Pizzetti’s themes remain largely intact, they are almost always recognizable when they reappear. Often, these recurring themes or motives are the unifying element in Pizzetti’s songs, since his songs are, for the most part, through composed otherwise.  

Gatti takes this view of Pizzetti’s songs one step further, saying that it is characteristic of Pizzetti to use a theme as a “germ-cell or nucleus around which the piece has been constructed” and that this germ-cell gives Pizzetti’s compositions “unity and firmness.” Example 2-5 shows perhaps the most famous use of this device in all of Pizzetti’s songs, since “I pastori” is his most well-known song. This theme, presented in octaves in the piano part, recurs frequently throughout the piece but is sometimes truncated.

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40 Pomfret, 93–94.

Other characteristics that persist in Pizzetti’s songs, while perhaps not as central to his art as the three described above, nonetheless play an important role in his songs and in identifying his individual musical style. One frequently relied upon composition technique is that the piano often plays unison melodic lines in octaves, sometimes widely spaced. This characteristic was mentioned above when discussing his presentation of themes, but it oftentimes plays a more pervasive role throughout a song—in other words, this characteristic is not limited only to themes. Another device repeatedly employed by Pizzetti is the use of pedal point. Pedal points frequently occur toward the end of a song and bring to mind the cadential use of this device in some of the music of the Baroque. There are also a number of songs that end with a kind of harmonic cessation of motion, in which the accompanimental texture changes drastically by either consisting of only long-held chords or by dropping out altogether, underneath an almost spoken, recitative-like vocal line. This makes for a dramatic conclusion, but it seems to work better in certain songs than it does in others. The effect can sound formulaic if one hears several of Pizzetti’s songs in a row in which the device is used. Example 2-6 is an excerpt from “Augurio” in which this compositional technique serves to punctuate the intense final

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moment of the poem. The text of this excerpt can be translated as: “and he who has not even one (lover), may a bullet strike him in the heart.”

Example 2-6. “Augurio,” mm. 42–45.⁴³

Regarding the publication of his songs, many were published in groups. Sometimes this signifies that they were composed around the same time period and that the texts were all by the same poet. Such is the case with the Tre liriche, which consists of three songs composed in 1904 with texts by Ildebrando Cocconi (1877–1943), and the Tre sonetti del Petrarca, which consists of three songs composed in 1922. In other cases,

however, songs appear as a set simply for publication reasons and may not necessarily share musical characteristics, have the same poet, or have even been written during a specific period of time. For example, *Cinque liriche* was published in 1916 but written over a period of eight years, consisting of texts by three different poets and two Greek folk texts in translation. When songs are grouped together in this way merely for publication, it does not necessarily mean that the composer intended for them to be performed as a group in recital. Therefore, the performer should feel free to extract songs from these groups for performance. In fact, in one example of this kind of grouping of songs for publication purposes, Pizzetti’s *Tre canti d’amore* (1960), each of the three songs was intended to be sung by a different voice type!

Though Pizzetti supported his fellow composers at various points in his career and also taught so many of the younger generation of Italian composers, his strong belief in his own musical aesthetic caused him to distance himself from other musicians on numerous occasions. He did this in his critical writings for the journals and magazines for which he wrote during his lifetime and by signing the infamous “manifesto” of 1932, mentioned above, among other ways. He admired certain composers for their operas, such as Bellini and Gluck, but felt that their compositions fell short of his high standards for one reason or another, usually due to the predominance of the music over the words in their operas. Other composers earned his esteem for their attempts at a marriage between words and music, such as Wolf and Debussy, but he felt that they hadn’t gone far enough in their experiments in this regard. One wonders, from the modern and admittedly easy vantage point, if Pizzetti didn’t perhaps go too far with his. He apparently admired Monteverdi greatly, indicating that he had found “a few pages” of music written by this
composer that displayed a perfect marriage between words and music. This kind of arrogance wasn’t likely to garner too many friends among other composers, one would imagine. Perhaps Pizzetti’s opinion of other composers, contemporary and historical alike, can best be summarized by quoting his final words, shouted from his death bed: “They are all dilettantes!”

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44 Jensen, 26.

45 ‘La notte su martedì 13 grida le ultima parole: ‘Sono tutti dilettanti.’ La giornata che segue di continuo dorme e mai si risente.” Bruno Pizzetti, 351.
“Vigilia nuziale” from *Tre liriche*

Text: Ildebrando Cocconi (1877–1943)

Date composed: 1904

Publication information: Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana, 1908

Range: C4 – B-flat5

Key: F major

Meter: Mixed; mostly 4/4 with some measures of 2/4 and 6/4

Tempo: Un poco mosso

Duration: 3’30”

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult; singing must have a wide range

Piano: Difficult

Mood: Ardent; impassioned

Voice type: Soprano or tenor

Vigilia nuziale

Eve (the night before a wedding)

Oggi tremi ne larja profu'mata

Today you are trembling in the air perfumed

O de lurida vita uniko a’more

Oh of filthy life unique love

Come una pura meraviglia alata

Like a pure wonder winged
piena di grazia e cinta di baglior.

full of grace and surrounded by (a) glow

e ne le ’tue com’mosse u’mide ar’denti

and in your much moved damp passionate

pu’pille e nel pal’lor ’dolﬁe del ’vizo

eyes and in the pallor sweet of your face

’delle ’tanto aspet’ate ’ore immi’nenti
delle tanto aspettate ore imminenti

of the much awaited hours imminent

djà ti ba’lena il ’trepido sor’rizo

already in you flashes the anxious smile

E il fresco incanto di tua voce viene

and the fresh enchantment of your voice comes

a sol’karmi la ’muta ’anima at’ﬁeza

to cut across the silent spirit burning

e mi ﬂuisce per ’tutte le ’vene

and me flows through all the veins

(and flows through all my veins)

’kome ’una eb’rettsa da ’luņgi ’anni at’teza

come una ebbrezza da lunghi anni attesa

like an intoxication for long years awaited

’kome uņ ko’mando ’kome ’una pre’gjerra

Come un comando come una preghiera

like a command like a prayer

’essa mat’førkja pju ’duna ma’lia

Essa m’accerchia più d’una malia.

It encircles me more than a spell.
Ah per l'albe tue chiare o Prima\'vera.

(Ah, for the dawns your clear oh Spring)

nom 'mai le\'vasti 'tanta melo\'dia
non mai levasti tanta melodia.

never did you raise such (a) melody

The first performance of this song took place in Parma on May 15, 1904, under the title “Vigilia di nozze.” Soprano Clementina Paveri de Fontana performed with the composer at the piano. It was published in Milan by Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana in 1908 as part of Tre liriche.\(^4^6\) This song is an early effort by the budding composer, and does not truly represent the “Pizzettian” style that would later unify his song output. However, it is a promising work that likely left little doubt in the minds of those in attendance at the first performance that Pizzetti was a gifted young song composer.

Musically, this song shows that the young Pizzetti was well schooled in the styles of song composition that were taking place in other parts of Europe. In fact, one hears moments in this song that sound as if they might have been composed by Debussy, and certainly the strong influence of Richard Strauss is heard throughout. Still, a hallmark of later Pizzetti songs is already present here: the unification of the piece through the use of motives or phrases that return later in the song. As he would do in many of his later songs, Pizzetti immediately introduces the most important theme at the beginning of the piece (mm. 1–4), and while the vocal line does have the first measure of the theme, it is only heard in its entirety in the piano part. This theme returns in an abbreviated form in the third strophe of the song at the words “E il fresco incanto di tua voce viene” (m. 27)

\(^{4^6}\)Bruno Pizzetti, 364.
and also is heard in its entirety as a postlude (mm. 53–55). This last appearance of the theme is conclusive and provides an appropriate resolution for the song.

In this early song, Pizzetti was already treating the text with great care, which leads to some wonderful moments of word painting. A couple of the more obvious examples of this characteristic are present in the first ten measures of this song—Pizzetti sets the word “amore” on the highest and longest notes of the piece to that point (mm. 5–6) and treats the word “alata” (“winged,” mm. 8–9) in much the same manner. More unusual, perhaps, is his unexpected use of borrowed harmonies in mm. 10–11 to set the text “piena di grazie” (“full of grace”) with what is, in fact, a very graceful harmonic progression. Other important text painting moments include: (1) m. 33 at the words “e mi fluisce per tutte le vene” (“and flows through all my veins”), in which Pizzetti introduced triplets in order to create a very fluid feel for this section, (2) the climax of the piece in m. 43, in which the cry ah is set on the highest note of the piece and held for the majority of two measures, and (3) the interesting way he sets the text “tanta melodia” in mm. 51–53. I would agree that “such a melody” has not been heard before, especially since the word “tanta” in m. 51 begins on the lowest pitch of the piece (C4) and is a perfect fifth below the lowest pitch heard anywhere earlier in the song! It is a surprising moment, to say the least.

One of the biggest challenges in this song is that the singer must possess a wide range and be comfortable in both the upper and lower regions of the voice. It is true that the lowest notes of the piece only appear in one phrase, the last one, but it is such an important moment in the song that it must not only be audible but also be beautiful. Mostly, though, the tessitura of the piece is rather high. Another possible complication
for the singer is the presence of wide leaps in the vocal line that could be problematic if a secure vocal technique is not in place. An extreme example of the wide vocal leaps present in this song happens between mm. 50–51, in which the singer drops from F5 down to C4 on the next beat, a descending interval of an eleventh! The mixed meter of this song also adds to the difficulty of learning and performing it; therefore, the ideal singer of this song will be a strong musician so as to mitigate this potential issue.
“Remember” from *Tre liriche*

Text: Ildebrando Cocconi (1877–1943)

Date composed: 1904

Publication information: Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana, 1908

Range: E4 – A5

Tessitura: A-flat4 – D5

Key: F minor (later F major)

Meter: Mixed; mostly 4/4 and 3/4, some measures of 5/4 and 2/4

Tempo: Poco mosso

Duration: 4’30’’

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Difficult

Mood: Regretful; sad

Voice type: Soprano or tenor

NULLA COSA QUAGGIÙ È PIÙ TRISTO,
nothing here below is more sad

O FANCIUILLA, A RICORDARE
oh young girl, to remember

delle parole care non dette
than words dear not spoken

QUANDO SI PO' TEVAN DIRE
when they could have been said

A CHI NON TORMA PIÙ.
to one who will not return anymore.

NULLA COSA QUAGGIÙ È CERCHIATA
nothing here below is bound
dall’onda del rimpianto
dall’ onda del rimpianto
by the wave of regret

’kome l’ignoto ‘kanto ke ‘volle
like the unknown song that wished

’nella ‘fredda ‘ombre sfiorire
in the cold shadow to wither

e che non ‘tremà piú
and which does not tremble anymore

Nulla cosa quaggiù è piú sacra
nothing here below is more sacred

alle tue lacrime, o ‘cuore,
to your tears oh heart,

d’un solitario amore
than a solitary love

chiose nel mesto desiderio vano
locked within sad longing vain

e che non ‘sordge piú
and which doesn’t rise anymore.

Ma nulla kwad’du ‘vale
but yet nothing is worth

‘tanta dolente poesia
such sorrowful poetry
tanta maliŋkoˈnia
such melancholy

tanto nascosto sentiˈmento uˈmano
such concealed feeling human
(human emotion)

ke non si 'trɔva pju
che non si trova più.
which is not found anymore

'kara riˈkɔrda tu
Cara ricorda tu
dear remember (you)

kwel ke penˈsasti e non diˈʧesti ‘mai
quel che pensasti e non dicesti mai
that which you thought and never spoke

le paˈɾole ke il 'kwɔre ‘soŋna
le parole che il cuore sogna
the words that the heart dreams

nellˈalbe dell aˈmare ‘vita
nellˈalbe dellˈamare vita
in the dawns of bitter life

e la kanˈtsun traˈdita
e la canzon tradita
and the song forsaken

e il 'muto aˈmore
e il muto amore.
and the silent love

'kara riˈkɔrda tu
Cara ricorda tu
dear remember (you)

'kweste meˈmɔrje 'sempliʃi
queste memorie semplici
these memories ordinary
This song appeared as part of Pizzetti’s first published set of songs, *Tre liriche*, in 1908, by Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana. Little is known about its first performance, since Bruno Pizzetti, the composer’s son, only gives information regarding the first song of this set.\(^47\) The score states that “Remember” was composed in 1904.\(^48\)

The text for this song is divided into six strophes, and Pizzetti groups these strophes into two contrasting musical sections. As is typical in many Pizzetti songs, the introduction (mm. 1–6) presents the most important musical phrase of the piece. This theme is repeated throughout the A section and even returns in the last two measures of the song (mm. 67–68). The A section is characterized by mixed meter (4/4, 2/4, and 5/4 bars) and repeated melodic vocal lines. Beginning at the words “Nulla cosa quaggiù è più sacra alle tue lacrime, o cuore” (“Nothing here below is more sacred to your tears, oh heart,” mm. 23–33), the third strophe is set apart from the rest of the A section by its movement away from F minor and through several keys, importantly including F major (see the B section, below), and also A minor and C major. The end of this strophe, at the words “e che non sorge più” (“and doesn’t rise anymore,” mm. 31–33), Pizzetti may

\(^{47}\)Bruno Pizzetti, 364.

\(^{48}\)Ildebrando Pizzetti, *Tre liriche*, text by Ildebrando Cocconi (Milan: Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana, 1908), 7.
have been engaging in musical irony when he chose to set this line of text to the highest pitches of the song. This last vocal line of the strophe should be sung in a declamatory fashion to produce a very dramatic climax in context.

The contrasting B section consists of the fifth and sixth strophes of text and is the most musically interesting part of the song. In this section, the time signature changes from the unstable, mixed meter of the A section to a constant 3/4 meter. The key shifts from F minor to the parallel major, a very satisfying F major. The accompaniment contains a propulsive arpeggio figure that pervades this section, and the vocal line consists of a gently arching legato line that seems to flow along the river of the accompaniment. The momentum stops abruptly at the final line of text—“e che non torna più”—which Pizzetti sets as a return to A section material and to F minor. This clever formal device is in response to the text, which is similarly jarring, and reminds the listener that, after all, those beautiful memories and “best times” are gone now.

“Remember” presents some difficulties for the singer, including the musical complication of the mixed meter in the A section. This can be challenging simply because singers, especially less-experienced ones, are more comfortable with a constant meter and steady, easy to anticipate patterns of strong and weak musical beats. However, Pizzetti’s setting of this text is so faithful to the natural rise and fall of the Italian language that the mixing of meters seems perfectly organic when one concentrates on word stress rather than on counting out the beats of the measure. In the B section (mm. 42–63), the singer needs to employ a perfect legato to achieve the composer’s desired effect. The result should be an easy, flowing line in which each measure seems to move forward to the downbeat of the next. No individual notes should stick out; rather, all
notes should have a sense of equality and movement in order to keep the legato throughout. This need for real legato is also true of the final phrase of the song, which is the one line of text that Pizzetti chooses to repeat; with a perfectly controlled legato, this moment can be quite touching as a final, despairing vocal phrase. If there is any sense of breaking up the vocal line with little h’s or with unintended cessations of pitch between notes, the ending of the song will sound like nothing more than a mundane, unnecessary repetition of text.

In mm. 2 and 4, there is a mistake in the score. In each of these bars, the quarter notes on the third beat should instead be performed as eighth notes. This correction will give these measures the appropriate four beats, and also ensure that the last three eighth notes appear as an “off the beat” motive, as they appear throughout the rest of the song (examples include m. 9, m. 13, m. 22, m. 28, m. 31, and many others).
“Incontro di Marzo” from *Tre liriche*

Text: Ildebrando Cocconi (1877–1943)

Date composed: 1904

Publication information: Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana, 1908

Range: C4 – G5

Tessitura: B-flat4 – E-flat5

Key: E-flat major

Meter: Mixed; alternates between 2/4 and 2/2

Tempo: Con molta scioltezza ritmica (With much rhythmic freedom)

Duration: 6’10’’

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Difficult

Mood: Otherworldly; surreal

Voice type: Soprano or tenor


Incontro di Marzo

Encounter during March

(March Encounter)

Guardami dunque! Io sono sempre

Look at me then! I am forever

quella come t’apparvi nei sogni d’allora

that one as I appeared to you in dreams of that time

così fiera e soave e così bella.

so proud and gentle and so beautiful.

se tu mi ‘guardi

If you look at me
non rivivi ancora nelle morte giornate.
you will not revive again in the dead days.
(in days gone by)

non reˈspi riˈvivi ancora ˈnelle ′morte ′dʒorˈnate
You will not revive again in the dead days.

Non respiri fragranze abbandonate?
Do you not breathe fragrances abandoned?

ˈʤɛtta il rimˈpjanto e la paˈura aˈmare
Cast away the regret and the fear bitter

Getta il rimpianto e la paura amare
Cast away the regret and the fear bitter

e saˈluta la ˈvɛkkja fantaˈzia
and greet the old fantasy.

e saluta la vecchia fantasia.
and greet the old fantasy.

ˈanjke ˈlalta bonˈta ˈdʒɛtta di perdoˈnare
Even the kindness of pardon.

Anche l’alta bontà di perdonare
Even the kindness of pardoning

vwɔl ˈkwesta ′bruna reˈduʃe folˈlia
wants this dark returned madness
(wants this dark madness to be returned)

ˈdammi le ˈnwɔve ˈroze
give me new roses

dammi le nuove rose
give me new roses

e ˈtrɛmino le ˈmie ˈlabbra zdeŋˈno ze
and may tremble my lips contemptuous.
(and may my contemptuous lips tremble)

e ˈtrɛmino le mie labbra sdegnose.
and may tremble my lips contemptuous.

per la ˈmia strana ˈiride proˈfonda
for my strange iris deep

Per la mia strana iride profonda
For my strange iris deep

per ′kwesta ′bratʃˈa dal seˈgreto inˈkanto
for these arms from the secret enchantment

per queste braccia dal segreto incanto
for these arms from the secret enchantment
for the hair which floods my agile neck

non ti scordare che una volta hai pianto
do not forget that once you wept

per la dolcezza amara
for the sweetness bitter

di questa bocca sovra tutte cara.
of this mouth above all others dear.

Se dalla tomba stanca impallidita
If from the tomb weary faded

to you I came by magic resurrected

Come vorresti le mie ceree dita
how you would want my waxen fingers

lagrimando baciare
weeping to kiss

(Kissing your good, ancient, dead fairy)

Beyond the funeral pyre does not live wrath harmful.

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This is a case in which intervocalic ‘s’ is pronounced as [s] in Italian, instead of a [z] sound.
e kol sorriso 'dalltre prima'vere
E col sorriso d'altre primavere
and with the smile of other springtimes

dar'mote kam'pampe 'io son ve'numa
dar remote campagne io son venuta;
from distant lands I have come;

laf'and per ve'derti
lasciando per vederti!
leaving to see you!

'oddgi le 'skiere 'dei 'songi de lad'dio
Oggi le schiere dei sogni de l'addio.
Today the hosts of dreams of farewell.

'sono 'una 'muta 'dolfi 'donna che fu
Sono una muta dolce donna che fù!
I am a silent sweet woman who has been!

'donna di 'feli ke non 'sapron pju
Donna di cieli che non s'apron più.
A woman of the heavens that open no more.

pur se di 'marso a la 'mia 'kjoma 'folta
Pur se di Marzo a la mia chioma folta
Even if in March of my hair thick

doni im me'morje le no'velle 'roze
don in memorie le novelle rose
you give in memory new roses

treme'anno le mie 'labbra zden'noze
tremeranno le mie labbra sdegnose.
will tremble my lips contemptuous

ma ti 'batfa sul 'kwore 'anke 'una 'volta
Ma ti bacia sul cuore anche una volta
But you it kisses in the heart even once

'kwesta 'mia 'bokka an'tika
questa mia bocca antica.
this my mouth ancient.
(but in your heart you kiss this, my ancient mouth, once again)
“Incontro di Marzo” was published as the third of *Tre liriche* in 1908 by Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana. Like the second song of the set, little is known about its first performance.\(^5\) According to the score, the song was composed in 1904.\(^6\)

“Incontro di Marzo” is a long, remarkable song. At first reading, the text seems bizarre and otherworldly, perhaps especially in English translation because it is impossible for the Italian words to retain all their connotations when translated. But Pizzetti’s setting brings attention to the more redemptive and beautiful side of the poem: that many terrible realities of the living—especially wrath, regret, and fear—are not carried over into the world beyond. Pizzetti presents the first theme in octaves, a strategy that would become a common device in many of his later songs.\(^7\) Pizzetti divides the poetry’s six strophes into four musical sections, into a kind of ABA\(^1\)B\(^1\), modified strophic format. This form is very unusual for Pizzetti, who, in his later songs, much preferred to write through-composed works in which the music is almost totally derived from and in response to the text. In one moment, Pizzetti’s setting does not exactly follow the strophe pattern of the text: At the words “*dammi le nuove rose*” (“give me new roses”) in mm. 61–64, the contrasting B section begins, with its lyrical, sweeping vocal lines and arpeggios in the piano. These words were evidently the inspiration for the change in

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\(^{5}\) Bruno Pizzetti, 364.

\(^{6}\) Ildebrando Pizzetti, *Tre liriche*, 13.

\(^{7}\) Gatti, *Ildebrando Pizzetti*, 77.
musical character here, considering Pizzetti’s preoccupation with the texts of his later songs.

In “Incontro di Marzo” we hear Pizzetti experimenting with combining early music elements, especially the rhythms of Renaissance instrumental dance music, with modern harmonies and other techniques. It has been well documented that Pizzetti was an avid scholar of the music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; this interest began as a young student and evidently continued into his compositional maturity, since characteristics of early music continued to play a part even in his later compositions. The influence here is probably most obvious in the rhythmic syncopation before the cadence in mm. 57–59, and also in the motivically similar moment in mm. 101–103. The syncopated rhythm is evocative of hemiola in certain Renaissance song forms.

Moreover, the pervading short-short-long rhythm in this song was a popular one during the Renaissance and has its roots as far back as the old rhythmic modes of the Middle Ages (in this case, tempus imperfectum, prolatio minore). It is not too far-fetched to suppose that Pizzetti chose to make use of these rhythms and musical gestures from long ago in response to a text in which the protagonist is remembering someone long-dead.

Regarding the difficulties of singing “Incontro di Marzo,” the biggest challenge may be related to interpretation. First of all, interpreting this convoluted and sometimes confusing text may prove a challenge for even an experienced artist. Also, the lyrical, sweeping lines require a consistent and secure legato, despite the rapid register shifts present throughout. The meter changes must be handled gracefully, so that the singer does not draw unnecessary attention to the fact that the meter has changed. In a few

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instances, the vocal line dips down into a register that might be uncomfortably low, in context, for a soprano or tenor. Overall, this is not one of Pizzetti’s most challenging songs, but it does require good vocal technique and strong musical ability to achieve a successful performance.
“Antifona amatoria di Basiliola”

Text: Gabriele d’Annunzio (1863–1938)

Date composed: 1907

Publication information: Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana, 1908

Range: D4 – G5  Tessitura: A4 – D5

Key: G-Dorian
Meter: 4/4
Tempo: Un poco lento, con espressione di ardore e di languore
Duration: 1’20”
Difficulty: Voice: Not difficult
Piano: Moderately difficult
Mood: Passionate; languorous
Voice type: Soprano

anˈtifo na  amaˈtoria di baziˈljola
Antifona amatoria di Basiliola
Antiphon amatory of Basiliola

ˈfulcitε me ˈflɔribus
Fulcite me floribus,
Support me (with) flowers

stiˈpatε me ˈmalis
stipate me malis.
Attend me (with) apples

ˈkwia aˈmɔrɛ ˈlanɡweɔ
Quia amore langueo.
Because love I faint.
(Because I am faint with love)

The first performance of “Antifona amatoria di Basiliola” took place in the “Sala della Leonardo” in Florence on January 23, 1909. Margherita Bindo-Paoli, soprano,
performed the song with the composer at the piano. The song is excerpted from a larger work by Pizzetti, *La nave*, with a libretto by Gabriel D’Annunzio (1863–1938). The title page indicates the composer as being “Ildebrando da Parma,” an invented moniker referring to Pizzetti’s birthplace and one that was given to him by D’Annunzio.54

“Antifona amatoria di Basiliola” is perhaps the song in Pizzetti’s output most heavily influenced by his study of and fondness for early music. It is in the Dorian mode, though more modern harmonies and progressions are interspersed (see mm. 10–11 for examples of this). His use of melismatic vocal writing is in contrast to the starkly syllabic style he adopts in later songs, but it is nonetheless a characteristic of Gregorian chant, which he was unmistakably emulating. The vocal line alternates between duple and triple divisions of the beat, further adding to the very free chant-like feeling of this song.

As indicated in the chart above, this song does not present any great challenges for the singer. It is only fourteen measures in length, and it does not require an especially wide range of the singer. The constant shifting between the duple and triple divisions of the beat is only a superficial difficulty; in fact, it is a beautiful characteristic that will likely end up feeling very natural to the singer once the song has been learned. The song does require a smooth legato in order to be effective, and it may be helpful for the singer not to bring out too strongly the rhythmic differences between the duple and triple divisions of the beat in order to achieve this.

“Sera d’inverno”

Text: Mario Silvani (1884–1913)

Date composed: 1907

Publication information: Milano, Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana, 1908

Range: C-sharp4 – F-sharp5  
Tessitura: F-sharp4 – B4

Key: G-sharp minor/C-sharp major

Meter: 6/4

Tempo: Un poco lento, quarter note equals 84 – 90

Duration: 4’45’’

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Moderately difficult

Mood: Peaceful; reflective

Voice type: Mezzo-soprano or baritone; soprano or tenor with strong lower middle register also possible

ˈsera          dinjˈvernɔ
Sera          d’inverno
Evening       of winter
(winter evening)

ˈmuɔre  il   ˈðɔrno  injverˈnale
Muore  il    giorno  invernale
Dies    the    day     winter
(the winter day dies)

tra     um  ‘pio  lamenˈtar  di  kamˈpane
trə un  pio  lamentar  di  campane
amid    a    pious  lament  of  bells

ˈmuɔre e  um  baˈʃore  sanˈgwijno
Muore. . . e  un  bagliore  sanguigno
(It) dies. . . and  a  glow  sanguine

ˈsui  ‘monti     lonˈtani     sinˈduʤa
sui  monti    lontani    sˈindugia.
on the  mountains  distant  lingers.
S'alza la nova luna sul puro velario del cielo
It rises the new moon on the pure curtain of the sky

e la gran koltre nivea jìn'tilla di 'vivido ar'džento
and the great blanket snow white sparkles of bright silver

Nel piano senza fine il popol
In the plain without end the population

de li 'alberi as'sorto
de li alberi assorto
of trees absorbed

nel 'suo do'lore muto tende le 'bratʧ'à a l'alto
e un gregge intorpidito sotto la lana grigia
in their sorrow silently stretches their arms to heaven:
and a flock numbed underneath the wool gray

sognando i 'verdi 'paski
Dreaming (of) the green pastures

pel 'bjanʧko si'lèntʃjo lon'tana
through the white silence far away.

Ancora le campane ripetono il vano lamento:
Again the bells repeat the vain lament:

kwel 'anima si 'ljaŋna nel 'ʤelo vespertino
What spirit moans in the cold evening?

È questa l’ora triste pei 'kwɔri
Is this the hour sad for the hearts

(This is the sad hour for hearts that conceal a dream)
che celano un sogno
that conceal a dream

per 'kwelli ke 'sanno le 'lOTte per 'kwelli ke 'sanno le 'ʤoje

per quelli che sanno le lotte per quelli che sanno le gioie.

for those who know struggles for those who know joys.

'naufraga iŋ 'kwesto mar 'sentsa 'rive
Shipwrecked in this sea without shores

'ɔŋni 'voʧe di 'vita
every voice of life

(Every living voice is shipwrecked in this sea without shores)

'ɔŋni 'kɔza mor'tale nel 'bjan'ko si' lenʧjo sad'dorme
Everything mortal in the white silence goes to sleep.

Bruno Pizzetti tells us that this song was composed in the San Lazzaro neighborhood of Parma in 1907, and was published the following year by Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana. The text is by Mario Silvani, a composer and poet who was also from Parma. Pizzetti set this text only six years prior to Silvani’s untimely death at the age of twenty-eight.55

The text is in seven strophes of four lines each. Pizzetti’s setting blurs the lines between these strophes, and one finds that the snow-covered “plain without end” is strongly suggested by the music. In fact, there are few moments of repose. For most of the song, the vocal line consists almost entirely of quarter notes and eighth notes, with no rests or other rhythms to offset these. There is a gentle rise and fall within each vocal

line, and almost every interval is by step; indeed, there are very few intervallic “skips” in the whole song. Most of the vocal phrases start lower in the voice and rise in pitch throughout the phrase, sometimes settling back down to the lower register and other times remaining in the upper register. All of these characteristics leave the vocal line feeling very static throughout and again reveal that Pizzetti was responding musically to the overall atmosphere of the text. In this way, the song anticipates Pizzetti’s mastery of musical atmosphere in his later song, “I pastori.” The end of the song brings a satisfying change in the texture of the vocal line, especially with regard to rhythm. At the words “È questa l’ora triste” (“This is the sad hour,” m. 31), the piano part, which has maintained constant rhythmic and harmonic support throughout the song, drops out, and the vocal line is left delicately hanging on. This phrase also includes intervallic leaps, which have heretofore been absent in this song. A few measures later, with “per quelli che sanno le lotte” (“For those who know struggles,” mm. 33–34), we find the rhythms of the vocal line speeding up, and Pizzetti includes triplets for the first time. This triplet figure continues until the end of the final vocal phrase, the matter of fact recitative of “naufraga in questo mar senza rive” (“shipwrecked in this sea without shores,” mm. 36–38).

Musical complications are relatively few, since the rhythms are mostly uncomplicated and the meter is consistent. Tonally, there are moments in the piece in which the key seems to fluctuate from bar to bar; nevertheless, once the singer becomes accustomed to this feature, it is no challenge at all. A real difficulty is the combination of a slow tempo and long vocal phrases. Pizzetti is very specific, both about his preferred tempo (Un poco lento, quarter note equals 84–90) and his phrase markings, which generally connect the first note of each phrase with the last. This makes it crucial for the
singer to have a reliable breath management system in place that will enable the phrases to be sung comfortably in one breath. Of course, considering the text, the phrases must never seem rushed or frantic, no matter their length. Another possible trouble spot occurs in the last five measures. At this point, the musical rhythms are shortened and begin to alternate between duple and triple patterns. Skillful pianists and singers will be able to line up the respective rhythms from each part correctly without too much difficulty, however. It is worth noting that the phrase markings that have been present in the vocal line disappear in m. 33 and are absent for the rest of the song. Apparently, Pizzetti intended for the lines after m. 33 to be declaimed, perhaps almost spoken. This is in contrast with all of the vocal lines earlier in the piece, which are to be sung legato.
Épitaphe

Text: Victor Hugo (1802–1885)

Date composed: 1903

Publication information: Firenze, *La Nuova Musica*, 1911

Range: D4 – F5  
Tessitura: A4 – D5

Key: F major
Meter: 4/4
Tempo: Quasi lento
Duration: 1’48”
Difficulty:  
Voice: Not difficult
Piano: Not difficult

Mood: Reflective, sentimental, “avec beaucoup d’expression”

Voice type: Listed as being for soprano or tenor, but can easily be sung by a medium voice, as well

epitaf

Épitaphe

Épitaph

Il dort.
He sleeps.

Quoi-que le sort fût pour lui bien étrange,
Although (the) fate was for him very strange,

Il vivait.
He lived.

Il mourut quand il n’eut plus son ange.
He died when he didn’t have anymore his angel.
“Épitaphe” is listed as being completed in 1903, meaning that Pizzetti was only twenty-two or twenty-three when it was composed. It was published somewhat later, in 1911, in the Florentine monthly magazine *Il nuovo musica*. This magazine was in operation from 1896 to 1919, and Pizzetti was its editor-in-chief beginning in 1910.56 Bruno Pizzetti states that “Épitaphe” was included in the magazine as an award for subscribers.57 The poem is from the final chapter of Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, and in the novel these words are inscribed onto the main protagonist’s tombstone and are the final words of the book.

This short song is only seventeen measures long. It is primarily in common time, though there are two measures of 5/4 and one of 3/4. The text is but four lines long, and the musical setting differentiates the lines of text clearly through cadence and phrase structure. The overall mood is almost tearfully sentimental, and Pizzetti certainly amplifies the sentimentality of the text with his musical setting. One example of this maudlin quality is the overly sweet progression in the first couple of measures, ending in what is for Pizzetti an exceedingly straight-forward cadence consisting of a root position

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57 Bruno Pizzetti, 364.
dominant seventh chord resolving to a root position tonic chord. This song is an early
effort by Pizzetti and doesn’t foretell much of Pizzetti’s later style.

“Épitaphe” is not very difficult and is certainly not challenging in comparison
with any of Pizzetti’s later songs. It is short and straightforward, and it must be sung
simply and without affectation. Though it was ostensibly written to be sung by a soprano
or tenor, there are many mezzo-sopranos and baritones who would find that this song sits
in a comfortable singing range.
“L’annuncio”

Text: Térésah (Teresa Corinna Ubertis Gray, 1877–1964)

Date composed: 1908

Publication information: *Grandi Magazzini di Musica Estera e Italiana*, 1912

Range: C4 – F5

Tessitura: F4 – C5

Key: F major

Meter: 4/4

Tempo: Adagio, molto calmo

Duration: 2’45”

Difficulty: Voice: Not difficult

Piano: Not difficult

Mood: Tranquil; serene

Voice type: Any high or medium voice type

lan’nunʧo

**L’annuncio**

The announcement

‘venne kol ‘vento si po’zɔ la ‘prima

Venne col vento; si posò, la prima,

It came with the wind; it landed, the first,

sul ko’miŋpolo an’tiko e salu’tɔ

sul comignolo antico e salutò. . . .

on the chimney top old and greeted

‘era dʒa ‘lombra ‘della ‘sera

Era già l’ombra della sera:

It was already the shadow of the evening:

in ‘ʧima ‘ai ‘greppi satʧ’en’devano i fa’lɔ

in cima ai greppi s’accendevano i falò.

on top of the mangers (hay racks) were lit the bonfires.
They celebrated in the mountains the good saint.  

They celebrated in the mountains the good saint. They celebrated in the mountains the good saint.

Ke a un nome di bel tempo e di ventura, who has a name of lovely weather and of fortune.

E la campana gli sgranò, and the bell to him poured out.

Kol suono tre corone di lodi, alla pianura, with the sound three rosaries of praise, to the plain.

Niuno seppe che dolcezza s’era raccolta, No one knew what sweetness he was collecting.

Sulla casa quella sera, on the house that evening.

Sulla casetta placida dell’ava, on the little house peaceful of the grandmother.

Dove la prima rondine posava, where the first swallow settled.

“L’annuncio” was written in 1908 in Parma but not published until 1912 in Florence, in a periodical called Grandi Magazzini di Musica Estera e Italiana. Bruno Pizzetti indicates that this is a lirica, the word for Italian art song that Pizzetti would adopt for almost all of his songs. Here again Pizzetti is listed in the score as

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58 The “good saint” referred to is Saint Benedict, since an inscription on the first page of this song mentions him.

59 Bruno Pizzetti, 368.
“Ildebrando da Parma,” the made-up name given to him by Gabriel D’Annunzio. The text is by “Térésah,” a pseudonym for Teresa Corinna Ubertis Gray (1877–1964), an Italian novelist and poet. Gray was also famous as a narrator and as an author of children’s books. An inscription on the first page of this song reads, “San Benedetto, San Benedetto, La prim rondine è sul tetto” (“Saint Benedict, Saint Benedict, The first swallow is on the roof”).

Musically, this piece is fairly straightforward. Pizzetti doesn’t stray very far from the tonic key of F major, and accidentals in the vocal part are few. In this song we begin to see a few more complicated rhythms than in the earlier songs; this is a hallmark of Pizzetti’s attempt to represent the natural rhythm of the Italian language in his vocal compositions. In his later songs, Pizzetti would become much more rhythmically precise, resulting in increasingly complex rhythms and a wide variety of note values. However, the rhythms in “L’annuncio” are confined to relatively uncomplicated note values in both duple and triple divisions of the beat, including eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and eighth-note triplets. The flexible nature of the vocal rhythms is a defining feature here and gives the effect of natural text declamation. There is a recurring motive of import that is presented in the first bar in the piano part and is present in one form or another in eighteen of the song’s twenty-four measures. This motive, heard only in the piano part, gives a certain continuity to this song. The precise rhythmic setting of the Italian text and the idea of repeating a motive throughout a song are both very remarkable features of this

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60 Gatti, Ildebrando Pizzetti, 12.
62 Pomfret, 34.
song, since both compositional techniques will be developed by the composer in his later songs.

Overall, “L’annuncio” is not very difficult, but it has enough rhythmic complexity that it might present problems, at first, to a singer unfamiliar with Pizzetti’s precise way of setting the Italian language. Also, the slow tempo of the song may make some of the longer phrases difficult to sing in one breath; however, there are generally places to breath mid-phrase as a last resort, if necessary. If it is sung by a soprano or tenor, the singer should be comfortable enough in the lower part of the vocal register for the last note of the piece to be sung securely and well. The singer of “L’annuncio” would do well to note that Pizzetti never indicates a dynamic louder than piano in this song. Following this indication by the composer creates a vulnerable, exposed quality—especially if the singer is accustomed to singing Italian songs with gusto!
“I pastori” from *Cinque liriche*

Text: Gabriele d’Annunzio (1863–1938)

Date composed: 1908

Publication information: Forlivesi, 1916

Range: E4 – G5  
Tessitura: A4 – D5

Key: A minor

Meter: Mixed; alternates between 6/8 and 2/4 in the vocal line and 6/8, 9/8, and 3/4 in the accompaniment

Tempo: Largamente sostenuto, dotted quarter equals 52 – 63

Duration: 5’30’’

Difficulty:  
Voice: Moderately difficult  
Piano: Moderately difficult

Mood: Reflective; sad

Voice type: Soprano or tenor, but can also be sung by a medium voice (baritone, mezzo-soprano) with a secure upper register

i pass’tori  
I pastori  
The Shepherds

set’temple an’djamo e ’tempo di mi’grare
Settembre, andiamo. È ’tempo di migrare.
September, let’s go. It is time to migrate.

’ora in ’terra da’bruttsi i ’mjei pass’tori
Ora in terra d’Abruzzi i miei pastori
Now in (the) land of Abruzzi my shepherds

’la[j]an ’ài ’stattsi e ’vanno ’verso il ’mare
lascian gli stazzi e vanno verso il mare:
Leave their folds and go toward the sea:

’sendo alladri’atiko sel’vaddgo
scendono all’Adriatico selvaggio
they descend to the Adriatic wild
ke 'verde ė 'kome i 'paskoli 'dei 'monti
che verde è come i pascoli dei monti.
that green is like the meadows of the mountains.
(that as green as the mountain meadows)

am be'vuto profonda'mente 'ai 'fonti
Han bevuto profondamente ai fonti
They have drunk deeply at the springs

al'pestrì ke sa'por 'dakkwa na'tia
alpestrì, che sapor d‘acqua natìa
alpine, that the taste of water native

ri‘màŋga 'nei 'kwòri 'ezuli a komj’òrto
rimanga nei cuori esuli a conforto,
remain in their hearts exiled as comfort
(they have drunk deeply at the alpine springs, so that the taste of native water may remain in their exiled hearts as comfort)

ke 'luŋgo il‘luda la lor 'sete inŋ ‘via
che lungo illuda la lor sete in via
that long elude their thirst on the way
(that it may long elude their thirst on their way)

rinno‘vato 'anno 'verga davel‘lano
Rinnovato hanno verga d’avellano.
they have renewed the staff of hazelwood.\(^{63}\)

e 'vanno pel tratturo antico al ‘pjano
E vanno pel tratturo antico al piano
and they go along the sheep path ancient to the plain

'kwazı per un er‘bal ‘fjume si‘lente
quasi per un erbal fiume silente,
as if through a grassy river silent

su le ves‘tidʒa 'deʎʎi an‘tiki 'padri
su le vestigia degli antichi padri.
on the footprints of the ancient fathers.

o 'voʧfe di ko‘lui ke prima‘mente
O voce di colui che primamente
Oh voice of the one who first

\(^{63}\)Hazelwood was traditionally used for making shepherds’ staffs.
ko’noʃʃe il tremo’lar ‘della ma’rina
knows the trembling of the sea!

‘ora lung’esso il lito’ral kam’mina
Ora lungh’esso il litoral cammina
Now along it the coastline walks

la ‘greddʒa ‘sɛntsa mut’a’mento ħ‘larja
La greggia. Senza mutamento è l’aria
the flock. Without change is the air.
(Now the flock walks along the coastline. The air is without change.)

il ‘sole im’bjonda si la ‘viva ‘lana
Il sole imbionda si la viva lana
The sun turns gold so the living wool
(the sun makes the living wool so golden)

ke ‘kwazi ‘dalla ‘sabbja non di’varja
che quasi dalla sabbia non divaria
that nearly from the sand is not distinguishable.
(that it is nearly indistinguishable from the sand)

iʃʃak’kwio kalpes’tio ’dolʃi ro’mori
Isciacquìo, calpestio, dolci romori
Swishing, trampling, sweet sounds.
(Swishing waters, trampling hoof steps, sweet sounds)

a per’ke non sɔn ‘io ko ‘mjεi pas’tori
Ah perché non son io co’ miei pastori?
Ah, why am I not with my shepherds?

“I pastori” has proven to be Pizzetti’s most famous and most frequently
performed song. This song’s success and longevity are well-deserved—it is a beautiful
musical setting that perfectly captures the mood of its tranquil, earthy text. Along with
the other songs of Cinque liriche, “I pastori” comes somewhat early in Pizzetti’s song
output, both in terms of composition and publication. It was composed in 1908 and was
first performed in 1909 in Firenze by Margherita Bindi-Paoli, soprano, with Pizzetti
himself at the piano. The song was officially published by Forlivesi in Florence in 1916 as part of *Cinque liriche* but had actually been printed years earlier in facsimile in the *Supplément à la Revue S.I.M.* in 1911. Because of the popularity of “I pastori” over the years, Pizzetti must have felt compelled to have it published in a version for voice and orchestra, which he did in 1939. This orchestrated version was first performed by the Cleveland Orchestra and tenor Edward Johnson, conducted by Nicolai Sokoloff. In order to remain within the bounds of this paper, this discussion will focus only on the version published in 1916 for voice and piano. The text is by Gabriele d’Annunzio, who was a friend of and frequent collaborator with the composer. In fact, the composer’s name is listed on the score as “Ildebrando Pizzetti da Parma,” a variation on the moniker “Ildebrando da Parma,” which was given to him by d’Annunzio. The song is dedicated to Bruno Barilli, an Italian writer and music critic.

Musically, “I pastori” follows the poem’s four strophes but is through composed. Each strophe consists of five lines of poetry, and the song ends with a single line of text that does not belong to the final strophe. Pizzetti chooses to treat the first line of text as separate from the succeeding lines of the strophe, as well, thereby giving a sense of balance to the song, since the first line and the last line are both set apart from the rest of the song. There is a piano interlude between each strophe except between strophes one and two—here the vocal line continues with but time for a single breath before beginning the text “Han bevuto profondamente.” Each section of music is identifiable unto itself, but the initial phrase in the piano part serves as a recurring theme, providing continuity to

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64 The tenor for this performance was also known under his more cosmopolitan-sounding pseudonym, Edoardo Di Giovanni. It is interesting to note that he would eventually become general manager of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City in 1935, after a long and successful singing career abroad and in North America.

65 Bruno Pizzetti, 368; Gatti, *Ildebrando Pizzetti*, 12.
the song as a whole. This phrase is presented at the beginning of the song in octaves and frequently returns in this format, though not always in its entirety. The musical quality of this phrase is haunting and sounds ancient—it is in fact pentatonic and resembles plainchant. The vocal lines of “I pastori” are almost entirely syllabic, with the ends of many phrases becoming melismatic. These characteristics are likely a result of Pizzetti’s musical training in and affinity for early music, since these, too, seem reminiscent of plainchant.

Pizzetti was very careful about how he set the Italian language in his songs, and this is perhaps especially true of this beautiful *liriche*. One author says of “I pastori” that it is a song in which “an unmistakably lyrical vein is combined with an unusually meticulous attention to the natural rhythm of the words.”\(^{66}\) In his later works, this carefulness resulted in very complicated rhythms, but here he was content simply to place the strong syllables on strong rhythmic beats. Long notes are invariably on strong syllables in important words. However, an important feature of this piece is the sense of its having no bar lines. He achieved this in multiple ways. First, the piano part and the vocal line are often in different meters from one another. Secondly, the vocal line alternates freely between complex meter and simple meter (i.e., 6/8 and 2/4), with the result being that each beat is simultaneously felt in subdivisions of three and two.

Rhythmically and linguistically, “I pastori” is not as challenging as some of Pizzetti’s later vocal works. The biggest challenge in performing this song is probably the musical coordination between pianist and singer. The fact that the two are often in different meters and that the bar lines frequently do not coincide is more significant than

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a cursory read-through might reveal. Musicians are trained to feel strong beats in certain part of the measure in each meter; therefore, since the meter and bar lines differ for the pianist and the singer in this song, the strong and weak beat placement is an issue. The effect the composer may have been seeking is in fact also a potential solution to this dilemma—there really are no strong and weak beats, at least not as far as the meter is concerned. It is the author’s suggestion that the text alone should determine where emphasis is to be placed. Pizzetti’s care with setting the Italian language in general, and in this song specifically, would give credence to this assertion. Another possible difficulty for the singer when performing “I pastori” is the potential for it to become monotonous. The beautiful sonorities that pervade throughout, the repeated motives in the piano part and in the vocal line, and the rich images in the poem itself may tempt the singer to sing each strophe in much the same way. The singer must, however, respond to the text in varied ways, finding new vocal colors and differing dynamics for each section, and, at times, each line of this poignantly beautiful lirica by Pizzetti.
“La madre al figlio lontano” from *Cinque liriche*

Text: Romualdo Pàntini (1877–1945)

Date composed: 1910

Publication information: Forlivesi, 1916

Range: C4 – G5  
Tessitura: D4 – A4

Key: G minor  
Meter: Vocal line alternates between 6/8 and 2/4 throughout, accompaniment is in 6/8  
Tempo: Sostenuto, dotted quarter equals 54  
Duration: 4’10”

Difficulty:  
Voice: Moderately difficult  
Piano: Moderately difficult

Mood: Longing; mournful  
Voice type: Soprano or mezzo-soprano

La madre al figlio lontano

The mother to the son faraway

O figlio, figlio, in che mondo ti trovi?

O son, son, in what world do you find yourself?

Da quanti mesi qua sola t’aspetto!

For how many months here alone I wait for you!

È sempre intatto coi lenzoli novi

It is always untouched with sheets fresh

Ed ogni sera mi rimetto a farlo

and every evening I go back to make it

laˈmadre alˈfiʎʎo lonˈtano
La madre al figlio lontano
Oˈfiglio,ˈfiglio, inˈche mondo tiˈtrovi?
Daˈkwantiˈmeziˈsolaˈtasˈpetto
Oˈson,ˈson, inˈwhatˈworld doˈyouˈfindˈyourself?

‘oɲɲiˈmatˈtina riˈgwardo ilˈtuoˈletto
Ogniˈmattinaˈriguardo ilˈtuoˈletto:
Everyˈmorning Iˈcheck yourˈbed:

‘eˈsempreˈintattoˈkoiˈlenˈtsoliˈnovi
Èˈsempreˈintattoˈcoiˈlenzoliˈnovi
It isˈalwaysˈuntouchedˈwithˈsheetsˈfresh

edˈoɲɲiˈsera miˈriˈmetto aˈfarlo
Edˈogniˈseraˈmiˈrimetto aˈfarlo
andˈeveryˈevening Iˈgoˈback toˈmakeˈit
E lungamente ti sorrido e parlo.
and for a long time I smile at you and speak to you

E 'kome 'spiego i 'kandidi len'toli
and as I spread out the spotless, white sheets

'diko ke 'tanta 'paše ti kon'soli
Dico che tanta pace ti consoli.
I say that such peace may console you.

'Scuoto i 'kandidilens'o gli 'spjɛgo li dis'pongo e 'diko:
I shake the spotless sheets and say:

L'amor più bello e il più fedele amico!
Love most beautiful and the most faithful friend!

Oh figlio, figlio, nel tuo letto bianco
Oh son, son, in your bed white

Torna una notte sola a riposare:
Return one night alone to rest:

Forse dormi sui monti o lungo il mare:
Perhaps you sleep in the mountains or beside the sea:

Ti manca un letto quando sei più stanco.
You lack a bed when you are most tired.

67Here is a case in which the spoken word may be pronounced with an [s] sound, but many teachers of singing would advocate the use of a [z] sound in this word when sung.
“La madre al figlio lontano” is a perfect example of a Pizzetti song that merits more performances and critical attention than it has received. It is a beautiful and theatrical setting of a text by Romualdo Pàntini (1877–1945), an Italian “poet, playwright, art critic, translator and journalist” who was a friend of Gabriele d’Annunzio,
a frequent collaborator with Pizzetti. Begun in 1908 and completed in 1910, this song was first performed on December 29, 1916, at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, one of the oldest musical institutions in the world (Pizzetti would eventually become its president in 1947). It was performed by the renowned mezzo-soprano Claire Croiza, with the famous composer Alfredo Casella at the piano. It is the second of Pizzetti’s Cinque liriche, published in 1916. “La madre al figlio lontano” is dedicated to Stanislao Gallo (1879–?), an Italian composer, bandmaster, and contemporary of Pizzetti’s. As with all of the Cinque liriche, the composer is listed on the score as “Ildebrando Pizzetti da Parma.”

“La madre al figlio lontano” is well crafted to achieve maximum dramatic and poetic effect. The musical setting gives the impression of a composition that is a very careful and faithful representation of the text, such that no note, rhythm, or chord is without textual purpose. Even the empty sound of an open fifth, which characterizes the opening motive in the vocal line and is present throughout in the accompaniment, seems to be born of the mother’s loneliness. The vocal line is otherwise made up almost entirely of step-wise movement, making the song sound extremely lyrical. A notable exception is the memorable opening line of each strophe (“O figlio, figlio”), which is presented on a variety of scale degrees and in both piano and voice. This recurring motif

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69. Lakeway and White, 122.

70. Bruno Pizzetti, 368–369.

turns out to be a unifying characteristic of the song and is a strong mental reminder of the mother’s grief for the listener. The tremolo that is present in the bass for much of the song builds tension and serves as a kind of drone. Lakeway and White note that Pizzetti shows the influence of “early church music” in this song, and liken the recurring dotted quarter-note counter melody in the piano part to a kind of cantus firmus effect.\footnote{Lakeway and White, 127.} A musical moment worthy of attention occurs two bars prior to the words “Ma questa sera son tranquilla” (“But this evening I am peaceful”). First, the note values in the accompaniment lengthen, creating an overall impression that the music is winding down and drawing near to its conclusion. However, the voice enters with much faster note values than earlier in the piece, lending an almost spoken quality to the vocal line. The effect suggests operatic recitative. Simultaneously, the music turns to the major mode to reflect these words that are perhaps more hopeful than any others in the piece—a ray of light in an otherwise dark poem. However, shortly thereafter, in response to a change of mood in the text, the tremolo returns to the accompaniment; likewise, the vocal line returns to the more lyrical singing from earlier, and the music turns again to the minor mode. All of this lends a mournful finality to the conclusion of the song and seems to capture the mother’s sense of waiting in limbo for her son who may, in actuality, never return home to his white bed and well-tended linens.

The first difficulty with which the singer will have to contend is the constantly shifting meter in the vocal line. This is not so challenging in and of itself, but unfortunately there are no time signatures added in the measures in which these meter shifts occur. Taking this into consideration along with its fairly complicated rhythms, especially in the accompaniment but also in the vocal line at times, one begins to
understand some of the challenges, rhythmically and metrically, that will confront the
singer who is learning this song. This song also demands that the singer possess a wide
range, but this is not an atypical feature of Pizzetti’s song output. In fact, the vocal line
sits quite low for most of the song, but in a couple of sections rises to the upper range and
requires the singer to remain there for several phrases. The high-lying passages must be
viewed as extremely important to Pizzetti, who was always faithful to the text and almost
always reserved outbursts such as this for moments of high drama and extreme
importance to the meaning of his musical setting. “La madre al figlio lontano” contains a
great deal of powerful yet largely restrained emotion and thus requires a strong singer-
actor to portray this heart-broken, desperate, and sometimes hopeful mother.
“San Basilio” from Cinque liriche

Text: Greek folk text, translated by Niccolò Tommasèo (1802–1874)

Date composed: 1912

Publication information: Forlivesi, 1916

Range: D4 – G5

Tessitura: A4 – D5

Key: D major

Meter: 4/4

Tempo: Andante mosso, quarter note equals 94 – 100

Duration: 2’21”

Difficulty: Voice: Some challenging moments, but generally not difficult

Piano: Moderately difficult

Mood: Reverent; mystical

Voice type: Soprano or tenor

sam baˈziljo
San Basilio
Saint Basil

sam baˈziljo ‘vjene di ḡeˈzarea
San Basilio viene di Cesarea:
Saint Basil comes from Cesaria:

‘porto ‘skarpe di ‘bronzo e ‘ferree ‘västi
Porta scarpe di bronzo e ferree vesti.
He wears shoes of bronze and iron garments.

baˈziljo ‘mio ‘donde ‘vjēni e ‘ove ‘ʃʃendi
"Basilio mio, donde vieni, e ove scendi?"
“Basil my, where do you come from, and where do you go?”

dal maˈɛstro ‘vengo e a ‘mia ‘madre ˈɔ
"Dal maestro vengo, e a mia madre vo,"
“From the master I come, and to my mother I go,”

se ‘vjēni dal maˈɛstro ‘ditʃi labbitˈʃi
"Se vieni dal maestro, dicci l'abbicci."
“If you are coming from the master, tell us the alphabet.”
“San Basilio” had its debut on March 16, 1917, as part of the first concert of the Società Nazionale di Musica at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia. It was performed, along with the last two songs of Cinque liriche, “Il clefà prigione” and “Passeggiata,” by soprano Anna Kruceniski and with the composer at the piano. It had been published in the previous year as the third song of Cinque liriche, but was actually composed some years earlier, between 1911–1912. Pizzetti dedicated this song to Ernest Bloch (1880–1959), a Swiss, Jewish composer who was born in the same year as Pizzetti and who was often led to compose works with a spiritual element to them, as was Pizzetti. As with all of the Cinque liriche, the composer is listed on the score as “Ildebrando Pizzetti da Parma.”

The text of “San Basilio” is a translation of a traditional Greek poem recounting a miracle performed by Saint Basil the Great, one of the Fathers of the Eastern (Byzantine) Church who was and is, together with the perhaps more well-known figure of Saint

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74 Bruno Pizzetti, 371.
Nicholas, known as Father Christmas.\footnote{Theodora Papatheodorou and Janet Gill, “Father Christmas: Just a Story?” \textit{International Journal of Children's Spirituality} 7, no. 3 (December 2002): 329-344, accessed May 20, 2013, http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=4&sid=4d65a146-6e24-4863-9dec-04a794e46402%40sessionmgr112&hid=127&bdata=JnNpdGU9Z Whvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=rlh&AN=9172052.} The music elevates the somewhat insipid poem, which may suffer from being a translation into Italian from the original Greek. Much of the music revolves around the musical motive that begins and ends the piece, which consists of four sixteenth notes and a quarter note (m. 1, 42–43). This motive, at the beginning, foreshadows the florid vocal passage near the end of the piece that represents the miracle performed by Saint Basil. Lakeway and White also correctly point out the processional nature of the song, which is largely due to the rising step-wise nature of the harmony.\footnote{Lakeway and White, 129.} There are at least four mistakes in the printed text published by Forlivesi—the text presented above may well represent the only printed version of this text with all of these mistakes corrected in one place.

Challenges for the singer are few, though excellent vocal flexibility in the upper range of the voice is required of the singer to successfully sing the almost trilled but still rhythmically precise “miracle” passage described above.
“Il clefta prigione” from *Cinque liriche*

Text: Greek folk text, translated by Niccolò Tommasò (1802–1874)

Date composed: 1912

Publication information: Forlivesi, 1916

Range: C4 – G5 Tessitura: E-flat4 – B-flat4

Key: C-Dorian

Meter: Mixed, mostly 4/4 but also some measures of 5/4

Tempo: Energico, quarter note equals 96 – 100

Duration: 2’25”

Difficulty: Voice: Difficult Piano: Difficult

Mood: Agitated; unsettled

Voice type: Soprano or tenor; medium voice with strong upper register possible

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il ˈkléfta priˈdʒone
Il ˈklefta77 prigione
The ˈklefta imprisoned

ˈɔddʒi ˈdɛmo ˈɔ̣̃ghi e ˈpaskwa ˈɔddʒi ˈfjɛra
Oggi, Demo, gli è pasqua, oggi fiera:
Today, Demo, for them is Easter, today (a) fair

i ˈprɔdi ˈfrendi ˈfɛsta  e ˈtirano al berˈsaʎʎo
I ˈprɔdi fan festa, e tirano al bersaglio:
the brave celebrate, and go target shooting

e tu ˈdɛmo ˈmio a ˈdʒannina ˈalla ˈpɔrtə del ˈviˈzire
E tu, Demo mio, a Giannina,78 alla porta del vizier,
And you, Demo my, in Giannina, at the door of the vizier,79

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77 This is not an Italian word, but is borrowed from the Greek word *kleftis*.

78 This is a city in Greece, also called *Ioannina*, which had been under Ottoman rule for centuries before becoming part of the Greek state in 1913: “History of Ionnina,” accessed on June 17, 2013, http://ioannina.uoi.gr/en/history/post_byzantine_period.html.

79 A high executive officer of various Muslim countries and especially of the Ottoman Empire.
In catene, in ceppi, in trista carcere.
In chains, in shackles, in (a) dreary prison.

E tutto il mondo tel dicevano,
And all the world told it to you,

e 'tutto il 'mondo tel di'vevano
And all the world told it to you,

e 'turki e ro'mei
and Turkey and Rome:

e 'tutto il 'mondo tel di'vevano,
And all the world told it to you,

E tutto il mondo tel dicevano,
And all the world told it to you,

e 'turki e ro'mei
and Turkey and Rome:

E tutto il mondo tel dicevano,
And all the world told it to you,
Il clefta prigione

“Il clefta prigione” was written while Pizzetti was traveling between Florence and Arcachon, a seaside region of southwestern France. It was first performed on March 16, 1917, along with two of the other songs of Cinque liriche, “San Basilio” and “Passeggiata,” as part of the first concert of the Società Nazionale di Musica at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia. It was sung by soprano Anna Kruceniski, who was accompanied by Pizzetti at the piano. As with all of the Cinque liriche, the composer is listed on the score as “Ildebrando Pizzetti da Parma.” 80

The text for “Il clefta prigione” is a translation of a Greek poem and is a dialogue between two speakers; first we hear a person speaking to the imprisoned thief, and then we hear the thief’s response. Pizzetti’s biographer, Guido M. Gatti, points out that this song leans toward the dramatic, as opposed to the lyrical, side of Pizzetti’s vocal writing. 81 In fact, this vocal line is very different from the flowing legato lines of “I pastori” and many of his earlier songs. Pizzetti’s musical response to this poem only

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80 Bruno Pizzetti, 371.

81 Gatti, Ildebrando Pizzetti, 79.
amplifies its rough tone and shocking ending. Perhaps the first impression one gets of “Il clefà prigione” is its unstable quality. This is due in large part to three characteristics of this song: the composer’s use of the Dorian mode, the irregular and abrupt key changes, and the unpredictable shifts in meter. Pizzetti’s setting is jagged, raw, and breathless, right from the outset. The angular initial phrase depicts the thief’s personality, with its accents that fall on strong and weak beats alike and its flurry of thirty-second notes that conveys the thief’s agitated state. This phrase pervades the texture of the entire song, though it appears in various guises—sometimes complete, sometimes truncated, and often beginning on different parts of the measure than at its first appearance at the beginning of the song. In the second iteration of this phrase (m. 5), the 5/4 measure serves to eliminate the two beats of rest that were present in its first appearance. This is a device that Pizzetti used in order to push the action of the story forward and contributes to the overall breathless quality mentioned earlier.

The use of the ostinato bass pattern throughout helps to build anticipation and drama—in fact, this pattern is broken only at the thief’s brash interruption at the words “e che mal vi fec’io” (“and what harm did I do to you,” m. 22). This outburst is doubled by the accented piano accompaniment in four octaves. In addition to this, the musical marking above the thief’s entrance is più sostenuto (more sustained), which is yet another indicator that this phrase is to be set apart from the rest of the song in dramatic fashion.

The highest point of the drama is literally the highest moment in the song, at least for the singer. In m. 47, the singer declaims the text “Ch’io lasci madri senza figliuoli, spose senza mariti” (“That I might leave mothers without sons, wives without husbands”) on G5, far and away the highest note of the piece to this point. This depiction
of the thief as a shouting, rage-filled brigand is entirely warranted by the text but is startling in its sharp contrast with the rest of the song. Perhaps Pizzetti had in mind that by setting the text in such a shocking way, the listener might feel something of what the first narrator in the text might feel at the moment of hearing those awful, final words of the angry prisoner.

The challenges in “Il clefta prigione” are many. It is musically difficult due to the qualities mentioned above. Some of those include the instability of key, the many accidentals in the vocal line, and the deceptive meter changes. Pizzetti’s use of the Dorian mode is also a potential difficulty, since many singers are unused to singing in this mode. The complicated coordination between the singer and the pianist is an additional obstacle to be overcome, since the two parts are often rhythmically and harmonically disconnected from one another. Both the singer and pianist must be dedicated to learning and performing this song with precision, such that the overall drama is not diminished by musical mistakes or timing issues. Finally, the singer must have the technical and vocal ability to comfortably maintain the low tessitura and audibly convey the text through what is often a thick piano texture, while still having the stamina to declaim the high-lying utterances of the thief at the end of the song. Though “Il clefta prigione” is truly a challenge for both pianist and singer, it could provide great contrast with some of Pizzetti’s more lyrical songs on a recital program. Lakeway and White also point out that it would make a good pairing on a recital with the previous song in Cinque liriche, “San Basilio,” calling them a “set within a set,” since both were written around the same time and both are translations of Greek texts.\(^\text{82}\)

\(^{82}\) Lakeway and White, 130.
“Passeggiata” from *Cinque liriche*

Text: Giovanni Papini (1881–1956)

Date composed: 1915

Publication information: Forlivesi, 1916

Range: D4 – A5           Tessitura: B4 – E5

Key: F (F-Lydic; sections of F minor)
Meter: Mixed, mostly 2/4 (end of the song is in 4/8)
Tempo: Allegro moderato, arioso; quarter note equals 94 – 100
Duration: 5 00’

Difficulty: Voice: Difficult
Piano: Difficult

Mood: Exultant; passionate
Voice type: Soprano or tenor

passedˈʤata
Passeggiata
Stroll

‘due iŋ komʃfiˈdentsaˈ drittiˈ kome re
Due in confidenza, dritti come re,
Two in confidence, upright as kings

sanˈdava per leˈ stradeˈ fwarˈ delle poeˈzie
S'andava per le strade, fuor delle poesie,
Were going through the streets, outside of the poetry
(beyond poetry)

unˈ fɔore per te eˈ unaˈ fɔʎʎa per me
Un fiore per te e una foglia per me
A flower for you and a leaf for me

e sleˈgjamo le fantaˈzie
E sleghiamo le fantasie!
And we unbind the fantasies!
It was the two of us alone between wall and wall.

Without noticing who is passing, who is looking,

Eye empty but step secure

Emperors in good faith.

They encountered the mountains one by one

The shoots salute in yellow swaying

But we did not speak to anyone:

Each one was to the other their god.

As far as was wide the world around

Breathing through the air the scent of love

We, as if lovers of the first day,
Si sentiva alle gote un bruciore.
We would feel on the cheeks a burning.

Ma s'era così felici, sudati, affannati,
But were so happy, perspiring, breathless,

'Strilli d'egoismo perfetto,
Tipsy with egoism perfect,

Ci pareva ormai d'esser soldati
to us it seemed by that time that we were soldiers

Con dieci medaglie sul petto.
With ten medals on our chest.

Alla fine, alla fine della salita,
Finally, at the end of the ascent,

Nell'ultima baia dell'orizzonte,
The final bay of the horizon,

Una luna di velo senza vita
A moon of veiled without life

Si stacca leggera da un monte.
it detaches itself easily from a mountain.

Tutto è uguale e compagno all'infinito,
All is equal and companion to the infinite,

Colmo è il cuore: per nulla rintocca;
Overflowing is the heart: for nothing it tolls;

(A veiled moon without life)
“Passeggiata” had its debut on March 16, 1917, as part of the first concert of the Società Nazionale di Musica at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia. It was performed, along with two other songs from Cinque liriche, “San Basilio” and “Il clefà prigione,” by soprano Anna Kruceniski and with the composer at the piano. As with all of the Cinque liriche, the composer is listed on the score as “Ildebrando Pizzetti da Parma.” The text is by Giovanni Papini (1881–1956), a famous and controversial Italian critic, journalist, and poet who was later an avid and outspoken supporter of Mussolini’s regime and its racial policies.\(^3\) Papini and Pizzetti were both contributors to La voce, a cultural newspaper published in Florence beginning in 1907. Pizzetti first met the poet in Florence in 1914, and Papini gave him a book of poetry entitled Cento pagine di Poesia (One Hundred Pages of Poetry); it was from this book that the text for “Passeggiata” was taken.\(^4\)

“Passeggiata” is long, rambling, and difficult. It is through composed, and the tonal center and key (or mode) of the song fluctuate throughout, though it begins and ends with F as its pitch center. The song opens rather exotically in the F-Lydian mode and ends on a surprising F major chord, by way of mode mixture from an F minor/F-Dorian section that precedes the finals bars of the piece (mm. 127–153). The rhythms of the vocal line are often complicated, and one senses Pizzetti beginning to find his later


\(^4\)Pomfret, 30, 34.
style of setting the Italian text through complicated rhythms based on the natural cadence of the spoken language. Also typical of Pizzetti is his use of octaves in the piano part, although the octaves at the beginning of this song are widely spaced, lending the initial section, especially, “an open, ‘outdoor’ quality.”\textsuperscript{85} The vocal lines are sometimes very chromatic and unpredictable, as are the sudden modulations throughout. Some of the more chromatic lines resolve in particularly satisfying ways; for example, the cadence in mm. 27–28 is extremely gratifying, largely because it returns to a sense of F-Lydian after a series of rapid-fire and brief modulations. Overall, “Passeggiata” is a majestic setting of this picturesque poem and captures the essential quality and sentiment of the flowery, exuberant text. In many ways, it resembles “I pastori,” though its vocal lines are less memorable and the song itself is probably a less successful one, all things considered.

The difficulties in performing “Passeggiata” are many. Perhaps its most challenging aspect is the lack of continuity between the piano and voice part throughout; the two parts sometimes seem to be unrelated or minimally so, at best. As mentioned above, this song undergoes many unexpected shifts in key/mode, and therefore there are many accidentals in the vocal line. Also, the Lydian modality is unfamiliar to many singers, as is the Dorian mode that Pizzetti references later in the piece (around mm. 141–150). There are many complicated rhythms to be worked out by the singer (and pianist), and though it is not as rhythmically challenging as some of Pizzetti’s later songs, such as the set \textit{Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti}, there are enough challenging rhythmic sections to be daunting for a singer who is anything less than a stellar musician. The tessitura of “Passeggiata” is high, especially compared to the other songs of \textit{Cinque liriche}.

However, this might not be considered a difficulty in this song, and, in fact, the generally

\textsuperscript{85}Lakeway and White, 133.
high tessitura may be a welcome feature for some singers. In contrast, many of the other songs Pizzetti wrote around this time feature a tessitura that is uncomfortably low for a typical soprano or tenor, but require secure, sometimes dramatic high notes toward the end of the song. One final note: for the reader interested in a detailed, almost measure-by-measure analysis of this song, please see the entry for “Passeggiata,” in Italian Art Song by Ruth C. Lakeway and Robert C. White, Jr.86

86Lakeway and White, 131–134.
“Erotica”

Text: Gabriele d’Annunzio (1863–1938)

Date composed: 1911

Publication information: Pizzi, 1922

Range: F-sharp4 – B-flat5 Tessitura: C5 – F5

Key: B-flat minor (based on the “Hungarian” minor scale printed in the score)

Meter: Mixed; mostly 9/8 for the singer, alternates between 3/4 and 9/8 for the pianist

Tempo: None indicated

Duration: 3’11”

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Moderately difficult

Mood: Sensual; lush

Voice type: Soprano or tenor

ne li orti specchiati da ’l mare.
in the gardens mirrored by the sea.

In coro le spose con lento cantare
In chorus the brides with slow singing

ne ’l talamo d'oro sopiscono il sir.
in the bridal bed of gold lull to sleep the sire.
Da l'alto scintillan profonde

From above shine profoundly

le 'stelle sul 'kapo immor'tale
the stars in the head immortal;

le stelle su 'l capo immortale;

nel 'vento si ef'conde kwel 'kantiko e 'sale
in the wind pours forth that canticle and rises

pel gran firma'mento ke in'kurvasi a u'dir

toward the great firmament that bends itself to hear.

in'njudo le 'nobili 'forme

Ignudo, le nobili forme
Nude, the nobile forms

kon'sparso dun 'öljo da'rōma

consparso d'un olio d'aroma,
sprinkled with oil aromatic,

la'mato sad'dorme la 'sua 'dolfe 'kjōma

l'amato s'addorme: la sua dolce chioma
the beloved falls asleep: his sweet hair

par 'tutta di 'neri dża 'ţiinti fjo'rir

par tutta di neri giacinti fiorir.
seems all of black hyacinths aflower.

diʃ jende da 'ţǐeli stell'anti

Discende da' cieli stellanti
Descends from the sky starry

umj 'fjume so'ave do'blio

Un fiume soave d'oblio
A river smooth of forgetfulness

(A smooth river of forgetfulness descends from the starry sky)

le 'spoze pjeg'anti sul bel sem'i dio

Le spose, pieganti su 'l bel semidio,
The brides, bowing over the beautiful semigod,
“Erotica” was composed in Florence in 1911 but not published until much later by Pizzi in 1922. The text is by Gabriele d’Annunzio, with whom Pizzetti was a frequent collaborator, especially in the early part of his career. This poem is taken from d’Annunzio’s large collection of poems entitled La Chimera, which was published in 1890. The score states that this song was dedicated to Vittorio Ricci (1859–1925), who was a noted teacher of singing and author of didactic works of vocalizzi for singers; one such work was entitled Old Italian School of Singing.

“Erotica” stands out as an unusual one in Pizzetti’s song output because of the composer’s surprising response to the sensuality and luxuriousness of d’Annunzio’s poem. The result is a rich, vibrant, over-the-top setting that seems uncharacteristic of Pizzetti when compared with the rest of his songs. The song is based on the “Hungarian” minor scale; this scale is printed at the top of the first page of the score. The theme at the beginning, which is presented in the piano part, is essentially an ascending and descending “spelling-out” of this scale in this Eastern-sounding minor mode (mm. 1–6). This theme will return in the piano, often whole or nearly so, such as in mm. 23–28 and also in mm. 27–30. Fragments of the theme also appear, such as the suggestive four-note snippet of the theme underneath the climactic, but dynamically restrained, highest sung

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87Bruno Pizzetti, 370.
88Jensen, 52.
note of this song in mm. 45–46. The vocal line includes many phrases that are
predominately made up of step-wise movement in eighth notes, sometimes with a
dramatic leap in pitch at or near the end of this phrase. While this characteristic does
seem to give the song a kind of “insolent sensual drag,” as it was described by one
author, it can also lead to a certain monotony in performance. This predominance of
step-wise motion is actually a common characteristic in many of Pizzetti’s songs and is a
result of his songwriting style that combines the cadence of natural Italian speech with
music. The song ends anticlimactically with a sense of “winding down,” as the tempo
slows and the dynamics lessen. Certainly the listener will notice the E-flat major chord in
m. 47 at the words “il respir” (“the breath”), which comes as a surprise at this point in the
song. Perhaps “breathing” new life into the song with this deceptive resolution of
harmony only four bars from its conclusion was intended as a playful way to cap this
remarkable setting of D’Annuncio’s sumptuous poem.

Though “Erotica” contains numerous challenges for the singer, overall it does not
rank as one of his most difficult. One potential difficulty that might not immediately be
apparent to the singer is that the piano part is often in a duple meter while the vocal line
is in a triple meter. This does create a few tricky spots and is something with which a
beginning or unskilled singer might have some problems. However, numerous Pizzetti
songs feature polymeter, and in most of those songs this issue is much more challenging
and significant. “Erotica” does feature some moments of mixed meter, even including
one measure of 15/8, but overall this isn’t a major difficulty in this song. The potential
monotony of this song, mentioned above, can be avoided if the singer is imaginative in
making use of various forms of musical or textual expression, for instance using varied

\[90\] Jensen, 54.
dynamics and/or rubato to bring out important phrases, and by being thoroughly invested in the text, expressively emphasizing important words through the use of *raddoppiamento sintattico* and other appropriate means. The tessitura of “Erotica” is high, but for the right singer, this characteristic of the song is a positive feature and not a negative one. The high note of the song, B-flat5, is indicated by the composer to be sung “il più possibile dolce e piano,” which means that the note is to be sung as sweetly and softly as possible—not an easy feat to accomplish for any level of singer. One final complication is that there is no tempo marking indicated at the beginning of the song; Lakeway and White offer a solution to this problem, recommending “an initial *lento* tempo (approximately quarter note = 60),” basing this suggestion on later tempi that are indicated in the score.\(^\text{91}\)

\(^{91}\)Lakeway and White, 141.
“La vita fugge e non s’arresta un’ora” from *Tre sonetti di Petrarca*

Text: Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374)

Date composed: 1922

Publication information: Ricordi, 1923

Range: B3 – E5

Tessitura: F-sharp4 – D5

Key: E minor

Meter: 4/4 and moments of 3/4

Tempo: Assai sostenuto

Duration: 2’20"

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Moderately difficult

Mood: Somber; philosophical

Voice type: Tenor or baritone (or soprano or mezzo-soprano, though the text of the set as a whole implies a masculine speaker)

La vita fugge e non s’arresta un’ora:
Life flees and does not stop for one hour:

E la morte vien dietro a gran giorno;
and death comes behind (at) a great pace;

E le cose presenti e le passate
and the things present and those past

Mi danno guerra, e le future ancora.
with me wage war, and those (in the) future also.
el rimembrar e laspettar mak'kora
and the remembering and the waiting grieve me

or 'kwinqti or 'kwindi si keŋ veri'tate
Or quinci or quindi sì, che 'n veritate,
now from here now from there so that in truth,
(from this way and that)

se noŋ ki c di me 'stesso pje'tate
Se non ch'i' ho di me stesso pietate,
if I did not have for myself pity,

i sa'rei ḏa di 'kwesti pen'şjer 'fôra
I' sarei già di questi pensier fora.
I would already of these thoughts be beyond.

'tornami a'vanti sal'kun 'dolfe 'mai
Tornami avanti s'alcun dolce mai
it returns to me any sweetness ever
(If ever my sad heart possessed some sweetness may it return to me)

'ebbēl kɔr 'tristo e 'poi dal'laltra 'parte
Ebbe 'l cor tristo; e poi dall'altra parte
had the heart sad; and then on the contrary

'veddʒo al 'mio navi'gar tur'batì i 'vanti
Veggio al mio navigar turbati i venti:
I see to my navigating disturbed the winds
(I see the winds opposed to my navigating)

'veddʒo for'tuna im 'pɔto e 'stanko o'mai
Veggio fortuna in porto, e stanco omai
I see a storm in port, and tired by now

il 'mio nok'kjər e 'rotte 'arbore e 'sarte
Il mio nocchier, e rotte arbore e sarte,
my helmsman, and (with) broken masts and sails,

e i 'lumi 'bei ke mi'rar 'səʎʎo 'spenti
E i lumi bei, che mirar soglio, spenti.
and the lights beautiful, that gaze upon I usually, are out.
(and the beautiful lights that I am accustomed to seeing are extinguished)

92 Fortuna could also be translated as “luck or happiness.”

93 This phrase could also be translated as “and the beautiful eyes that usually guide me are spent.”
“La vita fugge e non s’arresta un’ora” is one of Pizzetti’s most accessible, beautiful, and well-crafted songs. Its haunting melodic line and balance between music and text create an impression of a song that suits its poem perfectly. This is exactly the sort of song for which the early twentieth-century composers of liriche must have been aiming: one that weds word and music inextricably together, as in the German Lied, but that also remains true to Italian musical aesthetics.

“La vita fugge e non s’arresta un’ora” is the first of Pizzetti’s Tre sonetti del Petrarca: In morte di Madonna Laura, which were written in 1922 and published a year later. Like many of his songs for voice and piano, Pizzetti later chose to orchestrate these songs, this time for voice and small orchestra. These three songs then became part of a larger group of songs, Cinque liriche per canto e piccola orchestra, and were arranged in 1964 in this orchestrated format but were never published. The other two songs included in this set were “Mirologio per un bambino” and “Canzone per ballo,” which were originally published as part of Tre canti Greci and were also initially composed for voice and piano.94

Pizzetti dedicated Tre sonetti del Petrarca to his wife, Maria Stradivari, who had died suddenly in November of 1920 of typhus.95 The composer must have felt a strong connection with these poems and their poet, Petrarch, whose own muse, Laura, died of the plague in 1348.96 One contemporary of Pizzetti’s says that after the untimely death of his wife, the composer “never ceased to dress in dark clothes.”97 These songs were

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94Bruno Pizzetti, 378.
95Gatti, Ildebrando Pizzetti, 13.
96Jensen, 74.
intended to be performed together, and are linked by the composer in some ways—for instance, the tritones at the end of the first and third songs. In a moment of perhaps overly critical assessment, Gatti finds these songs to be lacking the usual Pizzettian individualism.

Pizzetti’s setting of “La vita fugge e non s’arresta un’ora” is through composed, but has certain elements and motives that tie its diverse musical sections together. The most important of these occurs in the vocal line in the first measure of the song. Although it is never repeated in its entirety in the vocal line, this motive recurs with some frequency in this short song in the piano part (for example in mm. 3–4, 13, 23–24) and is alluded to later in the vocal line, as well (m. 8). This is an example of one of the ways that Pizzetti creates continuity within a through-composed song. The vocal line itself is largely stepwise and is rhythmically constructed to closely follow the Italian text. As usual, Pizzetti was extremely faithful to the word stress inherent in the text. The melody and textual rhythms remind the singer of recitative and should be performed accurately but also with a relaxed quality in order to achieve the composer’s intent. These rhythms may be a somewhat beyond a beginning-level singer but are not as complicated as in some of Pizzetti’s later songs.

Another potential difficulty in “La vita fugge e non s’arresta un’ora” is due to its often unexpected harmonic movement, which results in some surprising accidentals in the vocal line. Therefore, the pitches of this song must be meticulously routined during the initial learning process, in order to avoid having to unlearn wrong notes later on. The


98 Jensen, 102.

99 Gatti, Ildebrando Pizzetti, 80–81.
actual range of this song, which is relatively narrow, makes it less vocally challenging than the others in this set. However, if the entire set is being sung by a tenor, as it was most likely intended to be, then the low-lying pitches on the final page could be problematic.
“Quel rosignuol che si soave piagne” from *Tre sonetti di Petrarca*

Text: Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374)

Date composed: 1922

Publication information: Ricordi, 1923

Range: B-sharp3 – A5

Tessitura: A4 – D-sharp5

Key: F-sharp minor

Meter: Mixed; 9/8, 12/8, and 6/8

Tempo: Sostenuto e triste

Duration: 3’30’’

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Moderately difficult

Mood: Mournful; sad

Voice type: Tenor (or soprano, though the text implies a masculine speaker)
Ch'altri che me non ho di cui mi langue:
That others that I don’t have among whom I complain:
(That I don’t have any others besides myself to whom I can complain)

Che'n Dee non credev’io regnasse Morte.
Who in Goddesses didn’t believe reigned Death.
(Who didn’t believe that Death reigned over Goddesses)

Oh how easy it is to deceive one who is sure of himself!

Oh ke ljeve e ingannar chi s'assecura!
Those two lovely lights (eyes), much more than the sun bright,

Chi pensò mai veder far terra oscura?
Who thought ever seeing to make earth dark?
(Whoever thought of seeing them made as dark as earth [as in, clay or soil]?)

Vuol che vivendo e lagrimando impari
Wants that living and weeping I learn

Come nulla quaggiù diletta e dura.
How nothing here below delights and endures.

“Quel rosignuol che si soave piagne” is a beautiful, haunting, and unusual song
that is an effective recital piece. It is accessible to learn and rewarding to sing. Like
many of Pizzetti’s songs, it deserves to be performed more frequently than it is. All three
songs of Tre sonetti di Petrarca were dedicated to his wife, Maria, who died suddenly of
typhus in the year prior to their composition. See the entry for “La vita fugge, e non s’arresta un ora,” the first song of the set, for more information.

The opening theme of “Quel rosignuol che si soave piagne,” presented in the piano part only, effectively mimics the plaintive, mournful call of the nightingale. The unpredictability of this melody, as well as its chromaticism, foreshadows the song’s unsettled nature before the first note of the vocal line is sung. This theme is somewhat unusual for Pizzetti, since it is not presented in octaves in the piano as so many of his opening themes are. The theme returns later in the song, often in a truncated or otherwise altered version, for example in mm. 24–28, where it comments on the previous line of text and also musically connects two strophes, or in mm. 29–33, where it serves to unify disparate sections of the otherwise through-composed song. Back in mm. 24–27, a “new” motive is introduced, a quick arpeggiated figure that acts as a countermelody to the original birdsong theme. However, this new motive is really just another imitation of the nightingale’s call and is related to the initial measures of the song in the piano part.

The vocal melody is predominately stepwise, which is expected due to Pizzetti’s typical faithfulness to the natural accent and flow of the Italian language. Leaps in the vocal line, especially when they occur as ascending intervals, usually indicate important words and always fall on the stressed syllable of those words. The harmony is persistently in a state of uncertainty and never convincingly adopts one particular tonality. It is technically in F-sharp minor, and yet C-sharp is an important pitch center throughout, even more important than one would expect of the dominant. In fact, the piece ends by alternating between C-sharp major and minor chords but has taken a circuitous route through many keys to arrive there. The song is in compound meter.
throughout but alternates between 9/8 and 12/8, with a few measures of 6/8. This alternation of meter ensures that the stressed syllables of important words fall on strong musical beats in the measure but also creates an effect of “undermining a sense of rhythmic stability.”¹⁰⁰ Perhaps this feature indicates, along with the constantly unsettled harmony, that the speaker of the poem is becoming unhinged with grief and despair over the loss of his beloved. Similarly, it may also be telling that the piece ends on a different chord, C-sharp, than the F-sharp tonality at the beginning. Certainly, there is a feeling of closure at the end of the song but not, perhaps, the closure for which the listener and the speaker had hoped.

The difficulties for the singer in “Quel rosignuol che si soave piagne” are similar to those in many other Pizzetti songs, though this is not among his most difficult. The rapid-fire shifts in harmony and meter create the aforementioned instability for the listener but can prove challenging for the singer. Finding a sense of being vocally grounded while singing this song requires skill and plenty of rehearsal. The changeable nature of the harmony also affects the vocal line, making it chromatic, non-traditional, and unpredictable. Although the tessitura of this song is mostly on the high side, the highest notes of the song are brief in duration and not particularly dramatic. There are moments that are low in the voice that could prove challenging, especially those that occur near the end of the piece and after singing in the upper register for most of the song.

¹⁰⁰ Jensen, 89–90.
“Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov’era” from *Tre sonetti di Petrarca*

Text: Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374)

Date composed: 1922

Publication information: Ricordi, 1923

Range: C4 – G5   Tessitura: A4 – E5

Key: F major
Meter: 4/4
Tempo: Largo
Duration: 3’10”
Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult
Piano: Not difficult
Mood: Hopeful; mystical
Voice type: Tenor (or soprano, though the text implies a masculine speaker)

leˈvommi il ˈmio pensiˈɛr im ˈparte
Levommi il mio pensier in parte
Raised me my thoughts partly

ovˈɛra ˈkwella ˈkio ˈʧerko
Ov'era quella ch'io cerco
Where was that one that I search for

e non riˈtrɔvo in ˈterra
e non ritrovo in terra:
and do not find again on earth:

ˈivi fra lor kel ˈtɛrso ˈʧerkjo ˈsɛrʁa
Ivi, fra lor che 'l terzo cerchio serra,
There, among those which the third circle encloses,

la riˈvidi pju ˈbɛlla e ˈmeno alˈtera
La rividi più bella e meno altera.
I saw her again more beautiful and less proud.

per man mi ˈpreze e ˈdisse iŋ ˈkwɛsta ˈspera
Per man mi prese e disse: In questa spera
by the hand she took me and said: In this sphere
You will again (be) with me, if the desire does not mistake:

I am she that gave you such (a) battle,

and finished my day before evening.

My goodness is not understood by intellect human:

You alone I await and that which so much you loved,

and there below is remained, my beautiful veil.

Ah, why (did she) fall silent and open her hand?

Little was lacking that I (would) not remain in heaven.

“Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov’era” is a remarkable song in Pizzetti’s output, and it provides a fitting ending for this three-song cycle. In fact, while many of Pizzetti’s songs were grouped together for publishing purposes but were not necessarily
intended to be performed together, the three songs of *Tre sonetti di Petrarca* are seemingly meant to be performed as a group. These songs were dedicated to his wife, Maria, who died suddenly of typhus in the year prior to the composition of these songs. See the entry for “La vita fugge, e non s’arresta un ora,” the first song of the set, for more information about *Tre sonetti del Petrarca*.

There are many ways in which “Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov’era” is atypical of Pizzetti’s overall song composition style. Perhaps the first indication that this song is uncharacteristic of Pizzetti is that it has a much more conventional melodic line for the voice, and this is especially true of the song’s opening theme in the vocal line. This four-bar phrase clearly outlines the key of F major, since the introductory chords of the phrase are all F major chords, the first two notes of the theme outline a dominant to tonic relationship in the key of F, and the melody ends above a convincing authentic cadence in F major. The phrase follows a well-known formula for four-bar melodic phrases in that it rises to its climax mid-way through the phrase (m. 4), then relaxes and descends to its conclusion (downbeat of m. 5). This theme is both “singable” and memorable; the latter is partly due to repetition of motives from the theme in the accompaniment. A theme this conventional in style, structure, and tonality is rare in Pizzetti’s overall song output—in fact, this may be the only one!101

Another distinctive feature of this song is its sparse accompaniment. Contrary to the type of accompaniment expected of Pizzetti, this song lacks instances of doubling at the octave, especially when presenting an important motive or theme, complicated rhythms and perhaps even more complicated rhythmic notation, mixed meter as a defining element of the piece, duple and triple divisions of the beat happening in rapid

101Jensen, 99–100.
succession and simultaneously, and many more tempo changes and other musical directions indicated in the score. The effect is one of simplicity and perhaps fragility, as if each note in the accompaniment is carefully placed so as not to upset the mood of the delicate poetry. There are, however, a few instances of sharp contrast in the musical texture that call attention to important moments in the drama and also serve to delineate sections of the text, such as in mm. 9–10 and mm. 26–27. It is in this final section of the song (mm. 27–31) that Pizzetti follows a familiar pattern also present in numerous others of his songs—the accompaniment essentially stops its momentum and the vocal line adopts an almost spoken, hushed quality and becomes like recitative. This device effectively draws in the listener’s attention to the final, trembling words uttered by the singer, who seems overwhelmed with passion and excitement.

Though on the face of it “Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov’era” is not as difficult as many other Pizzetti songs, there are some challenges that might present obstacles for the singer. One issue is that the vocal line is not as supported by the piano as it is in many of Pizzetti’s songs, since very often the pianist has only simple chords underneath the more substantial melodic line of the singer. This means that the singer must be vigilant and have a deep commitment to the music, so that the tempi, dynamics, rhythms, and overall energy of the piece will be maintained, even without consistent support from the piano. However, as if to counterbalance this potential difficulty, the piece is not as tonally ambiguous as many of Pizzetti’s other songs. Furthermore, the actual pitches of the vocal line are often present in the chords of the accompaniment, which is a somewhat unusual characteristic for a Pizzetti song. Aside from the first note, the melody line for the singer never dips too low—often an issue for tenor and soprano
voice types, for which most of Pizzetti’s songs were written—and the range isn’t as wide as in many others. Also, this song does not include complicated mixed meter, nor does it have the simultaneous duple versus triple divisions of the beat that are so prevalent in other Pizzetti songs. The combination of these attributes help to make “Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov’era” accessible for most singers. However, it does require that the performer possess the vocal control necessary to sing softly in many of the important moments, including the last note, which should match the accompaniment’s dynamic level of pianissimo. It should be noted that the loudest dynamic level indicated in the song, mezzo-forte, is indicated only once, whereas pianissimo markings predominate and are frequently indicated.
“Donna lombarda” from *Tre canzoni*

Text: Popular Tuscan

Date composed: 1926

Publication information: Ricordi, 1927

Range: A-flat3 – A5  
Tessitura: E-flat4 – B-flat4

Key: C minor  
Meter: 3/4  
Tempo: Energico e rude (energetic and rough)  
Duration: 5’45”  
Difficulty: Voice: Difficult  
Piano: Moderately difficult  
Mood: Dramatic; forceful  
Voice type: Soprano or mezzo-soprano

ˈdonna lomˈbarda  
**Donna lombarda**  
Woman of Lombardy

ˈamami tu ˈdonna lomˈbarda  
**Amami tu, donna lombarda!**  
Love me you, woman of Lombardy

nom ’posso aˈmarti  
- **Non posso amarti,**  
- I cannot love you,

ˈsakra koˈrona nom ’posso aˈmarti perˈke ɔ maˈri  
**Sacra corona, non posso amarti perché ho marì!**  
Sacred crown, I cannot love you because I have a husband!

se tu ’ai maˈrito ˈfallo moˈrire  
- **Se tu hai marito,**  
- If you have a husband, make him die!

tinseɲɲeˈtʃo  
**T’insegnerò.**  
I will teach you.
Go into the garden of the lord father,

For there is a serpent,

Take the head of that serpent;

Crush it well

When it you have very well crushed,

Give it to (him) to drink.

He asked her to give him (something) to drink

Of which do you want, honored husband,

some of the white or some of the red (wine)?

- Del bianco che n'è,
del meglio che c'è.
some of the best that there is.

Parla meglio che c'è.
Some of the best that there is.

Parla un bambino di nove mesi.
Speaks a child of nine months

Nom ber kwel 'vino
- Non ber quel vino,
- Don't drink that wine,

ke jë c'è il ve'len
che c'è il velen!
(in) that there is poison!

ke a 'kwesto 'vino 'donna lom'barda
- Che ha questo vino, donna lombarda,
- What has this wine, woman of Lombardy,
(What is in this wine)

ke lë tor'bè?
That it is cloudy?

sa'ran no i 'trôni del'altra 'sera
- Saranno i troni dell'altra sera,
- It would be the thunderclaps from the other night,

ke lan 'fatto tor'bè
Che l'han fatto torbè.
That have made it cloudy.

'bevelo tu 'donna lom'barda 'bevelo te
Bévelo tu, donna lombarda! Bévelo te.
You drink it, woman of Lombardy! Drink it yourself.

um 'posso 'beve' sin'nor ma'rito
- 'Un posso beve', signor marito,
- I cannot drink it, honored husband,

per'ke un ço se
Perchè 'un ho se'.
Because I am not thirsty.
“Donna Lombarda” is the first song of *Tre canzoni*, which consists of settings of popular Tuscan poems. In all three songs, there is a female protagonist. They were dedicated to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (1864–1953), an American millionairess and avid patron of the arts who was a financial supporter of numerous composers during her lifetime, among them many of the modernist Italian composers in the first half of the twentieth century.\(^{102}\) The songs were originally written for voice and string quartet, but shortly thereafter the composer published a reduction for voice and piano.\(^{103}\) The first performance of these songs, with string quartet, took place as part of the Coolidge Festival in Venice on May 11, 1926, and was sung by Rachele Maragliano Mori, soprano, and played by the Veneziano Quartet. Interestingly, a version of these songs, arranged by Pizzetti for small orchestra, was performed two years later at La Scala in Milan, conducted by none other than the great Italian maestro Arturo Toscanini himself and sung

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\(^{103}\)Lakeway and White, 143.
by soprano Mercedes Llopart (1895–1970).104 Llopart was a Spanish soprano who had an extensive and successful performing career, especially in Italy, but may now be better known as the teacher of Renata Scotto, Anna Moffo, and Alfredo Kraus, among other noted singers of the past century.105 There is no record of the first performance of these songs with piano accompaniment, though that is now the most readily available version; Ricordi has recently published all three songs of Tre canzoni as part of a much needed compilation of Italian songs of the last century for voice and piano entitled Liriche del secolo Italiano: per voce acuta e pianoforte.106

“Donna Lombarda” is a narrative ballad with five characters—the king of France, the woman of Lombardy, the husband, the child, and the narrator. The form of the song is determined by the succession of characters, which Pizzetti articulates with changes in dynamics, tempi, tonality, vocal register, and musical texture. Pizzetti makes each character stand out, but also deploys some recurring themes to provide continuity. For example, the decidedly masculine theme at the beginning (mm. 1–6) is at first linked with the character of the king, but it subsequently underscores the music of the husband after he asks for wine (mm. 96–101). This theme is also associated with murder: parts of the theme reappear when the king suggests that the woman should poison her husband (mm. 64–67), when she attempts to murder him by pouring him the poisoned wine (mm. 96–101), and at the end of the piece, when the husband kills his wife (mm. 168–173).

106 Maurizio Carnelli, ed., Liriche del secolo Italiano: per voce acuta e pianoforte (Milan, Italy: Ricordi, 2005), 75–113.
It is the way in which Pizzetti portrays each character that makes this such an exciting and appealing song. One such characterization can be heard in the first musical transition between the king’s text and the woman’s text (mm. 14–15). Suddenly, the angularity of the king’s music is replaced by lyrical, sweeping triplets. Her music is more flowing than that of the previous section, and the piano accompaniment is generally less thick when she sings. She also sings in a higher register, which helps to define her character for the listener. Even though her vocal theme is a combination of rhythms and pitches that were first uttered by the king when he addresses her (mm. 7–10) and her music is therefore directly related to his music, the music accompanying her and the quality of her vocal lines clearly sets her character apart (indicated to be dolce e accorato, meaning “sweet and distraught”). She uses this initial vocal theme in most of her phrases throughout the song. Another example of musical characterization occurs when the narrator introduces the child (mm. 102–107). The texture becomes ethereal, and only eighth-note octaves in the treble clef are heard in the accompaniment. In fact, the register of the piano rises sharply at the narrator’s entrance. This music is already the child’s music, though; it is simple and high, and it eerily evokes this exceptional nine-month-old child. The child’s vocal line is simply intoned, alternating between only two notes (mm. 108–114).

“Donna Lombarda” becomes increasingly chromatic as we near its brutal conclusion. It is particularly interesting how Pizzetti musically signifies the unraveling of the woman’s mental and emotional state in the accompaniment in mm. 141–150. Her vocal line is not so different than earlier in the piece, basically consisting of the same note values and similarly shaped phrases. It is the piano part underneath the vocal line,
with its descending chromatic scales, that betrays the fact that her confidence is failing and that she is beginning to foresee the grisly ending of her story.

The challenges in “Donna Lombarda” are many. It takes a particular kind of singer to successfully perform such a difficult narrative song. It is important to portray each character differently, making use of vocal colors, dynamics, etc., while all the while maintaining a healthy vocal production. Lakeway and White warn the singer against too many “dramatic changes of vocal color,” reminding the singer that Pizzetti used many compositional devices to represent each character, taking much of the pressure off the singer. They allow, on the other hand, that “appropriate vocal colors may enhance the interpretation.”

In any case, it should be obvious that this song requires a good vocal actor to portray the drama and action—it is not one in which the singer can stand and sing with little or no facial expression or without attempting to convey to the audience a sense of the action and expect a successful performance. That being said, there is an inherent danger that this song’s dramatic nature might inspire some singers to use a heavier than normal vocal production. Unfortunately, Pizzetti didn’t help matters by including so many accents in the vocal line and by composing so many forte and fortissimo passages. “Donna Lombarda” encompasses a wide range, and requires the soprano (the voice type for whom this song was intended) to descend to a low A-flat3 for many important phrases. Pizzetti supplied optional higher notes in the score for the singer who needs to avoid singing the lowest pitches of the song, but those are far less dramatic and appealing. I have suggested in the chart above that a mezzo-soprano might conceivably sing this song; in that case, the singer should look to the high notes at the end of the song, around mm. 155–166, to decide if it will be doable. This song is likely to pose tessitura

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107Lakeway and White, 143.
issues for both higher or lower voiced females, since its disparate sections sit in various registers of the voice, and it is long enough that fatigue may become a factor, as well. Other potential challenges include the musical coordination between the pianist and the singer in rhythmically ambiguous parts of the song, and the difficult task of dramatically weaving the various sections together into a unified whole. With its intrigue, infidelity, deception, miracles—what nine-month-old child could warn his father not to drink the poisonous wine?—and murder, “Donna Lombarda” can be a very unusual and thrilling addition to a recital program.
“La prigioniera” from *Tre canzoni*

Text: Popular Tuscan

Date composed: 1926

Publication information: Ricordi, 1927

Range: C-sharp4 – A5  
Tessitura: A4 – E5

Key: A minor  
Meter: Mixed; 6/8, 3/4  
Tempo: Andante mosso  
Duration: 5′30″

Difficulty:  
Voice: Difficult  
Piano: Difficult

Mood: Melodramatic; petulant  
Voice type: Soprano

la pridʒoˈnjɛra  
La prigioniera  
The prisoner

ˈmanda a di  
Manda a di'  
She sends word to her

'alla su  
alla su' sorella  
her sister

ke la ˈkavi di  
che la cavi di prigionia,  
that her get out of imprisonment,

ke im priˈdʒone  
che in prigione ci puol marci'.  
that in prison she could rot.

e le ni ˈmanda a di  
E le' ni manda a di'  
and she to her sends word

ke im priˈdʒone tʃi pwɔl marˈʧi
che in prigione ci puol marci'.
She sends word to her mother
ke la 'kavi di pridʒo'nia
che la cavi di prigionia
(that she get her out of prison)

e le ni 'manda a di
E le' ni manda a di'
And she to her sends word
ke im pridʒone ħi pwɔl mar'ʧi
che in prigione ci puol marcì'.
that in prison she could rot.

She sends word to her father
ke la 'kavi di pridʒo'nia
che la cavi di prigionia
(that he get her out of prison)

e lu ni 'manda a di
E lu' ni manda a di'
And he to her sends word
ke im pridʒone ħi pwɔl mar'ʧi
che in prigione ci puol marcì'.
that in prison she could rot.

She sends word to her lover
ke la 'levi di pridʒo'nia
che la levi di prigionia
(that he take her out of prison)

e lu se la va a 'prende
E lu' se la va a prende',
And he himself her goes (and) gets
e se la porta via.
and himself her carries away.
(and he himself goes and gets her and carries her away)

moret'tina um 'balla pju
- Morettina, 'un balla' più,
- Little brunette girl, don’t dance anymore,

ke lè 'morta la tu so'rella
chè l'è morta la tu' sorella.
for she is dead your sister.

e se lè 'morta la ti 'stia
- E se l'è morta, la ci stia!
- And if she is dead, let her be!

'kwando 'lèro im pridço'nia
Quando l'ero in prigionia,
When I was in prison,

nun mi 'volse 'mai ka'va
nun mi volse mai cavà'!
(she) did not me want ever to get out!
(she did not ever want to get me out of prison)

'swòna vio'lino ke 'vɔʎʎo bal'la
Suona, violino, chè voglio ballà!
Play, violin, for I want to dance!

moret'tina um 'balla pju
- Morettina, 'un balla' più,
- Little brunette girl, don’t dance anymore,

ke lè 'morta la tu 'mamma
chè l'è morta la tu' mamma.
for she is dead your mother.

e se lè 'morta la ti 'stia
- E se l'è morta, la ci stia!
- And if she is dead, let her be!

'kwando 'lèro im pridço'nia
Quando l'ero in prigionia,
When I was in prison,
(she) did not ever want to get me out!

"Suona, violino, chè voglio ballà!"
Play, violin, for I want to dance!

"moret'tina um 'balla pju
- Morettina, 'un balla' più,
- Little brunette girl, don’t dance anymore,

ke lè 'mɔrto lo 'tuo pa'pa
chè l'è morto lo tuo papà.
for he is dead your father.

-e se lè 'mɔrto lu 'stia
- E se l'è morto, lu' ci stia!
- And if he is dead, let him be!

"Quando l'ero in prigionia,
When I was in prison,

"Moret'tina um 'balla pju
- Morettina, 'un balla' più,
- Little brunette girl, don’t dance anymore,

ke lè 'mɔrto lo 'tuo 'damo
chè l'è morto lo tuo 'damo.
for he is dead your lover.
- Se l’èmortodidav’vero,  
- If he isdeadindeed,  
(If he is truly dead)

mi farò il vestitono,  
I will make the dress black,  

e bal’lare ‘ionon vo’più.  
And to dance I do not wantanymore.  

‘presto anch’io ne morirò.  
Soon I also will die.

The three songs of Tre canzoni were originally written for voice and string quartet, but a version for voice and piano was also published. It is the latter version that will be discussed here. For more information about Tre canzoni, please see the entry for “Donna Lombarda,” the first song of the set.

“La prigioniera” is a song that could almost be mistaken for a scene from a nineteenth-century opera, with its over-the-top histrionics and thrilling musical setting of this disturbing text. It is distinctive in Pizzetti’s song output because of its surprising traditional qualities. Formally, it is a modified strophic setting, which is quite rare for Pizzetti. The vocal melodies are also structured conventionally, especially at the beginning of the song. Many of the vocal lines follow the time-honored form of a four

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108The words “da vero” present a situation in which raddoppiamento sintattico is always appropriate; therefore, the v is shown as a doubled consonant in the transcription above. In fact, these two words have become one word in modern Italian—davvero. Note that the modern equivalent is spelled with a doubled v. Incidentally, the m of “morto” in this line of text would also be an excellent candidate for phrasal doubling, though it is not obligatory to do so. For a more thorough discussion of raddoppiamento sintattico, see: Adams, 41–44.

109Lakeway and White, 143.
measure antecedent with an inconclusive cadence followed by a four measure consequent phrase that ends more conclusively. Such is the case in the first vocal phrase of the song, which Pizzetti marks with the word “maliconico,” which means “melancholy.” This is the music of a young girl—it is lilting and tuneful, if already tinged with a note of sadness (mm. 3–6). Here, she is sweetly imploring her sister to come and get her out of prison. It is only in the consequent phrase, in which she mimics the sister’s response, that we hear more chromatic harshness in the melodic line. Perhaps the increased chromaticism is meant to indicate that this curt reply was not the one for which the protagonist was hoping (mm. 7–10). This musical pattern repeats itself in each of the young girl’s subsequent inquiries to her family members, though the actual notes of the melody are sometimes altered. An example of an alteration of the initial melodic line occurs when she asks her father to come and get her out of prison (mm. 21–24). Now there is a B-flat in the vocal line, and Pizzetti included the musical indication “un poco più sostenuto e stentato,” which means “a little more sustained (slower) and labored.” These changes imply that the prigioniera may have a special relationship with her father, or that she views this request as her last chance for one of her family members to come and save her. In any case, her response to being told about his death later in the song is met by the most violent outburst in the piece (mm. 103–111), supporting either of these two interpretations. In another example of the melodic pattern of the repeated strophes being modified, when the imprisoned girl asks her lover to come and get her out of prison and in her subsequent rescue, the mode of the song is temporarily altered to A major (mm. 30–39). This reveals one of the ways in which Pizzetti responded authentically to the text while maintaining a familiar, quasi-strophic form. The dancing of the young girl
is represented by virtuosic piano interludes, the first of which can be found in mm. 39–54. These sections of music must be counted among the song’s most attractive features. At first, they may appear to the listener to be light-hearted and fun, but as the piece develops, one begins to realize that there is a frenetic quality to the girl’s dancing, underlying her unstable psychological state. It is also interesting to note Pizzetti’s use of the descending chromatic lines at the end of the piece to symbolize the girl’s death, presumably of heartbreak (mm. 141 and 143). By invoking this musical device, Pizzetti surely drew upon his knowledge of early music, as this is a characteristic tool used by composers at least as far back as the Renaissance.

As with many Pizzetti songs, one of the most significant challenges of “La prigioniera” may be its wide range. In fact, this song may be considered both high and low, since its various sections emphasize different registers of the singer’s voice. Therefore, it requires a singer that is capable of singing weighty and dramatic passages in both extremes of the vocal range. The dramatic element of this song is also a potential challenge for some singers, since it demands much more than a beautiful voice and solid vocal technique. It simply won’t work if the singer and the pianist aren’t completely committed to the theatrical component of the text. Another difficulty lies in the fact that the key gets progressively farther away from the initial A-minor tonality as the tension in the text builds. This leads to increasingly chromatic vocal lines as the song progresses. This, combined with the song’s many intervallically disjunct lines (such as the one in mm. 26–28), can make for some challenging singing later in the piece, especially as the overall pitch of the vocal line rises. Finally, the performer of “La prigioniera” in the version for voice and piano would be advised to remember that when the protagonist
says, “play violin, I want to dance,” the singer in the original version for voice and string quartet would have been cuing an actual violinist!
“La pesca dell’anello” from *Tre canzoni*

Text: Popular Tuscan

Date composed: 1926

Publication information: Ricordi, 1927

Range: C4 – A-flat5 Tessitura: B4 – F5

Key: C major
Meter: 2/4
Tempo: Allegro moderato
Duration: 3'55"
Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult Piano: Moderately difficult
Mood: Playful; excited
Voice type: Soprano

la 'peska della'nello
La pesca dell’anello
Fishing for the ring

el’ìran tre so’rèlle
Ell'eran tre sorelle,
There were three sisters

e ’tutte tre da’mò
e tutt’e tre d'amò'
and all three to be loved
(and all three fit to love/all three were of age to be married)

ro’zetta la pju 'bella
Rosetta, la più bella,
Rosetta, the most beautiful,

si 'mize a navi'ga
si mise a naviga'.
took herself sailing.
Nel navigare che fece,
In the sailing that she did
(While sailing)

la' nello ʎ̩i kas' kɔ
l' anello gli cascò.
the ring from her fell.

O peska‘tor del' londe
- O pescator dell' onde,
- Oh fisherman of the waves,

'vjẹnì a pes'kar pju kwa
vi enì a pes'kar più qua!
come fish more here!
(closer, over here)

'peskami lo’ mio a'nello
Pescami lo mio anello,
Fish for me my ring

che m'è cascato in mar.
That from me has fallen into (the) sea.

'kwando la' vrɔ pes' kato
- Quando l' avrò pescato,
- When I have fished it (out),

'kɔza mi 'vwoi do' na
cosa mi vuoi donà'?
what (to) me do you want to give?
(what will you give me?)

'ʧɛnto tsek' kini 'dɔro
- Cento zecchinì d' oro,
- One hundred coins of gold,

na 'borsa reka' ma
' na borsa recamà.
A purse embroidered.

nom ʧ vo' tanti tsek' kini
- Non vo' tanti zecchinì,
- I don't want so many coins,
ne 'borsa reka'ma
né borsa recamà'.
nor purse embroidered.

'solo um ba'ʧin da'more
Solo un bacìn d'amore,
Only a little kiss of love,

se tu me lo vo da
se tu me lo vo' da'.
if you me it want to give.
(If you want to give it to me)

'kɔza di'ra la 'ʤente
- Cosa dirà la gente
What will say the people

keʧi ve'dra baʧar
che ci vedrà baciare?
who us see kissing?
(What will people say who see us kissing?)

di'ra ke lè la'more
- Dirà che l'è l'amore,
- They will say that it is love,

keʧè la 'fatto fa
che ce l'ha fatto fa'!
that us it has made do!
(that has made us do it!)

Pizzetti originally composed *Tre canzoni* for voice and string quartet, but it is version of “La pesca dell’anello” from the composer’s reduction of these songs for voice and piano that will be discussed below.¹¹⁰ For more information about *Tre canzoni*, please see the entry for “Donna Lombarda,” the first song of the set.

There are many elements in “La pesca dell’anello” that seem very unlike those that one would expect to find in a song by Pizzetti. First of all, he alters the poem by

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¹¹⁰Lakeway and White, 143.
repeating many of the lines of text, especially those at the beginning of the song that are uttered by the narrator. Of course, this method of adjusting the text to suit a composer’s needs is quite common in the song repertory, but this in one of the few times that Pizzetti uses it. Second, the song does not change meters at all, which is also unusual for Pizzetti. Third, the song rarely engages in the triple versus duple divisions of the beat that are common in Pizzetti’s other songs. Finally, it contains melismatic vocal lines, which are infrequently used by Pizzetti. These uncharacteristic traits were clearly chosen to emphasize the song’s simple, folk-like nature.

Lakeway and White offer a brief but insightful description of this song in their book, *Italian Art Song*, in which they compare this song to a “miniature opera.” In this appropriate analogy, the piano introduction serves as a “overture” of sorts. The first eight measures of the introduction return, often in a slightly varied form, to serve as interludes later (mm. 33–39, 57–64, 131–138) and as a triumphal postlude (mm. 165–176). This mirrors the way in which many opera composers use their orchestral overtures to introduce important musical themes that will recur throughout the opera. The theme at the beginning of “La pesca dell’anello” is a memorable one that consists of folk song elements and includes perhaps more than a hint of seafaring vigor.

In this song, Pizzetti makes use of more clear moments of word painting than is usual for one of his songs. For example, when the young, beautiful Rosetta is described as going sailing (m. 46), the word “navigare” (“sailing”) is set to eighth-note triplets, alluding to the rocking of the boat on the waves. When this line of text is repeated, even more triplets are included (mm. 55–56), suggesting that the boat is rocking a little bit more than in the previous phrase. Similarly, in the section in which the ring falls into the

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111 Lakeway and White, 148.
water (mm. 65–81), Pizzetti has devised a pattern of broken-chord sixteenth notes that indicates the reason for the ring’s unfortunate mishap—the water on which Rosetta is sailing has become quite turbulent! Another moment of text painting occurs just as the girl is considering whether or not to grant the fisherman’s unusual request for payment. The moment that she becomes concerned over what people will think if she kisses him is clearly audible in the music (mm. 139–142). This may be one of the moments that draws Gatti’s attention as he refers to this song’s “half-tender, half-vulgar ‘moral’”—the girl is really only concerned about appearances and not about the rightness or wrongness of the act in question.\textsuperscript{112} What then is to be made of the trills that underscore the fisherman’s request for the kiss (mm. 125–128)? One explanation is that these represent the reaction of a young girl who is “trembling” with both nervousness and excitement at this prospect, though there may be other, equally plausible interpretations.\textsuperscript{113} Whatever the reason for those odd little trills, the song’s conclusion seems to leave no doubt that both parties must have gotten what they wanted out of the deal (complete with a kiss in m. 173?), judging from the jubilant-sounding postlude, doubled at the octave on the piano and marked fortissimo.

The generally high tessitura of “La pesca dell’anello” may be challenging for some sopranos, but, contrariwise, others may appreciate that there only two occurrences of any real low notes. The ideal singer of this song must be able to move her voice well, since this song, unlike most other songs written by Pizzetti, contains florid melismas throughout. In fact, this is one of the only songs that might be considered a vocal showpiece in all of Pizzetti’s output. A related difficulty is that there may be a

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{112}Gatti, \textit{Ildebrando Pizzetti}, 82.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{113}Lakeway and White, 149.}
temptation to lose a sense of legato in this song in order to sing the arpeggio-like vocal lines and also to bring out the drama of the text.

In order for the audience to distinguish between the three characters of this text (the narrator, Rosetta, and the fisherman), Lakeway and White suggest making use of a different vocal color for the fisherman.\textsuperscript{114} Pizzetti, however, has taken care of some of the characterization already by setting the fisherman’s text with lower pitches and in a different key than Rosetta’s vocal lines. It is more important, then, that the singer should demonstrate the personality of the main protagonist in this song, Rosetta, above all else, in order to create a character with whom the audience can relate and empathize. Her personality traits can be varied, depending on what kind of person the singer believes her to be, be it naïve, spunky, curious, devious, nervous, etc. Since her character is not completely “fleshed out” in the text, this process will be similar to creating a well-thought-out character in an operatic setting. Once this is accomplished, there is great potential for acting in the final postlude, since it is there that the singer has an opportunity to help the audience decide how the story ends. The singer may, in fact, choose to imagine that the kiss occurs in the piano’s postlude; this is actually possible in two places near the end of the song. The first and most obvious moment for the kiss to occur is on the surprising and accented B-flats of m. 173, which are presented in three octaves, but it could also take place in the final bar of the song, m. 176. This second interpretation might then lead the singer to understand m. 173 as the moment when the fisherman retrieves the ring and the girl realizes that the kiss is imminent.

\textsuperscript{114}Lakeway and White, 149.
“Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem” from *Due canti d’amore* in *Altre cinque liriche*

**Text:** *Songs of Songs*

**Date composed:** 1908

**Publication information:** Ricordi, 1933

**Range:** D-sharp4 – G5  
**Tessitura:** B4 – E5

Key: E minor (First half)/G-sharp minor (Second half)  
**Meter:** Mixed: 2/4, 5/4, 15/8, 3/4, 4/4, 12/8  
**Tempo:** Andante sostenuto

**Difficulty:**  
Voice: Difficult  
Piano: Difficult

**Mood:** Expectant; lovesick

**Voice type:** Soprano

**in 'lɛktulo 'mɛɔ in 'nɔktɛs**

*In lectulo meo, in noctes,*  
**On bed mine at night**

'kwesivi kwɛm 'dilidʒit 'anima 'mɛa  
**quæsivi quem diligit anima mea;**  
**searching for whom I love my soul**  
(Searching for the one my soul loves)

'kwèsivi 'illum et non in'vəni  
**quæsivi illum, et non inveni.**  
**searching for that one and not finding (him).**

**a'djuro vos 'filie je'rusaɛm**

**Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem,**  
**Swear you, daughters Jerusalem,**

si inve'nəritis di'lektum 'mɛum  
**si inveneritis dilectum meum,**  
**If find beloved mine,**
In Bruno Pizzetti’s chronology of his father’s works, this song is listed under the title *Due antifone*, which is translated as “two antiphons.” Later in the entry, he informs us that it was published, years later, as “Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem.” The reason for this is evident from the rest of the information given in the entry, which discusses the inception of this curious song. John C. G. Waterhouse, English musicologist and expert on twentieth-century Italian musicians, clarifies the interesting history of this song in his review of Bruno Pizzetti’s aforementioned book:

... [T]he remarkable song 'Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem', published in 1933 as one of the *Altre cinque liriche*, always seemed the odd one out in that group and strangely different from most of Pizzetti’s other music of the 1930s. Now Bruno Pizzetti reveals the reason: the song, in all its essentials, dates back to 1908, when its two halves were conceived as separate late additions to the incidental music of *La nave*; but they were subsequently withdrawn without ever being performed in that context and were thereafter withheld from publication for a quarter of a century before being joined together to form the song as we know it.  

The first performance of the song with its two halves unified under the single title “Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem” occurred on January 22, 1932, in Rome. The performers

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115 This word could be pronounced using a j-glide—[nunʦjetis]. In this case, however, Pizzetti’s setting of the word does not support this pronunciation.

116 Bruno Pizzetti, 367–368.

were Maria Rota, soprano, and Giorgio Favaretto, pianist; this duo may also have been the first to perform *Altre cinque liriche* as a unified set of songs.\textsuperscript{118}

Regarding the song itself, it is structurally divided into two sections. The first section, which begins with the text “*In lectulo meo,*” is only thirteen measures long and serves as a kind of introduction to the more involved, more rhythmically and tonally complex second section, which begins with the text “*Adjuro vos.*” The two sections are basically unconnected, and they sound like exactly what they are, which is two separate pieces of music that have been merged into one song. There is no real transition between the two—the first section ends, in its key of E minor, and the next section begins, in G-sharp minor. Nothing about the style, harmony, rhythm, or melody seems, at least initially, to connect the two disparate sections of music. The result is essentially a medley of two short arias from a Pizzetti opera.

There are some connections between the two sections of “*Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem,*” and the most obvious of these is probably that the texts were both taken from *Song of Songs*. However, these texts do not occur in succession in the original poetry, so having these two texts juxtaposed does not exactly make sense. One musical connection between these two songs occurs in the vocal line of mm. 17–21, in which the initial sixteenth-note motive from the “*In lectulo meo*” section recurs. In fact, this initial motive of the piece has been present, in a fragmented state, in the accompaniment of the “*adjuro vos*” section since m. 14, and continues to surface until the end of the song, making its final appearance in the penultimate measure.

The pervading opening motive is the most important one of the piece, and is interesting in its design. It is mostly made up of sixteenth-notes that alternate by step and

\textsuperscript{118}Bruno Pizzetti, 368, 383–384.
“resolve,” in a sense, to the longer quarter-note values of the following measure. Each time it is repeated, it gives the sense of rushing ahead for one moment, and then abruptly ceasing this sense of motion. The phrase itself is short and seems incomplete or interrupted. During the sixteenth-note portion of the motive, the pitch attempts, twice, to ascend to a higher pitch, but the quarter notes invariable descend in pitch to a note lower even than the first pitch of the sixteenth-notes. One could interpret this phrase in the context of the beautiful, ancient poetry as portraying the emotions and circumstances of the speaker—she is anxious and her heart is fluttering, but she is forced to wait for the return of her beloved; she tries to rise up from her bed but is unable to do so, presumably because she is faint with love, and she feels unfulfilled and incomplete without him.

The melismatic passages of “Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem” are a testament to Pizzetti’s life-long interest in chant and early music. One detects more than a little influence of the florid vocal writing of the Renaissance. It should also be noted that there are some interesting moments of text painting in this short song. Perhaps the most remarkable is the winding but rapidly descending chromatic scale in anticipation of the word “langueo” (“I faint,” mm. 23–25). Though this figure occurs on the final vowel of the word “quia,” it is essentially a wordless vocalise, meant to epitomize the protagonist’s swooning and heartsick condition.

Beyond the usual difficulties involved with singing a Pizzetti song—such as challenging rhythms, unusual harmonic shifts resulting in difficult, chromatic melodies—the singer of this song must be able to move their voice with ease. Despite the relatively slow tempo, this song has moments of rapid-fire melismas that appear abruptly, calling to mind the florid vocal styles of the Renaissance while serving as vocal pyrotechnics for
the singer. This song also requires a talented singer-actor, since it is made up of excerpts from Pizzetti’s earlier staged work that were not initially meant to stand on their own in a song recital. One possible tactic for the performer might be to embrace, rather than to downplay, the contrast between the two sections of this song by making them very distinct from one another. Certainly, the pianist should consider taking a bit of extra time in m. 13 to help facilitate this approach, and the singer would do well to dramatically create a change of mood in this measure in order to give the impression of inspiring the unexpected music of m. 14.

Of course, singing “Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem” in context with the other Altre cinque liriche would make an interesting group for a modern-day song recital, since these songs are all essentially unknown to modern audiences and because they were published as a group. As with many of Pizzetti’s published song sets, there is little evidence that these songs were intended by the composer to be performed together, so they need not exclusively be performed as such. For example, a performer interested in creating her own group of Pizzetti songs might pair this song with another that is itself an excerpt from La nave, “Antifona Amatoria di Basiliola.” This song is also a setting of text from The Song of Songs, and also ends with the words “Quia, amore langueo.” Alternately, the singer might choose to build a set of love songs by Pizzetti around “Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem,” which might include songs such as “Oscuro è il ciel,” “Erotica,” and “Antifona Amatoria di Basiliola.”
“Oscuro è il ciel” from *Due canti d’amore* in *Altre cinque liriche*

Text: Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837), after Sappho (born c.650 B.C.)

Date composed: 1931

Publication information: Ricordi, 1933

Range: D-sharp4 – G5

Tessitura: E4 – B4

Key: E minor/major

Meter: 4/4

Tempo: Lento

Duration: 2′25″

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Not difficult

Mood: Languid; erotic

Voice type: Mezzo-soprano or soprano

osˈkuɾo ɛ il ʧɛl

Oscuro è il ciel;

Dark is the sky;

nellˈ onde la ˈluna dʒa sasˈ konde

Nell’ onde la luna già s’asconde

In the waves the moon already conceals itself

è  in ˈ seno al mar le ˈ plɛjadi

E in seno al mar le Plejadi

And in the breast of the sea the Pleiades

dʒa diʃʃɛnˈdɛndo van

Già discendendo van.

Already descending they go.

(The Pleiades are already descending into the breast of the sea)

ɛ meddزا’ nɔtte

È mezzanotte,

It is midnight,

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119 The Pleiades are stars that are visible from Earth and are part of the constellation Taurus.
E l’ora passa frattanto,
and the hour passes in the meantime,
E sola qui sulle piume
and alone here on the feather pillows
Ancora veglio ed aspetto in van.
Still I stay awake and wait in vain.

“Oscuro è il ciel” was published by Ricordi in 1933 as part of Due canti d’amore in Altre cinque liriche, though it previously appeared in 1932 in the magazine La Nuova Italia Musicale. Pizzetti also arranged this song for voice and orchestra, but that version was never published. The first performance took place in Milan in 1932 and was sung by Ginevra Vivante with the composer at the piano. Vivante, a soprano whose career spanned from 1933 to 1978, specialized in early music, chamber music, and concert music, and was a frequent interpreter of works by the contemporary Italian composers Pizzetti, Malipiero, Alfano, and Dallapiccola, among others. The text is by writer and translator Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837) and is based on a fragment of poetry by Sappho.

“Oscuro è il ciel” begins very simply, with two measures of open octaves in half notes serving as an introduction prior to the singer’s first entrance. The vocal line is also initially very simple, consisting at first of the notes E and G only and later adding G-

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120Bruno Pizzetti, 382–383.


sharp. This gives the opening of the song a very ambiguous tonality—is the piece in E minor or E major? Taking a larger perspective, this song can be viewed as a kind of musical palindrome, in that it begins with minimal complexity and later adds more and more layers of complication as the song progresses towards its climax in the middle of the piece. Then, one by one, these layers of complication subside as the piece returns at its conclusion to a texture that is similar to the beginning of the song. These layers of complexity include an increase in the variety of notes present in the vocal line, an increase in the variety of rhythms for singer and pianist, a fuller texture in the accompaniment, and an accelerando leading to the climactic moment of the piece (and the highest note) in m. 21. After this moment, there is a slowing of the tempo that leads to a resumption of the original *lento* tempo marking, and the other complications mentioned all fade as well, as the song nears its conclusion. At the end, the listener is left with the same simple texture as in the song’s opening measures and the same E major/minor pattern in the vocal line, though now this pattern is reversed from the introduction. This idea of writing this piece as a musical palindrome was a technique for composing songs that Pizzetti must have been delighted to borrow from one of his favorite composers—perhaps Ockeghem?—of the Renaissance.

Another aspect of understanding “Oscuro è il ciel” is to observe the ways in which the composer engaged in word painting. Lakeway and White point out an important instance of this in which a series of descending chords follow the line of text “*le Plejadi già discendendo van,*” which can be translated as “the Pleiades already are descending.” The chords that follow this line of text, which get progressively lower in pitch and softer in dynamic level, are obvious musical allusions to the stars of this
constellation descending and even disappearing from sight. A somewhat less
conventional approach to word painting, at least for Pizzetti, is the erotic component that
can be heard in his musical setting of this text. Perhaps the most notable moment of this
surprising—or lurid?—sort of word painting may be the unanticipated climax in the vocal
line at the words “E sola qui sulle piume” (“and alone here on top of the feather pillows,”
mm. 19–21). Here the pitch ascends sharply and the dynamic level, which up until this
point has been marked entirely piano or pianissimo, rises to mezzo-forte—the loudest
dynamic marking of the piece. After this unexpected moment, at the beginning of the
word “ancora” (meaning “again”), there is an upward glissando in the piano part that
should sound “as if the piano strings had been touched with a brush,” or perhaps a
feather, in keeping with imagery of the text.\footnote{Lakeway and White, 150.}

Immediately after, there is a descending chromatic scale in the vocal line, a device that in context brings to mind “the little death”
so often referenced in the songs of the Renaissance with which Pizzetti was intimately
familiar. This scale descends to the vocal register of the beginning of the piece, and the
dynamic level, post outburst, returns to the softer piano marking.

“This oscuro è il ciel” can be an effective song in performance, but there are some
challenges to overcome in order for this to be the case. Certainly the sustained and
exposed vocal lines are challenging, and they prove to be a real test of legato and breath
support for even the most accomplished and technically sound singer. Then there is the
matter of the tessitura, which is fairly low. Many of the sustained vocal lines of this song
lie in the low register, especially for a high voice. However, as the textual and musical
agitation grows, the pitch also rises. The singer must be able to sustain in the upper
register for several measures, singing both mezzo-forte and piano in the top, before
returning to the lower register at the song’s conclusion. It also contains ascending and descending scalar passages (mm. 8–9 and mm. 22–23, respectively) that require a secure vocal technique and very accurate pitch from the singer, since in both cases the accompaniment is sparse and provides little support. In considering the dramatic element of this song, it should be noted that the speaker of the poem is alone throughout—it is a brief monologue but one that has the potential for great emotion and expression. “Oscuro è il ciel” might be interesting to pair in recital with “Erotica,” a song by Pizzetti that has an even more overtly sexual theme.
“Augurio” from *Tre canti Greci* in *Altre cinque liriche*

Text: Greek folk text, translated by Pio Bondioli (1890–1958)

Date composed: 1932

Publication Information: Ricordi, 1933

Range: D-flat4 – G5

Tessitura: F-sharp4 – C5

Key: G major

Meter: Mixed; 3/4, 2/4, 4/4, and 4/8

Tempo: Largo e disteso (Slow and expansive)

Duration: 2’42”

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Moderately difficult

Mood: Haunting; disturbing

Voice type: Soprano

Augurio

Wish

in rumelja ti un ’albero
In Rumelia c’è un albero
there is a tree,

frondoso e di grande ombra;
full of leaves and of great shade;

alla radice ha una fresca polla
at the roots (it) has a fresh spring

e sul ’tronco ’una ’croce.
and on the trunk a cross.

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124“Rumelia” refers to an historical region located on the Balkan peninsula. This area is now part of many countries: Greece, Turkey, Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo.
Ci vanno i marinai per acqua
They go there the sailors for water

e 'fanno au'gurjo 'sulla 'croce:
and make (a) wish on the cross:

ki ε 'amato e re'kuza a'more
“Chi è amato e recusa amore
“Who is loved and rejects love

'mwoja zve'nato
death bleed;
(May he who is loved and rejects love bleed to death)

e ki a 'due a'manti
and (may he) who has two lovers

si 'abbja kwa'anta koltel'late
si abbia quaranta coltellate;
may he have forty knife wounds;

e ki na tre o 'kwattro
and (may he) who has three or four (lovers)

se 'nabbja kwaranta kwattro
se n'abbia quarantaquattro;
may he have forty-four (knife wounds);

e ki na 'una 'unika
and (may he) who has one (lover) , unique

al 'mondo dzo'iska;
al mondo, gioisca;
in the world, rejoice;

e ki non ne a nem'meno 'una
and (may he) who has not even one,
The first performance of “Augurio” took place, along with “Oscuro è il ciel,” and the final song of Tre canti Greci, “Canzone per ballo,” on November 25, 1932, in Milan. The songs were performed by soprano Ginevra Vivante with the composer at the piano. For more information about Vivante, see the entry for “Oscuro è il ciel,” a song for which she also sang the debut performance. “Augurio” was dedicated to Ida Pozzi Borletti.

The songs of Tre canti Greci are Italian translations of popular, traditional Greek texts by Pio Bondioli. It is unclear from Bruno Pizzetti’s chronology of his father’s works whether these three songs were published only as a part of Altre cinque liriche or if they were also published as a separate set. Unlike so many of Pizzetti’s published song “sets,” these three songs are especially appealing when presented as a group in recital and must have been intended by the composer to be performed as such. There are some subtle musical connections between the songs, but most of all it is the varying moods, styles, and tempi that make these work well together. Certainly, these are three songs that deserve more attention than they have received, and a singer looking for a beautiful, interesting, and unusual set for a recital would do well to consider them.

“Augurio” is a curious setting of a strange, disturbing text. It can roughly be divided into two sections; first, the initial, introductory section that describes the tree in Rumelia and its attributes (mm. 1–14), and second, the narrative section that describes the wishes (or in some translations, “fortunes” or “omens”) of the sailors who visit the tree (mm. 15–45). In this song, Pizzetti writes musical themes of melodic interest in both the

accompaniment and the vocal line (a lack of which can be mentioned as a criticism of many of his earlier pieces) but manages this without taking away from his usual faithfulness to the Italian language. For instance, the first couple of phrases for the singer are equal parts lovely vocal melody and idiomatic Italian text recitation. The first theme in the piano is of great importance to the overall meaning of Pizzetti’s setting of this text. It is presented in octaves in the piano, which is not an uncommon device for Pizzetti, and its modal-sounding nature, combined with the downward flourish of sixteenth and thirty-second notes, may remind the listener of a “middle-Eastern strummed instrument.”

Incidentally, music that implies this same stringed instrument is also present later, such as in m. 7, m. 9, and m. 10. The alternation between the notes E-flat and E-natural in this initial theme give the impression of mode mixture. Here it is more complicated than a simple mixing of the major and minor modes, yet it is still reminiscent of the alternation between major and minor at the beginning another of Pizzetti’s songs, “Oscuro è il ciel,” written in the same year. The music of the introduction of “Augurio” is unsettled and evokes a probing, searching quality, as if the theme itself is unsure of its character or identity. It is, of course, left up to the interpreters of this song, both singer and pianist, to decide how this aspect of the initial theme will affect the performance of the song, but it is certainly worthy of attention.

One of the most interesting choices made by Pizzetti in this song is how he set the various “wishes” of the sailors. In each wish that mentions knife wounds, Pizzetti surprisingly makes use of the major mode (mm. 21–22, 25–26, 29–30). In fact, for the line of text, “e chi n’ha tre o quattro se n’abbia quarantaquattro,” (“and may he who has three or four lovers, may he have forty-four knife wounds”), the music sounds positively

126Lakeway and White, 152.
exultant! It is not hard to imagine, then, why he chose a soprano for the first performance of these songs—this song was intended to be sung from the female perspective, and she is intent on punishing those who do not conform to her standards of proper relationship etiquette. It is only in the line “e chi n’ha una,” (“and he who has one [lover],”) which echoes the initial theme in the piano with its wavering uncertainty between E-flat and E-natural, that a certain guarded passion creeps into the music, which crescendos and becomes less restrained at the climax of “gioisca” (“rejoice”).

Fairly unusual for Pizzetti is the way in which he chose to repeat the line of text that begins the words “e chi n’ha una.” First, the initial words of the line are repeated (mm. 31–33), and then the whole sentence is repeated (mm. 35–39). This departure from his usual practice in text setting, which nearly always reflects how one would naturally speak the text, must be taken as a sign that this phrase was repeated for emphasis. It should also be noted that when Pizzetti repeats the entire line of text, the mood of the line the second time is very different than the first; while the first iteration of this text is sung as part of a great crescendo into the triumphant “gioisca,” the repetition of the line is more collected and understated—perhaps a more sober, private utterance than an unrestrained outburst.

For the ending of “Augurio,” Pizzetti called upon a dramatic musical device that he employed perhaps too frequently in his other songs. In this case, however, it is perfectly suited to the text. Beginning in m. 42, the accompaniment drops out, and the voice utters its phrase in an unaccompanied and almost spoken, recitative-like style. The note values for the singer are much faster and resemble patter; the piano part is sparse and sounds like the continuo part from an opera. The poem has a surprise ending that lends
itself well to this treatment, and Pizzetti reinforces the “punch-line” with accents in the vocal line and chords that serve as punctuation in the piano accompaniment.

“Augurio” affords the singer many opportunities for beautiful singing and dramatic interpretation, but it also includes some significant challenges. The key (or mode) is extremely fluid in this piece, and because of this, tuning for the singer can be a challenge. Obviously, it is important for the singer to be thoroughly prepared, musically, before performing this piece publically—a very good ear will also be an asset. However, Pizzetti offered more help for the singer in the accompaniment than was usual for one of his songs. For example, in m. 15, the F-natural might be a tricky note to find, given the repeated F-sharps of the previous measure. Here, Pizzetti allowed the piano part to anticipate the F-natural by one half beat before the singer sings it. In m. 36, the melody in the vocal line must emerge from a very chromatic passage in the piano in the previous measure; thankfully, the first motive of the singer’s melody occurs earlier in the bar in the left hand of the accompaniment. These are two examples of challenging tonal transitions for the singer being made somewhat easier by the accompaniment, but there are many other moments in this song in which this is the case.

One suggestion for the singer in performing “Augurio” is to embrace—rather than downplay—the strangeness of the musical setting of each wish, especially when it is suggested (in the major mode!) that the offending person be brutally killed. A creative singer will surely find a way to use these fascinating moments as opportunities for vivid character choices. That being said, a perfect legato must be maintained in this song in order for it to be a musical and vocal success. As with many narrative songs, the singer
should be careful not to let the dramatic aspect of the song get in the way of employing a beautiful, healthy legato line. Only momentary excursions from this rule are acceptable.

As a side note, for the word “Rumelia,” the singer should follow the word accent implied by Pizzetti’s setting of the text—[rumeˈlja]. Though this pronunciation may seem odd for an Italian word, placing the stress of this word on the final syllable is in line with the pronunciation of the corresponding word in Greek and is clearly the word accent for which Pizzetti was aiming in his rhythmic setting of this word.
“Mirologio per un bambino” from *Tre canti Greci* in *Altre cinque liriche*

Text: Greek folk text, translated by Pio Bondioli (1890–1958)

Date composed: 1932

Publication information: Ricordi, 1933

Range: D-flat4 – G-flat5

Tessitura: G4 – D5

Meter: 2/4

Tempo: Andante lento

Duration: 2’35”

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Not difficult

Mood: Anguished; heartbroken

Voice type: Soprano or mezzo-soprano

miroˈlodo per un bamˈbino

Mirologioʼ127 per un bambino

Calendar for a child

non ˈnella ˈbɛlla esˈtate

Non nella bella estate,

Not in the beautiful summertime,

ma ˈkwore dellimˈverno

Ma nel cuore dell’inverno,

but in the heart of winter,

ˈprɔprjo ˈora tu ˈai voˈluto anˈdartene

Proprio ora tu hai voluto andartene!

Just now you wanted to go away!

ˈmiɔ ˈbimbo tu non ˈai voˈluto atˈtendere

Mio bimbo, tu non hai voluto attendere

My baby, you did not want to wait

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127 “Mirologio” is not an Italian word, but is a variant of a Greek word, *hmerologio*. 
ke a 'pòko a 'pòko le kol'line fjo'rissero
Che a poco a poco le colline fiorissero,
until little by little the hills would be full of flowers,

rimver’ dissero i 'prati
Rinverdissero i prati,
Would again become green the meadows,

zbotˈʧassero i gaˈròfani
Sbocciassero i garofani,
Would blossom the carnations,

e krefˈʃessero i 'fjori
E crescessero i fiori.
And would grow the flowers.

a'vresti poˈtuto 'kɔˈʎerne a 'pjène 'mani
Avresti potuto coglierne a piene mani,
You could have picked to full hands,
(You could have picked them by the handfuls)

e porˈtarli nel 'basso 'mondo
E portarli nel basso mondo,
And carried them into the underworld,

le dʒovaˈnette 'sullo spaˈrato 'della kaˈmitha
Le giovannette sullo sparato della camicià,
The little girls on the front of their blouses,

e i 'ʤovani li a'vrébbero 'messi sul berretto
E i giovani li avrebbero messi sul berretto,
And the boys could have put them in their caps,

le dʒovaˈnette 'sullo spaˈrato 'della kaˈmitha
Le giovannette sullo sparato della camicià,
The little girls on the front of their blouses,

e i 'pikkoli li a'vrebbero te'nuti im 'mano
E i piccoli li avrebbero tenuti in mano,
And the little ones could have held them in their hands,

dimentiˈkando la 'mamma
Dimenticando la mamma.
Forgetting (their) mama.

“Mirologio per un bambino” is the second song of Tre canti Greci, a set that is itself a part of Altre cinque liriche. It was debuted by Maria Rota, soprano, and Giorgio
Favaretto, piano, on May 10, 1933, in Florence. This pair may also have been the first to perform the entire *Altre cinque liriche*, according to Bruno Pizzetti. This song, along with “Canzone per ballo,” was reworked by Pizzetti much later in life into a version called *Due canti Greci* for voice and small orchestra (1964), but these were unfortunately never published. The version of the song for voice and piano was dedicated by Pizzetti to the memory of Gino Raimondi.\(^{128}\) The origin of the title of this song is a bit of a mystery, since it neither appears in the text of the song nor in the previous section of the poem that Pizzetti chose not to include.\(^{129}\) It may have been added by the composer. “Mirologio” is a Italianized version of the Greek word for “calendar,” and has been rendered incorrectly in other English translations of this song as a “lament.” Therefore, the title of this song has been misconstrued in these translations to mean “Lament for a Child,” when in actuality it should read, “Calendar for a Child.” This song can stand on its own or be grouped with other songs in recital, but it probably is most effective when performed in context with the other two songs of *Tre canti Greci*. For more information about *Tre canti Greci* as a set, please see the entry for “Augurio,” the first song of the set.

“Mirologio per un bambino” can be a captivating, not to mention uncommon, addition to a song recital but is largely unknown to modern performers. Its success as a composition is due to its beautiful yet tragic text, the pervading use of sharp dissonance to portray the mother’s agony, and the superb marriage between text and music in this, one of Pizzetti’s most beautiful songs. The most important musical idea in this song is the very first motive in the piano (m. 1), which is based on a tritone. Later repetitions of this motive are sometimes altered to outline other intervals/chords, but the tritone version

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\(^{128}\)Bruno Pizzetti, 383–384.

\(^{129}\)Pio Bondioli, *Canti popolari Greci* (Lanciano: Carabba Editore, 1922), 139–140.
returns again and again. The flutter of sixty-fourth notes that is intrinsic to this motive—perhaps suggesting the strumming of a harp—immediately sends us into another world at the beginning of the song. This is a world without a traditional, tonal key center, but with plenty of pain, sorrow, and suffering. Given the heartbreaking text of this song, this motive may be viewed as symbolizing the mother’s grief. In discussing the music of this song, one author says that “it is the mother’s unspoken pain that is the subject of Pizzetti’s music.”\(^{130}\) It is true that the poem doesn’t specifically mention the pain of the mother. It is Pizzetti’s musical commentary on this text that makes her pain so evident.

The tritone of the motive finally resolves to a perfect fifth on the word “bimbo” (“baby”) in m. 15, and this resolution comes with no small sense of relief for the listener, whose ears have become “numb” to the constant repetition of the tension-filled tritone motive.\(^{131}\) However, in the very next measure the figure returns to the all-pervasive tritone, indicative of the mother’s unrelenting sorrow over her baby. This motive is constant throughout the piece, except for the section that begins in m. 40. This section (mm. 40–48) is unexpected, in context, and very beautiful. The music here is suddenly in G major, which is probably the last place the listener would anticipate. However, in light of the change in the tone of the poem, it is an amazing response by the composer to this section of text, which talks of children wearing the flowers brought to the underworld for them by the mother’s dead child. However, it isn’t long after this moment of respite that the sixty-fourth note tritone motive returns, and it is this initial ostinato figure that ends the piece, as well. Its return is unwanted, and the ending of the song consists of the motive.

\(^{130}\) Jensen, 110.

\(^{131}\) Ibid.
fading into the distance, leaving the listener with a terrible sense of the mother’s perpetual, crushing grief.

“Mirologio per un bambino” is a very unusual song in many ways, not the least of which is the tonal ambiguity present throughout. Due to this, the vocal line is quite chromatic at times. The singer must be very secure with their own melodic line, since the piano is not always supportive in this regard. In fact, the piano part and the vocal line often seem at odds, as far as pitch is concerned. No matter the difficulties of pitch, the singer of this song should primarily be concerned with the words of the text, as Pizzetti unfailingly was. There are exquisite instances of word painting, such as the descent of the vocal line in mm. 37–38 for the words “nel basso mondo” (“in the underworld”) and the brief switch from G major to G minor in mm. 49–51 for the words “e i piccoli” (“and the little ones”). Of the latter example, the singer should bear in mind that the mother is singing about her baby, and that these words cruelly awaken her from a dreamlike moment of relief by recalling her “little one” who has died. Though this song is certainly musically and vocally demanding, its most challenging aspect may well be dealing with the difficult subject matter of this text in a live performance. To quote the authors of Italian Art Song in their brief but accurate description of this song, “this piece requires exceptional emotional maturity.”

132Lakeway and White, 154.
“Canzone per ballo” from *Tre canti Greci* in *Altre cinque liriche*

Text: Greek folk text, translated by Pio Bondioli (1890–1958)

Date composed: 1932

Publication Information: Ricordi, 1933

Range: B3 – B5

Tessitura: G4 – D5

Key: B minor

Meter: Mixed; 2/2 and 4/2 in the vocal line (2/2 throughout for the piano)

Tempo: Allegro rude (fast and rough)

Duration: 3’05’’

Difficulty:

Voice: Difficult

Piano: Moderately difficult

Mood: Frantic; defiant

Voice type: Soprano

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**kanˈʦone**  **per**  **ˈballo**

**Canzone**  **per**  **ballo**

Song  **for**  **dancing**

**goˈdete**  **ˈdʒovani**  **goˈdete**  **ˈbelle**  **i**  **ˈdʒorni**  **ˈʃemano**

**Godete,**  **giovani;**  **godete,**  **belle:**  **i**  **giorni**  **scemano**

Enjoy,**  **youths;**  **enjoy,**  **pretty ones:**  **the**  **days**  **wane**

**e**  **kaˈronte**  **ʧə li ˈkonta**  **ad ˈuno ad ˈuno**

**e**  **Caronte**  **ce li conta**  **ad uno ad uno.**

and  **Charon**  **(he) counts them**  **one by one.**

**iŋkominˈʃate**  **il**  **ˈballo**  **ˈvia**

**Incominciare**  **il**  **ballo,**  **via!**

Begin  **the**  **dance,**  **go!**

**ˈpoi**  **la**  **ˈnera**  **ˈterra**  **ʧi iŋˈgoi**

**Poi**  **la**  **nera terra**  **ci ˈingoi.**

Afterwards  **the**  **black**  **earth**  **will swallow us.**

**kaˈronte**  **non a**  **ʤuˈdittsjo**  **ne**  **riˈgwardi**

**Caronte**  **non ha**  **giudizio**  **nè**  **riguardi;**

Charon  **has neither**  **judgement**  **nor**  **respect;**
He tears away the babies from the breasts
(He tears the babies away from their mothers’ breasts)

and leaves the elderly.

Ah! let’s dance then,

because the dance is good (for us)!

Beneath this earth that we trample on,

We will all go one day.)

Devours little boys and brave young men;

and in consideration of Italian spelling conventions, this word is probably intended to be plural here.

133Pallicari is taken from a Greek word, “palikari” — a word which has no direct translation into English. It refers to a virile, strong, brave young man, and it is a singular noun in Greek. However, in this context, and in consideration of Italian spelling conventions, this word is probably intended to be plural here.
“Canzone per ballo” is the third of *Tre canti Greci*, which is itself a part of *Altre cinque liriche*. For more information about this set, see the entry for its first song, “Augurio.” The first performance of “Canzone per ballo” took place along with at least two other songs by Pizzetti, “Augurio,” and “Oscuro è il ciel,” on November 25, 1932, in Milan. The songs were performed by soprano Ginevra Vivante with the composer at the piano. This song, along with “Mirologio per un bambino,” was reworked by Pizzetti much later in life (1964) into a version called *Due canti Greci* for voice and small orchestra, but these were unfortunately never published. “Canzone per ballo” was dedicated to Guido M. Gatti (1892–1973), an Italian musicologist who was known as a staunch supporter of contemporary Italian musicians. Gatti would later write a biography of Pizzetti and number of articles about his music.

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134“Augurio,” and “Oscuro è il ciel,” are also from *Altre cinque liriche*.

135For more information about Vivante, see the entry for Pizzetti’s “Oscuro è il ciel.”

After the piano introduction places the song firmly in B minor, the music takes a violent, unprepared modulation to F# major (the key of the dominant) upon the first vocal entrance. It is jarring and unsettling, since the listener is now wondering which of the two keys is the “real” key of the song. It almost seems as if the singer has not been listening to the music prior to her entrance! In actuality, though, this key change serves as the first foray in the struggle between the singer and the piano that will continue for the rest of the song, a conflict that symbolizes the struggle between the living and Charon, the mythological Greek ferryman of Death. This dichotomy was foreshadowed in the opening pick-up to the first measure of the song, when the left hand of the piano aggressively descends, while the right hand, playing a melody that will later belong to the singer, ascends by octave.  

Later this conflict takes on various forms, such as in the sections of the song in mm. 44–48, mm. 94–99, and in perhaps the most striking example, mm. 126–133.

“Canzone per ballo” is, in general, very chromatic. In fact, a recurring vocal motive in this song is an ascending scale that consists of many chromatic notes. There is no pattern of whole steps and half steps in these scales, as is evident when comparing the scales in mm. 44–47 and mm. 76–79. The scale in the latter passage, however, does reappear again later with the same intervals, though transposed up a minor third, in mm. 84–87.

While some authors have referred to this piece as a fugue, it is probably more accurate to say that there are moments in this song in which Pizzetti engages in canonic

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137 Jensen, 118–119.

138 For clarity’s sake, measure numbers for this song refer to the piano part, which remains in a 2/2 meter even when the vocal line changes to 4/2. Measure numbers begin in the first full measure of the song, not in the half-measure “pick-up.”
writing. Lakeway and White describe some of its repeated motives as being used “quasi-sequentially” but also mention its “canonic imitation,” while Jensen refers to the dance theme that returns “always as a short canon.”\textsuperscript{139} Whichever label is preferred, one need look no further than in mm. 29–34 to find the voice and piano in imitative figuration, and there are other passages in which this occurs, as well.

The vocal writing in “Canzone per ballo” is more florid than is usual in a song by Pizzetti, possibly inspired by the dance referenced in the text. While most of Pizzetti’s songs are almost entirely syllabic, in this song many vocal phrases contain short episodes of melismatic material. This is due, in part, to the more folk-like, “tuneful” melodies that occur in the vocal line. As a consequence, however, Pizzetti had to sacrifice a little of his faithfulness to idiomatic text setting in order to achieve the desired popular quality.\textsuperscript{140}

The most likely impediment to performing this song is its wide range. Spanning a full two octaves from B3 up to B5, this piece requires the singer to sustain some sections of the song in a low tessitura and others in a high tessitura. In this way, the tessitura listed in the chart above may be misleading—in some sections, the tessitura is actually quite high. Generally, pitch ascends for the singer as the song progresses and becomes more dramatic. This can be a recipe for vocal disaster if the singer does not take appropriate action to mitigate this potential difficulty. It is critical that the building of tension in the song does not equate to undue tension in the singer’s body or vocal mechanism. This song is enough of an endurance test without unnecessary tension causing vocal problems for the singer.

\textsuperscript{139}Gatti, \textit{Ildebrando Pizzetti}, 82; Lakeway and White, 155–156; Jensen, 119.

\textsuperscript{140}Jensen, 117, 120.
Like the other songs of *Tre canti Greci*, the tonal and harmonic instability in “Canzone per ballo,” and the chromatic alterations to the melodic line that occur as a result, can present problems for the singer. In particular, the very chromatic ascending scales are a challenge in this piece, but there are other passages that also require a solid ear and much practice. Great care should be taken in all of these sections to meticulously learn the right notes initially, for the simple reason that it is much harder in a piece such as this to unlearn notes that were haphazardly learned (incorrectly) in the first place. A smart singer will also attempt to learn the melodic lines in conjunction with hearing the harmony of the accompaniment beneath the vocal line. The end result should be that the altered notes of this song sound as natural as any of the others; to achieve this will require diligence and skill from the singer.

Maintaining a balanced dynamic between the piano and singer can be an issue, since the singer must cover such a wide vocal range throughout the course of this song. The pianist should especially be aware of this when the singer is in the lowest parts of her range, especially if the singer does not have a sizable instrument capable of producing a lot of sound in this register. Generally, the vocal line should follow the dynamic markings in the piano part (unless otherwise indicated in the score) in order for this song to achieve its maximum potential; for instance, the sudden drop in dynamic in the piano part in m. 84 is only effective if the singer also follows this indication, in order to build the next crescendo from a softer dynamic level. “Canzone per ballo” provides significant contrast from the other two songs in this set and results in an exciting, if terrifying, conclusion to *Tre canti Greci*. 
“La Pietà” from *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti*

Text: Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888–1970)

Date composed: 1935

Publication information: Ricordi, 1937

Range: G2 – F4

Tessitura: F3 – C4

Key: F minor

Meter: Mostly 4/4, some measures of 2/4 and 3/4

Tempo: Largo, quasi lento

Duration: 9’50”

Difficulty: Voice: Difficult

Piano: Difficult

Mood: Disquieted; questioning God

Voice type: Baritone

I.

'Sono un uomo ferito. E me ne vorrei andare.

Sono un uomo ferito.

E me ne vorrei andare.

I am a man injured.

And I would like to go away.

(I am a wounded man)

E finalmente giungere, Pietà, dove si ascolta

E finalmente giungere,

Pietà, dove si ascolta

and finally arrive,

Mercy, where one hears
l'uomo che è con sé, solo.
the man who is with himself, alone.

Non ho che bontà e orgoglio...
I don’t have but goodness and pride…
(I have nothing but goodness and pride)

E mi sento in esilio in mezzo agli uomini.
and I feel exiled in the midst of men.

Ma per essi sto in pena…
but because of them I am in pain…

Non sarei degno di tornare in me?
Am I not worthy to return to myself?

Ho popolato di nomi il silenzio…
I have populated with names the silence…

Ho fatto a pezzi cuore e mente
Have I torn to pieces heart and mind
(Have I torn apart my heart and mind)

Per cadere in servitù di parole?
Only to fall into slavery to words?

Regno sopra fantasmi…
I rule over phantoms…

O foglie secche, Anima portata qua e là...
O leaves dried, Soul carried here and there…

No, odio il vento e la sua voce di bestia immemorabile.
No, I hate the wind and its voice of (a) beast unremembered.
`dio ko’loro ke tim’plorano non ti ko’noscono pju
Dio, coloro che t’implorano non ti conoscono più
God, those that implore you not know you anymore

ke di ‘nome
che di nome?
but by name?
(God, do those that implore you now only know you by name?)

tu ‘mai skat’tato ‘dalla ‘vita
Tu m’hai scacciato dalla vita
You have banished me from life

e mi skat’te’rai ‘dalla ‘morte
e mi accorderai dalla morte?
and will you banish me from death?

`forse `lwomo ε ‘anke in’deŋno di spe’rare
Forse l’uomo è anche indegno di sperare…
Perhaps man is also unworthy of hoping…

‘anke la ‘fonte del ri’morso ε ‘sekka
Anche la fonte del rimorso è secca?
Even the spring of the remorse is dry?
(Is even the spring of remorse dry?)

il pek’kato ke im’pora se ‘alla pu’rettsa
Il peccato che importa, se alla purezza
Sin what does it matter if to the purity

non kon’duʃe pju
non conduce più?
it doesn’t lead anymore?
(Of what use is sin, if it no longer leads to purity?)

la ‘karne si ri’korda ap’pena ke ‘una ‘volta fu ‘fɔrtə
La carne si ricorda appena che una volta fu forte…
The flesh remembers barely that once it was strong…

ε `fɔlla e u’zata ‘lanima
È folla e usata, l’anima.
It is crazy and used up, the soul.

‘dio ‘gwarda la ‘nastra debo’lettsa
Dio, guarda la nostra debolezza…
God, look at our weakness…
Vorremmo una certezza.

We would like a certainty.

di ‘noi nem`meno pju ‘rìdi

Di noi nemmeno più ridi?

Of us not even anymore you laugh?

(Do you not even mock us anymore?)

e kom’pjanʧiʧi ‘duŋkwe krudel’ta

E compìangici dunque, crudeltà.

And you lament us then, cruelty.

non ne `posso pju di `stare mu`rato

Non ne posso più di stare murato

It is not possible anymore to remain walled

nel dezi’derio ‘sènsta a’more

nel desiderio senza amore.

in the desire without love

(I cannot stand to remain walled off within desire without love.)

‘una ‘traʧfa ‘mostraʧi di dʒus’titsja

Una traccia mostraci di giustizia.

A trace show us of justice.

la ‘tua ‘lēddège kwa’le

La tua legge qual’è?...

Your law what is it?

(Show us a trace of justice. What is your law?)

‘fulmina le ‘mie ‘povere emot’ʃjone

Fulmina le mie povere emozioni...

Strike my poor emotions…

‘liberami dall’inquietudine

Liberami dall’inquietudine.

Free me from worry.

‘sono ‘staŋko di ur’lare ‘sènsta ‘voʧe

Sono stanco di urlare senza voce.

I am tired of howling without (a) voice.
II.

Maliŋ'kɔnika carne dove una volta pullulò la gioia,

Malinconica carne dove una volta pullulò la gioia,

Melancholy flesh where once sprung up joy.

Okki sokˈkjuzi del rizˈveʎʎo 'stanʃko tu 'vedi
cocchi socchiusi del risveglio stanco, tu vedi,
eyes half-shut of reawakening tired, you see,

'anima tròppo maˈtura kwel ke saˈrò
anima troppo matura, quel che sarò,
soul too wise, that which I will be,

kaˈduto 'nella 'terra
caduto nella terra...
fallen to earth...

'ɔkki sokˈkjuzi del rizˈveʎʎo 'stanʃko tu 'vedi
cocchi socchiusi del risveglio stanco, tu vedi,
eyes half-shut of reawakening tired, you see,

'anima tròppo maˈtura kwel ke saˈrò
anima troppo matura, quel che sarò,
soul too wise, that which I will be,

kaˈduto 'nella 'terra
caduto nella terra...
fallen to earth...

ε 'nei 'vivi la 'strada 'dei deˈfunti
È nei vivi la strada dei defunti.
It is among the living the road of the dead.
(The road of the dead runs through the living.)

'Siamo noi la fjuˈmana 'dombre
We are the swollen river of shadows.

'sono 'esse il 'grano ke ḥiˈskɔppja in 'sɔɲɲo
Sono esse il grano che ci scoppia in sogno.
They are the seed that bursts into dreams.

'loro ε la lontaˈnantsa ke ḥiˈresta
Loro è la lontananza che ci resta.
Theirs is the distance which remains.

ε 'loro ε 'lombra ke da 'pezo ai 'nomi
È loro è l'ombra che dà peso ai nomi...
And theirs is the shadow which gives weight to names...

la speˈrantʃa dum 'mukkjo 'dombre
La speranza d'un mucchio d'ombra
The hope of a mass of shadows
e null’altro è la nostra sorte?
and nothing else is our fate?

E tu non saresti che un sogno, Dio?... (And you would not be but a dream, God?)

Almeno un sogno, temerari,
At least a dream, wreckless ones,

(we wreckless ones want you to resemble at least a dream)

Oh!... È parto della demenza più chiara...
Oh!... It is the birth of the insanity more clear

(It is the fruit of the clearest insanity)

Non trema in nuvole di rami
It doesn’t tremble in clouds of branches

la luce che ci punge è un filo
The light that pierces us is a thread

sempre piú sottile...
always more thin...
Non abbagli tu, se non uccidi? (Will you no longer dazzle, if you don’t kill?)

'dammi 'kwesta 'dʒɔja su'prema

Give me this joy highest.

IV.

L'uomo, monotonous universe,

Man, monotonous universe,

'krede all'garsi i 'limiti

crede allargarsi i limiti

believes he is expanding the limits

e 'dalle 'sue 'mani feb'brili non 'eskono

e dalle sue mani febbri non escono

and from his hands feverish do not emerge

'senzsa 'fine ke 'limiti

without end only limits.

(and from his feverish hands nothing but limits without end emerge.)

attak'kato sul 'vwɔto al 'suo 'filo di 'raɲɲo

Attaccato sul vuoto al suo filo di rango,

Clinging in the emptiness to his web of (the) spider,

non 'teme e non se'duʃ'e

non teme e non seduce

(he doesn’t fear and doesn’t seduce

se non il 'prɔprjo 'grido

se non il proprio grido.

if not his own cry.

(he fears and seduces only his own cry.)

per ripa' re lu'zura 'altsa 'tombe

Per riparare l'usura, alza tombe,

In order to repair the wear, he raises monuments,
“La Pietà” is the first song of *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti*. These two songs were originally composed for baritone voice and piano quartet, but were also transcribed for baritone and piano by the music editor Maffeo Zanon (1882–1968). Both versions of the songs were published by Ricordi in 1937. The first performance of *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti* was sung by the famous operatic baritone Giuseppe De Luca (1876–1950) with the composer at the piano in Rome, 1936. Information regarding the first performance with chamber ensemble is not known. For the purposes of this paper, only the version of this set for baritone and piano will be discussed.

The poetry of these songs was written by Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888–1970), an important contemporary Italian poet. Ungaretti served in the Italian infantry in WWI and penned some of his first and most powerful poems while stationed at the front lines. He became known as a leading voice of the modernist poetry movement in Italy and the most famous of the “hermetic” poets. Many of Ungaretti’s works struggle with death and with spiritual futility, and the text of “La Pietà” is an example of just such a struggle. Pizzetti had very often set the poetry of ancient or long-dead writers, such as Petrarch, Sappho, and the author of *Song of Songs*, or set folk texts, such as the popular Tuscan

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141 Bruno Pizzetti, 386.

poems of *Tre canzoni* and the Greek folk texts of *Tre canti Greci*. The songs of *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti*, then, mark Pizzetti’s return to setting texts by modern poets, as had been his practice early in his career with his settings of texts by D’Annunzio and others.

“La Pietà” is Pizzetti’s longest and most involved song by far. Ungaretti divides his text into four distinct sections. The first section, which begins with the words “*Sono uomo ferito,*” is extended and is in fact longer than the other three sections of text combined. The second section (“*Malinconica carne,*”) is shorter but still of substantial length, and the last two (“*La luce che ci punge*” and “*L’uomo, monotono universo*”) are extremely short by comparison. Pizzetti observes these divisions within the text by including musical interludes between them, except for the notable lack of musical transition between sections two and three. In this case, he elides these two sections without pause, essentially modifying Ungaretti’s formal division to suit his musical interpretation of the text. Section four is heard as something of a coda, in that the musical texture thins out greatly in the accompaniment, and the vocal line is treated almost like recitative. This is a familiar technique to the student of Pizzetti songs, but here it specifically contributes to the song’s stark message of hopelessness. The ending of “La Pietà” feels as if the poet and composer, and by association the pianist and singer, have run out of things to say, arguments to make, or notes to play or sing. It is the final moment of regret, signifying that the emotional and spiritual disintegration of the speaker has reached its inevitable conclusion, and it makes for a fitting, if unsatisfying, ending. But leaving things unsatisfied is the point, and Pizzetti captures Ungaretti’s complicated sentiment brilliantly.
Pizzetti used two themes to provide continuity among the sections of “La Pietà.” The first appears in the first four measures of the piano part. This melody, which is initially played by solo cello in the original chamber music version of this song, returns again and again, but is frequently broken into smaller motives upon its return. Especially prevalent are the first two bars of the theme, which occasionally undergo some modification as the piece progresses but just as often appear intact. The second important theme makes its first appearance in the singer’s opening phrase, seven measures before rehearsal 1. This theme (or motive, since it is only four full beats in length) is just as ubiquitous as the first theme. It is short, begins off the beat, and consists of triplets culminating in two quarter notes. Later, this theme will be treated more as a rhythmic motive than a melodic one, since the pitches and intervals are variable but the rhythm remains consistent. One interesting use of this motive occurs at rehearsal 10, “maliconica carne” (“melancholy flesh”), which is the very eerie-sounding beginning of the second section of Ungaretti’s text. Here the motive is rhythmically the same as in its initial appearance at the beginning of the piece, but pitches are presented in inversion. This unusual presentation of the theme is very effective, since it reminds the listener of the beginning of the song and the many other appearances of the theme prior to this moment and yet gives the sense that something is amiss. In this way, Pizzetti connects these two large sections of text but also indicates the change in character that begins with the new section.

143For the two songs of Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti, I have chosen to refer to the rehearsal numbers printed in the score, rather than to the measure numbers, which are not printed. Especially for this lengthy first song of the group, this is a much more manageable and easy way to navigate the score than using measure numbers would be.
One of the most obvious characteristics of “La Pietà,” especially for the singer learning it, is its rhythmic complexity throughout. In fact, the vocal line consists mainly of short rhythms, predominately eighth notes, sixteenth notes, eighth-note triplets, sixteenth-note triplets, and eighth-note and sixteenth-note quintuplets, and these occur in various, non-repetitive patterns. There are many moments of complicated syncopation, and often the singer is unsupported, rhythmically, by the pianist, who is frequently occupied with tremolos and other figurations that were probably better suited to string instruments in the original version of this song than in the piano transcription by Zanon. Pizzetti’s reason for writing a vocal line that includes such devilishly hard rhythms is evident, especially considering his technique for setting text prior to this song. In all of his compositions for voice, Pizzetti had been experimenting with ways of setting Italian texts that would not unduly distort the natural sound and cadence of the language. Here he was unmistakably attempting to approximate as closely as possible the natural rhythm, pacing, and accent of the language, and the result is an exceedingly complex assortment of rhythms for the singer.

There is something akin to a motive that arises in many of the vocal phrases in “La Pietà,” due to Pizzetti’s single-mindedness towards achieving an accurate and authentic-sounding Italian text setting. In the Italian language, word stress falls on the penultimate syllable of most words. In order to ensure that the final word of each phrase would be given its proper inflection, Pizzetti often set this word with a descending interval (usually by a leap), to emphasize the “strong-weak” nature of the final two syllables. In fact, all of the lowest notes of the piece occur in a moment such as this. It is as if Pizzetti discovered in this song a way to ensure that his own faithfulness to accurate
word stress in the Italian language would be carried out by the singer, especially at phrase endings. This feature occurs repeatedly, and examples can be heard six measures before rehearsal 1, at rehearsal 1, at rehearsal 2, five measures after rehearsal 2, one measure before rehearsal 3, and in too many other instances to enumerate here.

The climactic moments in “La Pietà” never feel conclusive—either the rhythmic and harmonic motion in accompaniment continues during and after the cadence (2 and 3 measures after rehearsal 8), or the cadence is weakened by an unexpected softening of the dynamic level (rehearsal 10), or the harmony is inconclusive (2 measures before rehearsal 10), or any combination of the above. This serves to musically represent the constant search for meaning by the speaker, and the hollowness and starkness of Ungaretti’s poem.

In so many ways, “La Pietà” is a culmination of many of the ideas and techniques Pizzetti used in his earlier songs. For example, his preoccupation with creating an accurate setting of the Italian language reached its high point in this song with its predominance of rhythmic complexity, its complete adherence to word stress and cadence, and by the largely stepwise motion and syllabic setting of the vocal line, all of which strongly suggest natural speech patterns. His penchant for using motivic repetition, if not motivic development, throughout a composition also reached a pinnacle in this piece, since the two motives mentioned above are ever-present in this, his longest song. Even his favorite technique for ending a song, in which the vocal line becomes almost like recitativo and the texture in the accompaniment suddenly thins and is only minimally supportive of the singer—a technique that was used by Pizzetti frequently in
earlier songs—was used so effectively here that it is surely the most successful use of this feature in all of his song output.

When discussing the challenges present in “La Pietà,” it should first be said that it is one of Pizzetti’s most difficult songs. The rhythmic challenges alone might dissuade all but the bravest singer from daring to sing it, but the truth is that this is a song for which the “payoff” in performance is well worth the hard work that must be undertaken in order to learn it. It is suggested that the singer carefully learn the rhythms first, separately from the words and pitches. The next step in this process is to then add the words to these rhythms, noticing how the language fits perfectly into the rhythmic framework devised by Pizzetti. Once this is successfully accomplished, the singer should then practice speaking the text with the pianist playing the piano part. These kinds of practice sessions will likely need to take place many times before the singer feels secure. Later, the notes can be learned and applied to the previously-learned words and rhythms, but by this time the most challenging part of the song, the intricate, word-based rhythms of the vocal line, have already been learned.

“La Pietà” also encompasses a wide vocal range for the singer. It is likely that at least one of the two extremes of range will be a challenge for the baritone singer performing this piece. Though the tessitura of this song is generally medium to low, there are periodic excursions into the upper register. Some of these moments are loud and dramatic, such as in measure two before rehearsal 4 and at rehearsal 7, and others are soft and rather delicate, such as in measure three after rehearsal 12. However, it is with the lowest pitches of this song that many baritones may have the most difficulty. Especially at phrase endings, Pizzetti often drops the voice down to the song’s lowest
pitches, even in phrases that have otherwise been relatively high (for example, the phrase that begins six measures before rehearsal 11). The singer should keep in mind that these notes always appear on unaccented, unimportant parts of the word, and were intended by the composer to be sung with much less volume than the higher pitches before them. Therefore, they do not require a lot of sound to be produced—they just need to be sung on pitch, however softly.

“La Pietà” does contain a fair amount of chromaticism, but this facet of the piece seems almost trivial once it has been learned. Since this is such a long song, Pizzetti had more time in which to move away from the tonic key. Because of this, there are more accidentals in the vocal line than in some of his other songs, but this probably appears more daunting on the page than it is in actual performance. The accompaniment is generally very supportive of the singer, as far as harmony and key are concerned, so the chromatic element of this song is not nearly as challenging as is its significant rhythmic complexity. While speaking of the accompaniment, it is important to point out that this song contains some daunting moments for the pianist, since what is idiomatic for a bowed stringed instrument is not necessarily so for the piano. It is evident from careful study of both the chamber music version and piano version of “La Pietà” that Zanon did very little but transcribe Pizzetti’s version for ensemble for the piano without making any substantial changes for pianistic considerations.

Of course, there are other significant challenges present in this song for the singer. Among them is the demanding task of dramatically portraying this difficult, long text—maintaining one’s emotional connection to the text throughout the pianistic interludes is a related challenge. One must also take into account the need for the mental and vocal
endurance to sustain this long song. However, Pizzetti’s work in the operatic genre served him well here, as it did in many of his other songs, in that the vocal line of this song is made up of excellent vocal writing. It is not overly fatiguing, vocally, in spite of its length and level of difficulty, due to the composer’s understanding of the voice as an instrument. Despite its many complications and challenges, once learned, this piece is a pleasure to sing and is very effective in performance. Especially when performed along with the remaining second song of the set, “La Pietà” makes for an extraordinary, thought-provoking, and uncommonly beautiful addition to a song recital.
“Trasfigurazione” from *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti*

Text: Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888–1970)

Date composed: 1936

Publication information: Ricordi, 1937

Range: B-flat2 – F4

Tessitura: G3 – C4

Key: C major

Meter: 4/4

Tempo: Largo ma fervente, non lento

Duration: 3’09’’

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Difficult

Mood: Contented; self-assured

Voice type: Baritone

trasfiguratˈʦjone

Trasfigurazione

transfiguration

stro  addossˈsato a un ˈtumulo di ˈfjẹno bronˈʣato
Sto  addossato a un tumulo di fieno bronzato.
I am astride a bale of hay dried, golden.

un  ˈakre ˈspazimo ˈskɔppja e ˈbrulika ˈdai ˈsolki ˈgrassi
Un  acre spasimo scoppia e brulica dai solchi grassi.
A bitter spasm bursts and swarms from wide furrows.

ben ˈnato mi ˈsɛnto di ˈʤɛnte di ˈtɛrra
Ben nato mi sento di gente di terra.
Well born I feel from men of earth.

mi ˈsɛnto ˈneɬʃi ˈɔkki atˈtɛnti ˈalle ˈfazi del ˈʧɛlo
Mi sento negli occhi attenti alle fasi del cielo
I feel in the eyes attentive to the phases of the sky

dell ˈwɔmo ruˈgato ˈkome la ˈskɔrʣa
dell’uomo rugato come la scorza
of the man wrinkled like the skin

stɔ addosˈsato a ˈtumulo di ˈfjẹno bronˈʣato
Sto addossato a tumulo di fieno bronzato.
I am astride a bale of hay dried, golden.

un ˈakre ˈspazimo ˈskɔppja e ˈbrulika ˈdai ˈsolki ˈgrassi
Un acre spasimo scoppia e brulica dai solchi grassi.
A bitter spasm bursts and swarms from wide furrows.

ben ˈnato mi ˈsɛnto di ˈʤɛnte di ˈtɛrra
Ben nato mi sento di gente di terra.
Well born I feel from men of earth.

mi ˈsɛnto ˈneɬʃi ˈɔkki atˈtɛnti ˈalle ˈfazi del ˈʧɛlo
Mi sento negli occhi attenti alle fasi del cielo
I feel in the eyes attentive to the phases of the sky

dell ˈwɔmo ruˈgato ˈkome la ˈskɔrʣa
dell’uomo rugato come la scorza
of the man wrinkled like the skin
“Trasfigurazione” is the second song of *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti*. This song was completed in 1936, one year after the first of the set. One senses from his choice of poem and from the musical setting itself that Pizzetti intended for this song to form a significant contrast with the first song of the set. For more about *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti*, such as information about the first performance of the songs or about the inception of these songs for voice and piano, please see the entry for “La Pietà.”

From the opening measures of “Trasfigurazione,” it is clear that this is a different musical world than the first song of the set. The opening theme, which is played in
unison by violin, viola, and cello in the original chamber music version of this song, is warm, robust, and full of vigor. This theme is squarely in the key of C major and pervades this song. In Pomfret’s detailed analysis of this song, she points out that one of the features of this theme, the ascending mini-scale C-D-E, is repeated in various ways throughout the piece, both in the accompaniment and in the vocal line. In fact, these first three notes of the initial theme are treated as a recurring motive, and variations of it occur in nearly every measure of the song. This motive is sometimes presented exactly as at the beginning, such as in the accompaniment two measures before rehearsal 2, or in transposition, as in the accompaniment four measures before rehearsal 4, or as a melodic motive with the rhythmic aspect altered, such as in the vocal line three measures before 2. An interesting iteration of the motive happens one measure before rehearsal 2 in the accompaniment—the left hand plays the motive with exactly the same rhythm as at the beginning of the piece, while the right hand is playing the motive with larger note values over a longer period of time. Clearly, Pizzetti used this motive as an important, germinating element in this song, and also as a way to unify the piece as a whole.

The vocal line of “Trasfigurazione,” as in many other Pizzetti songs, is largely syllabic and never melismatic. In this way, Pizzetti achieved his perpetual goal of accurate, natural-sounding musical transcriptions of the Italian language in this song. Most of the phrases for the singer progress largely, if not entirely, by step, and this aspect, coupled with the fact that there are many repeated notes in these phrases, contributes to the almost spoken quality of these lines. However, he was more apt in this

\[145\] Pomfret, 73–78.

\[146\] For the two songs of *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti*, I have chosen to refer to the rehearsal numbers printed in the score, rather than to the measure numbers, which are not in the score. Especially for this lengthy first song of the group, this is a much more manageable and easy way to navigate the score than using measure numbers would be.
song than in “La Pietà,” for example, to write a traditional-sounding melodic line, within the framework of these previously mentioned characteristics. The end result is a straightforward (for Pizzetti), unaffected melodic line for the voice. Clearly, all this is a result of Pizzetti’s deep understanding of this earthy text and his musical response to it.

“Trasfigurazione” is much less difficult than the first song of the set. First of all, the rhythms are much more forthright and less complicated. There is also very little chromaticism for the singer to contend with in this song. This is perhaps due to the fact that its length prevented Pizzetti from straying too far from the tonic key of C major (momentary excursions into B-flat major and A major notwithstanding), but it is just as likely that the composer kept the chromaticism at a minimum as a response to the wholesome, healthy atmosphere of the poem. Though the tessitura of this song sits a bit higher than in the previous song, the range of the song is more limited in that the vocal line never dips below B-flat2. This may be especially important for those baritones for whom the lowest notes of “La Pietà” prove difficult. One challenging moment in the song is the soft, floating quality that the voice must take on in the section that begins at rehearsal 3. The text here is translated as “like a cloud I filter myself in the sun,” and it is clearly to these “clouds” that the composer is referring with both the softly arpeggiated chords and the light, elongated notes (in quarter-note triplets) of the vocal melody. This kind of singing in the upper register, especially if this song is being sung in a performance of both songs of Due poesie, requires a solid technique and plenty of contextual rehearsal. It is at this moment that the fatigue of singing both of these demanding songs is most likely to be evident.
“e il mio dolore io canto”

Text: Jacopo Bocchialini (1878–1965)

Date composed: 1940

Publication information: Forlivesi, 1945

Range: B-flat3 – E-flat5

Tessitura: E-flat4 – B-flat4

Key: E-flat minor

Meter: 4/8

Tempo: Lento

Duration: 2’50”

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult

Piano: Not difficult

Mood: Mournful; weary

Voice type: Baritone/bass or mezzo-soprano

And my sorrow I sing

I am a dry fountain

Summer wounded my spring

that once flowed calm and full

Now no more.
Una caduta di foglie quaggiù in fondo.
A falling of leaves down here at the bottom.

Un volo vano di piccole ali attorno.
A flight useless of little wings around.

Bocca assetata, non t’accostare
mouth parched, do not come near

Io sono una fonte dolente che languisce
I am a spring sorrowful that languishes

Ogni goccia è stilla di sangue,
Every drop is (a) drop of blood

Ogni goccia è stilla di pianto.
Every drop is (a) drop of tears.

Il mio dolore io canto
my sorrow I sing

Bocca assetata, la mia vena di pianto
Mouth parched, my spring of weeping

non disseta
does not satisfy...
amico,” which means, “my old companion and friend.” Pizzetti composed this song four or five years after composing the brilliant two songs of Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti, and it was the first song for voice and piano that he had composed after that set. He had been busy with other musical projects, such as Due inni Greci for soprano and orchestra, the music for the film Scipione l’Africano, and numerous other works in various genres, several of which were never published.

The most prominent feature of “e il mio dolore io canto” is its recurring motive. In this piece, Pizzetti followed a compositional technique that is by now familiar to the reader, building the song around a single defining motive. The motive that permeates this song is at first only present in the piano accompaniment (mm. 1–2), but is later shared by the vocal line (for instance in mm. 11–12). The sparse accompaniment beneath the first appearance of this motive helps highlight its importance, and Pizzetti marks the motive one dynamic level louder than the surrounding pitches. The bass below is an ascending chromatic scale with rests indicated between each of its clipped notes, as if it can barely make the climb due to fatigue. The motive itself is a “falling” motive, and this is signified in more than one way. First, the notes themselves descend, the most obvious indication of a falling idea. The rhythm of this motive also implies a fall. This rhythm may be simplified as “long-short-short-long.” It is significant that the motive always lands on a strong beat throughout the song. When this rhythm is combined with descending pitches, its perceived momentum brings to mind an actual fall, since when one falls, it usually happens quickly! The first three notes of the motive are descending,

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148Bruno Pizzetti, 386–388.
chromatic tones made up entirely of half-steps, but the last interval is a descending leap, or “fall.” This interval is a minor third at the beginning of the song in both of the initial presentations of the motive (m. 1), but later the interval varies, depending on context (mm. 11–12, for example). The half-steps of the first three pitches of the motive are also subject to small modifications later in the song (m. 17). The almost constant repetition of this falling motive, in conjunction with the slow, almost plodding, tempo of this song, perfectly depicts the overwhelming sorrow, hopelessness, and weariness of the speaker in this poem.

“e il mio dolore io canto” is written in a very slow, lento tempo in 4/8 time, and Pizzetti makes it clear that there should be four beats per measure—in other words, the eighth-note gets the beat. This means that there is an abundance of small notes values throughout the song, making it look much more exotic, rhythmically, than it really is. The reason for this complicated notation is not entirely clear, since to the listener it will not be apparent at all. The song could just as easily be in 4/4 time, as far as the ear is concerned. Perhaps, though, it would not be too much of a stretch to imagine that this feature is a result of Pizzetti’s study of the music of the early Renaissance. During this time period, some composers wrote music with certain kinds of notation that would not be audible to the listener but would affect the musician performing the song. This is sometimes called “eye music,” since the special notation would only be perceptible to the eye and not to the ear. It was one feature of the Ars Subtilior, a name for the “subtle art” of compositions written in the late fourteenth century in France. Given Pizzetti’s preoccupation with the study of early music and his penchant for including historical elements into his compositions, it is at least feasible that he may have conceived the
overly-complicated notation of this song as a way to force the singer and pianist to experience the sorrow of the poetry in a tangible way, since having to read so many complex rhythms inspires this emotion quite naturally in many performers!

Since “e il mio dolore io canto” is very short (only twenty-nine measures long in total), vocal fatigue is not an issue, as it might be in some of Pizzetti’s longer songs. The low tessitura means that it is most appropriate for lower voice types, and Lakeway and White point out that “the range and tessitura of the song make it especially suitable for baritone or bass voice without the need for transposition from the original key.” This is fairly unusual for a Pizzetti song, since most of them were intended to be sung by a soprano or tenor. Pizzetti’s curious decision to write this song in a very slow 4/8 can be problematic, since most singers are unused to seeing such short note values as a regular feature of a song, and especially at as slow a tempo as this. The meter may seem to be a somewhat annoying and unnecessary complication, but it really only requires that the singer spend a little more time becoming accustomed to the song’s appearance. As mentioned earlier, it is merely the appearance of the song that is affected, since the overall effect of the song would be the same whether it was notated in 4/8 or 4/4.

It is imperative that performers of this song notice that the loudest written dynamic for the singer is mezzo-forte, and that this dynamic occurs only once, in order to bring out the important phrase, “bocca assetata, non t’accostare” (“mouth parched, do not come near”) in m. 17. The other dynamic markings for the singer consist entirely of softer ones, making some sections of this song fairly challenging. For instance, the high-lying phrase “e il mio dolore io canto” (mm. 23–24) is made doubly difficult by the need to sing it softly, especially after singing so many phrases that lie very low in the voice

\[149\] Lakeway and White, 158.
just before this phrase. Pizzetti made a point to remind the singer in the score that it is still to be sung piano—likely something that was important to note in a case such as this, when the singer’s natural inclination may be to sing this, the song’s highest phrase, loudly in comparison with the phrases that have come before it.

There are two mistakes in the published score that may reveal a certain carelessness either by Pizzetti or his editor, or both. The first is in m. 7, in which a quarter-note appears on the second beat for the singer. It should be an eighth-note. Perhaps the 4/8 meter confused either the composer or the editor in this case, since the eighth-note, not the quarter-note, gets the beat! The other error is in m. 10—the pattern of pitches in the thirty-second notes of the first beat should match that of the thirty-second notes of the remaining three beats of the bar.

Written in 1940, “e il mio dolore io canto” comes fairly late in Pizzetti’s song output. There were only two sets of songs composed after this one. This may have been one of the songs that served as inspiration for Waterhouse to write that “. . .one suspects that if he had stopped composing in, say, 1930 the general history of Italian music would have been little changed.”¹⁵⁰ Notwithstanding this withering review of Pizzetti’s late works, this song, while perhaps not one of Pizzetti’s best, is definitely not among the worst, either. In fact, this is a song that can have a very meaningful effect in recital, especially when performed in context with other, contrasting Pizzetti songs.

“Bebro e il suo cavallo” from *Tre liriche*

Text: Popular Greek poem, translation by Niccolò Tommaseo (1802–1874)

Date composed: 1944

Publication Information: Forlivesi, 1945

Range: C4 – G-sharp5  
Tessitura: G4 – D5

Key: A minor

Meter: Mixed; 2/4 and 4/4

Tempo: Andante lento

Duration: 3’55’’

Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult  
Piano: Moderately difficult

Mood: Mournful; grim

Voice type: Soprano or tenor

ˈbebro e il ˈsuo kaˈvallo  
Bebro and his horse

A ˈvardari,  
Vardari,  
Vardari,  
Vardari,  
Vardari

At ˈkampo di ˈvardari,  
in the battlefield of Vardari

ˈbebro ˈɛra disˈtezo el ˈsuo moˈrello ˈdįˈe  
Bebro was stretched out and his black horse to him said:

ˈleva siɲˈnor ˈmio ke anˈdjamo  
Leva, signor mio, that we may go;

ke se ne va laˈnɔstra kompaɲˈnia  
that it goes our company.

che se ne va la nostra compagˈnia  
(so that our company may leave.)

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151 The Vardari (or Vardar) is a major river of Macedonia and Greece.
Non posso, morello, andare, chè son per morire.
I cannot, black horse, go, for I am about to die.

Vieni, cava con l’ugna, coi ferri tuoi argentei
Come, dig with the hoof, with horseshoes your of silver

E prendimi coi denti, buttami nella terra.
And take me by your teeth, throw me in the earth.

E prendi le mie armi,
And take my weapons,

E piglia la pezzuola,
And take hold of the handkerchief,

“Bebro e il suo cavallo” was first performed, along with the rest of Tre liriche, in Rome on April 16, 1945, by Maria Teresa Pediconi, soprano, and Armando Renzi,

piano.\textsuperscript{152} The composer arranged these three songs for voice and orchestra in 1946, and

\textsuperscript{152} Sources do not agree as to whether this set was published in 1945, one year after Pizzetti wrote it, or in 1954, nine years later. This discrepancy appears to stem from Bruno Pizzetti’s normally reliable chronology of his father’s works, in which he dates these as being from 1954. Most modern resources on Pizzetti songs use this later date as part of the publication information for these songs. However, the
they were performed in this version on January 25, 1947, with Pizzetti conducting one of his most frequent collaborators, the soprano Genevra Vivante.\textsuperscript{153} The orchestral version of the set was never published.\textsuperscript{154} These songs are sometimes referred to erroneously as \textit{Tre liriche Firenze} due to their place of publication, perhaps to distinguish them from the earlier set of \textit{Tre liriche} published in 1908. However, this designation was used neither by the composer nor his son, in his biography of his father. “Bebro e il suo cavallo” was dedicated to Domenico de Marsico.\textsuperscript{155}

The haunting opening of this narrative song contains echoes of the aftermath of a battle. One can hear the fading sounds of military themes, especially in the initial vocal line. The jarring, descending chromaticism present in even the first bar already hints at Bebro’s dire condition. This strange-sounding motive in the piano in mm. 1–7 sounds more like transitional music than the opening theme of a song. It is this instability that alerts the listener to the confused and disturbing situation, even before the text informs the listener of the exact details of the story. This motive returns in the vocal line when Bebro tells his horse that he is dying (mm. 33–40) and also in the piano part when the last words of the singer—and perhaps the last words of Bebro—are uttered (mm. 60–66). Therefore, this motive is the “death” motive, and as such, the ending of the piece probably coincides with Bebro’s expiring. Underlining this interpretation is the final note in the accompaniment, which is A0, the lowest note on a standard 88-key piano. It is

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{153}For more information about Vivante, see the entry for “Oscuro è il ciel.”
\item \textsuperscript{154}Bruno Pizzetti, 391–392.
\item \textsuperscript{155}Ildebrando Pizzetti, \textit{Tre liriche} (Florence, Italy: A. Forlivesi, 1945), 2.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
hard to mistake this kind of musical allusion to death for anything else, given the context. It may not even be too much to imagine that Pizzetti’s desire to use this particular note for the last pitch heard in this song could even be the reason that Pizzetti chose the key of A minor, given his known use of extra-musical associations for the performer of his songs.\textsuperscript{156} Pizzetti’s study of and interest in early music would have made him aware of the composition techniques of the Renaissance style that we now call the \textit{Ars Subtilior} (“subtle art”), such as so-called “eye music,” in which composers wrote certain elements into their music that would only be perceived by the performer and not necessarily by the listener. Striking the lowest note on the piano to finish a song in which the protagonist is dying is probably intended as an inside reference to the pianist. Of course, this is also word-painting, since it is clearly audible to the listener that this is a very low note.

The initial motive in the vocal line “\textit{A Vardari, a Vardari,}” mentioned above, returns later in the song, and the rhythm of this motive is especially important to the overall construction of this piece. Our first hearing of the motive (mm. 7–10) has a military quality to it, but it is all wrong. It is too slow, first of all, and it is in the minor mode. Both of these significant details perhaps point to the fact that the battle is over, and it has not gone well for the central character of the story. Alternately, or perhaps concurrently, the fading quality of this motive may indicate the soldier’s regiment is leaving, a fact pointed to later in the text. The repetition of this motive (and text, in mm. 12–16) contains more chromaticism than in its initial appearance and increases the already heightened tension in this opening section. The quasi-military dotted rhythm of

\textsuperscript{156}See the description of “e il mio dolore io canto” for a brief discussion of how Pizzetti uses this sort of extra-musical association in another of his songs. Importantly, these two songs date from the same general time period in the composer’s life.
this motive is pervasive, serving as a constant reminder, even in the less gloomy sections of the song, of the results of the battle that took place before this scene begins.

“Bebro e il suo cavallo” is a narrative story with three speakers. The first lines of the song set the stage for what will come next and are presumably sung by a narrator who is observing the scene. The next couple of lines of text are spoken by the horse, followed by Bebro’s more lengthy reply. The singer should be very aware of which of the speakers he or she is portraying in each moment of the song, in order to convey this to the audience. However, it really isn’t necessary to change one’s vocal color drastically, if at all, to indicate which speaker is singing, or to overdo the acting of the characters as part of the singer’s portrayal, since Pizzetti has already distinguished each character by the nature of the vocal line and the accompaniment beneath it.

There is a mistake in the score in m. 5. There are three beats in this measure but no indication that we have changed from the original 2/4 meter. It is unclear whether the mistake should be corrected by including a meter change (to 3/4) for this single measure or whether the notes and rests in this bar should be altered to fit into only two beats. This choice must be left up to the performers of the piece, unless the original autograph score of this song emerges and clarifies the issue. Also, there is in this song a certain carelessness with performance indications, especially tempo markings, which should be marked in both the piano and the vocal line, but which are only indicated in one or the other of the parts. For instance, in m. 31, it would be very easy for the pianist to miss the rallentando marking, which is present only above the vocal line. Five measures later, in m. 36, the singer might not notice the accelerando marking between the two staves of the piano part. Performers of this song should take great care to notice and observe these
markings when they occur, since one can assume that these tempo markings, if not also the dynamic markings, should apply to both pianist and singer, even when they are only indicated in one of the two parts.

In the same year that “Bebro e il suo cavallo” was composed, 1944, Pizzetti wrote in a diary entry that he found himself “incapable of work, and almost ashamed of my life and of all I have done” (“Incapace di lavorare, e quasi vergognoso della mia vita e di tutto ciò che ho fatto.”)\(^{157}\) This is a song in which one suspects that the inventiveness and freshness that Pizzetti showed in some of his earlier songs, such as in “I pastori” or the three songs of Tre sonetti di Petrarca, were becoming much harder for him to capture. There is a sense here of Pizzetti trying to recreate the kind of songs that he had composed earlier in his career, rather than forging ahead with some new style, and the result is a kind of formulaic composition that does not result in an altogether successful composition. Still, this song has its gratifying moments, such as Bebro’s melismatic passages in the upper register of the singer’s voice when he speaks of his home and his beloved. In the hands of a skillful performer, it can be an interesting, dramatic, and rare addition to a song recital.

\(^{157}\)Bruno Pizzetti, 294; J.C.G. Waterhouse, review of Ildebrando Pizzetti: Cronologia e Bibliografia, by Bruno Pizzetti, 142.
“Vorrei voler, Signor, quel ch’io non voglio” from *Tre liriche*

**Text:** Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564)

**Date composed:** 1944

**Publication information:** Forlivesi, 1945

**Range:** B3 – G5  
**Tessitura:** G4 – D5

**Key:** D minor  
**Meter:** Mixed; the singer is in 4/4 and 2/4, while the pianist is in 12/8 and 6/8  
**Tempo:** Molto mosso e appassionato  
**Duration:** 4’04”  
**Difficulty:**  
Voice: Difficult  
Piano: Difficult

**Mood:** Conflicted; restless  
**Voice type:** Soprano or tenor

“Vorrei voler, Signor, quel ch’io non voglio;  
tra l’ foco e’l cor di ghiaccia un vel s’asconde  
che ’l foco ammorza, onde non corrisponde  
l’amo con la lingua, e poi mi doglio.”

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158 The published version of this song has *opra* here instead of *opre*; the latter is in the original poem. I believe it is an editorial mistake, and so I have restored the original word.
Vorrei voler, Signor, quel ch’io non voglio” was first performed in Rome on April 16, 1945, by Maria Teresa Pediconi, soprano, and Armando Renzi, piano. It was dedicated to Vittorio del Gaizo, a contemporary of Pizzetti’s who was an art critic and

159Bruno Pizzetti, 391.
author. For information about *Tre liriche*, the set from which this song comes, please see the entry for “Bebro e il suo cavallo.”

This song has three main themes. Each of these has certain features that help provide melodic and accompanimental interest, and each also has specific textual or musical associations that combine to make a very unified whole at the end of the song. The most obvious characteristic of “Vorrei voler, Signor, quel ch’io non voglio” is its persistent eighth-note triplet figure, initially played two octaves apart on the piano, that is present in the piano part through much of the song. These triplets are introduced in the first theme (beginning in m. 1), from which a short motive is derived. The motive turns out to be more important than the theme as a whole, since the motive is repeated on its own again and again in this song. This motive is only two beats long and starts off the beat with an incomplete triplet followed a complete beat of triplets (m. 1, beats 2 and 3). This first theme is repeated in accompaniment but never in the vocal line, and it appears intact or as the shorter derived motive. The result is an accompanimental texture that is dominated by these eighth-note triplets, which propel this song forward and give it a breathless quality.

The second theme is initially presented in the vocal line (mm. 10–16). This theme also returns many times later in the piece, both in the vocal line and in the accompaniment. The first three eighth-notes of this theme serve to remind the listener of the first words of the song, “Vorrei voler, Signor, quel ch’io non voglio” (“I would like to want, Lord, that which I do not want”), each time it is repeated later in the song.

The third theme doesn’t emerge until the second section of the song, when the triplets subside in m. 59. This is an extremely contrasting section that comes as no small
sense of relief after all of those frantic-sounding triplets. This section is intriguing, mostly because this third theme (mm. 59–65) seems totally at odds with all of the music that has come before it. This theme is a chant passage that borrows its style from a time period well before Pizzetti’s; both phrases of the theme even end with references to the under-third cadence, also known as the “Landini” cadence, so popular in fifteenth and early sixteenth century polyphony. As is the case with almost all of Pizzetti’s songs, one need only examine the text of this section to discover the impetus for this music. This text, “Manda’l predetto lume. . .” (“Give us the foretold light. . .”) inspired Pizzetti to draw upon his knowledge of Renaissance music in order to evoke a timeless, ancient quality to this section of the song, in response to these words. The effect is unexpected and jarring, but is profoundly suited to the text at this moment of the song. It is primarily an intellectual moment, certainly, but also stirs the emotions with a feeling of “devout spirituality,” to quote one Pizzetti scholar (who was speaking of all three songs of Tre liriche). This is one of those passages in Pizzetti’s songs that begs for more interpreters to discover it—it contains a specific kind of marriage between text and music that only Pizzetti could have written.

The ending of “Vorrei voler, Signor, quel ch’io non voglio” incorporates all three themes, with the first two beginning to emerge from the more lyrical texture established upon the introduction of the third theme around m. 66. From m. 70 until the end of the song, all three themes are present as the singer sings a wide-ranging passage with many long note values. This combination of what were initially disparate themes creates a sense of the unified whole, bringing the song to a satisfying conclusion but also leaving room for additional anxiety and questioning by the speaker, signified by the occasional

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160Gatti, Ildebrando Pizzetti, 82.
rumbling of the initial triplet motive, now in the bass register, even in the final measure of the song.

For the singer, the biggest challenge may well be the chromaticism present in the vocal part. However, the altered notes are often somewhere in the accompaniment, so the singer must simply learn what to listen for in order to overcome this potential hindrance. It is very difficult piece to sight-read, for pianist and singer, but with adequate rehearsal, both performers will find some patterns and logic their respective parts. There are also many wide intervallic leaps in the vocal line, a fairly uncharacteristic trait for a Pizzetti song (many of Pizzetti’s songs contain mostly step-wise vocal lines). As in the first song of this set, there is a mistake in the published score. In m. 10, the time signature is missing. Normally this would not be much of an issue, but since the pianist is in 12/8—a compound meter—the lack of indication for the 4/4 time signature is a critical oversight.
"In questa notte carica di stelle" from *Tre liriche*

Text: Manlio Dazzi (1891–1968)

Date composed: 1944

Publication information: Forlivesi, 1945

Range: C4 – F5              Tessitura: F4 – C5

Key: C minor
Meter: Mixed; mostly 4/4 with some measures of 2/4 and 3/4
Tempo: Molto largo
Duration: 4’10’’
Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult
Piano: Moderately difficult
Mood: Contemplative; philosophical
Voice type: Soprano or tenor (mezzo-soprano or baritone also possible)

In questa notte carica di stelle

Io so di me che sono

Attimo nel tramutare del mondo;

Come l’erba e la pianta,

Come la pietra che si forma adagio.
Poi sarò lungamente,
Then I will be long,
(then I will be for a long time)

nella supina benedetta inerzia,
in the supine blessed idleness,

um morto che si decompone; e nutre
a dead man that decomposes; and nourishes

un morto ke si dekom'pone e 'nutre
a morto che si decompone; e nutre

ˈlərba e la 'pjanta e le ra'diʃi 'fluide
the grass and the tree; and the roots flowing

l’erba e la pianta; e le radici fluide

duŋ kris’tallo ke a ‘fondo
of a crystal that in the depths

d’un cristallo che a fondo

ˈfatto 'puro sali'ra nel'larja
and made pure will rise in the air,

res'piro 'dei vi'vænti
breath of the living.

respiro dei viventi.

E tu nell’universo che tramuta,
And you in the universe that transforms,

'nostra vaga 'terra
our lovely earth,

nostra vaga terra,

ˈattimo 'sei 'attimo 'sono in te
a moment you are, a moment I am in you.

ˈattimo se, attimo sono in te.
Onde a me questo
Wherefore to me this

Il senso de’terno e dimfi’ nito ’fende
senso d’eterno e d’infinito scende
sense of the eternal and of the infinite descends

e mutamente ’dentro me ri’swona
and mutely inside me resounds

’kome ’dentro ’una ’kjoʧo’la ma’rina
come dentro una chiocciola marina
like inside of a snail sea

lo ’strεpito del ’mare
lo strepito del mare.
the roar of the sea.
(like the roaring of the sea inside a sea snail.)

Ma nel mutare, di chi ride e passa
But in the changing, of whom does laugh and passes

Che cosa è questa necessità che tutti ci tramuta?
What is this necessity that all transformed?
(that transforms us all?)

“In questa notte carica di stelle” was first performed in Rome on April 16, 1945,
by Maria Teresa Pediconi, soprano, and Armando Renzi, piano. The poetry is by

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161 This is a case in which intervocalic ‘s’ is pronounced as [s] in Italian, instead of a [z] sound.
162 Bruno Pizzetti, 391.
Manlio Dazzi (1891–1968), from his book of poetry entitled *In riva all’eternità* (“On the shores of eternity”). The song is dedicated to Prof. Mario Coppo.\(^{163}\)

Dazzi’s poem might be considered lengthy for a song by another composer, but Pizzetti’s style of setting text syllabically and with rhythms that closely match natural Italian speech patterns results here in a song of only four pages (55 measures) in length. The form of the song closely follows the strophes of Dazzi’s poem. In section A (mm. 1–15, “In questa notte”), Pizzetti composed a strikingly beautiful, modal sounding introduction. The first notes of the piano are five octaves of the pitch ‘F.’ In fact, the opening strongly implies F major or else some long-forgotten mode centered around ‘F’, but this is misleading. Though ‘F’ remains an important pitch throughout the song, especially when it is used as a pedal tone, the piece ends in C minor and travels through many keys to get there. Incidentally, this use of pedal tone is not unusual for Pizzetti, and is in fact one of his favorite compositional devices.

In section B (mm. 16–30, “Poi sarò lungamente”), both the vocal line and the accompaniment contrast with the music that has come before. The vocal line is now less chromatic, and is a more cantabile line than earlier. The texture of the accompaniment is thinner and simpler than in the first section. The result of all this is that in m. 16 the music suddenly shifts into a very different world. The text-painting in this section is significant. For instance, the section, which begins so suddenly with a dramatic shift in the texture of the accompaniment and the character of the vocal line, opens with the words “poi sarò lungamente” (“then I will be for a long time”) and the aptly long-breathed vocal phrase. In the very next couple of measures, the vocal line descends chromatically as the words “nella supina benedetta inerzia” (“on my back in blessed

\(^{163}\)Ildebrando Pizzetti, *Tre liriche* (Firenze: A. Forlivesi, 1945), 12.
idleness”). So, one doesn’t have to look far in this song to find instances of text-painting—in fact, it is a integral component of Pizzetti’s mature style. There is also a surprising reference in this section to the first song of the set, “Bebro e il suo cavallo.”

In mm. 20–21, in which the text describes a decomposition of a dead man, we hear a melodic passage from a moment in the earlier song in which the protagonist is stretched out in anticipation of his death (mm. 16–20 of “Bebro”). The quotation is not exact, but certainly enough to be detected by the listener, and to assure us that it was Pizzetti’s intent for these songs to have musical connections and perhaps also that he intended them to be performed as a group.

Section C (mm. 31–45 “E tu nell’universo”) is similar to section B in that the vocal line is less complex than at the opening of the song, and the accompaniment remains in its thinned out state. However, a new feature is added to the accompaniment—the ostinato bass line, which serves to build an undercurrent of tension and unease in this otherwise relaxed-sounding section. The expansiveness of the vocal line at “Onde a me questo senso d’eterno ed’infinito scende” (“Wherefore to me this sense of the eternal and infinite descends,” mm. 37–39) is aided by the droned pitch ‘F,’ which replaced the ostinato figure from earlier in this section.

Section D (mm. 45–55, “Ma nel mutare”) is something of a return to the style of the opening of the song. In fact, in m. 46, we hear the opening theme in the right hand of the piano, but now there is the low, rumbling ‘F’ drone beneath this ethereal melody. The result is a dramatic effect that builds until the voice enters in m. 48 with a recitative-like vocal line that continues until the end of the song. The accompaniment ends with a
small motive that has been extracted from the opening theme but is now truncated and presented in a more moderate register as the sounds of the piano die away.

There are often wide leaps in the vocal line. In fact, all of the important intervals in this song are large ones, specifically octaves, major sevenths, and minor sevenths. In the piano accompaniment, occurrences of these intervals are too numerous even to point out specific instances in the music—they are ubiquitous. In most of Pizzetti’s earlier songs, a wide, upward intervallic leap in the vocal line almost always occurred as a result of some important event or word in the text. This is not always the case in this song, since the wide leaps of the octave and both major and minor sevenths are motivic characteristics of the song itself. It should also be noted that the quality of these intervals is sometimes visually disguised by being spelled enharmonically, such as in m. 9 in the vocal line. Another potential difficulty in this song is that it has, at times, a very chromatic vocal line. The song’s numerous momentary key fluctuations certainly contribute to this aspect of the song. Some of the sonic qualities that Pizzetti achieves in this song are not so different than in his other songs, but if a singer is not already familiar with his works, this will not offer any help. There are also a few occasions in which Pizzetti uses enharmonic spellings that seem to unnecessarily complicate matters, though in one instance in m. 19, he does so to make the intervallic leap into the next measure, a perfect fourth, much more visually clear for the singer.
“Scuote amore il mio cuore” from *Tre canti d’amore*

Text: Sappho (born c.650 B.C.), translated by Manara Valgimigli (1876–1965)

Date composed: 1956

Publication information: Forlivesi, 1960

Range: A-flat3 – F5  
Tessitura: F4 – B-flat4

Key: C major, but tonally ambiguous throughout
Meter: Vocal line is in 4/4; piano part is in 4/4 and 12/8
Tempo: Vivo, appassionato
Duration: 1’30”
Difficulty: Voice: Moderately difficult  
Piano: Moderately difficult
Mood: Fervent; excited
Voice type: Mezzo-soprano

ˈskwɔtə əˈmɔrɛ il ˈmio ˈkwɔre
Scuote amore il mio cuore
(Shakes love my heart)

ˈkɔmə ˈvento ˈsui ˈmonti səˈbatte su ˈkwɛrtʃə
come vento sui monti s’abbatte su quercie.
(like wind on the mountains crashes down on oak trees.)

ˈdɔltʃə ˈmadɾə ˈnɔm ˈpɔsso pju ˈtɛssɛrɛ la ˈtela
Dolce madre, non posso più tessere la tela,
(Sweet mother, I can no longer weave the cloth,

dezˈi ˈdɛri jo ˈduɲ fɑntʃuˈllo mi a ˈvinta
desiderio d’un fanciullo mi ha vinta,
(desire for a boy has conquered me,

e la ˈmɔlle ˈɑfɾo dətə
and the tender Aphrodite.

e la molle Afrodite.
The three songs of *Tre canti d’amore* were composed over a period of four years, 1956–1959, and then published in the following year. They follow a period of about ten years in which Pizzetti wrote no songs, as he was instead occupied with composing large-scale dramatic works, orchestral pieces, and film music, among other projects.\(^{164}\) The texts for the songs come from varied sources, and each song was written for a different voice type. One can assume, then, that Pizzetti did not intend for them to be performed as a set, but rather, like many of his other song sets, they were grouped together simply for publication purposes. “Scuote amore il mio cuore” takes its text from several fragments of poetry of Sappho (born c.650), by way of an Italian translation by Manara Valgimigli (1876–1965). The song is dedicated to Marya Freund (1876–1966), a Polish born soprano who taught in Paris for over thirty years and was well known for her interpretations of modern works, especially twelve-tone works by Schönberg and others.\(^{165}\) No information survives regarding the first performance of this song.

This short song opens with a scale presumably invented by Pizzetti. This theme, the most important in the song, begins with a rapidly rising arch of triplets and eighth-notes, and includes a seemingly random pattern of chromatic intervals, the most critical

\(^{164}\)Bruno Pizzetti, 391–395.

being the half-step. The first four notes of the theme contain two half-steps, and seem to imply two leading tones, creating a sense of tonal ambiguity in the very first measure of the song. The interval of a half-step will continue to appear in this piece, and often in pairs of half-steps, each time evoking this opening theme. The theme ends with a falling cascade of triplets in disjunct pitches, perhaps foreshadowing the first line of the text, which declares that the speaker’s heart has been shaken by love. This initial theme in the piano is altered both in pitch and rhythm when it next appears, in the first vocal entrance. This time, the scale begins with quarter-note triplets, though it later has the eighth-notes that are a reminder of the opening piano theme but are more extended. Certainly, these two scalar themes are related, but more by gesture than exact repetition. But it is the first version from the piano introduction that is repeatedly heard later on in the piece, always in the piano accompaniment. At the first iteration of the words “Fermati, caro” (“Stop, dear one,” mm. 21–22), we hear a fragment of the opening theme in the walking, off-beat bass line—really it is the two half-step, double leading-tones that give it away. At the end of the song, this theme makes it final appearances and is played twice in the accompaniment (mm. 26–27 and mm. 28–30), but this time it has the effect of binding the whole song together and bringing it to a satisfying conclusion.

Text painting is an important component of “Scuote amore il mio cuore.” Already mentioned is the opening theme, which may indicate the shaking of the protagonist’s heart but might also be thought of as a wind motive, an idea pointed to by Pomfret in her discussion of this song.\footnote{Pomfret, 88–89.} Another moment of text-painting occurs at the expansive, more traditional sounding melodic line and consonant accompaniment at “dolce madre” (“sweet mother,” mm. 10–12), including the rapid upward arpeggio that
leads to the echo of the vocal line on the word “madre.” More examples of text painting include the accompanimental passage at the word “vinta” (“has conquered,” m. 17), with its syncopated accent in the upper register that could easily be mistaken for the sound of an arrow piercing one’s heart, and the accompanimental response to the mention of the goddess “Afrodite” (mm. 18–19), in which a triplet figure based on the opening theme ascends in triumph and concludes with a soft, tender, consonant-sounding cadence, and which also refers back to the echo-motive of “madre.” It is also important to observe that the “e la molle Afrodis” phrase is related to opening vocal phrase; though the actual pitches differ, the range and quarter-note triplets make the reference clear.167

Probably the biggest challenge for the singer of “Scuote amore il mio cuore,” is its tonal instability and resultant chromatic passages. There are some unusual-sounding passages that could be misleading for the singer—just as the melodic line begins to sound like something familiar, the pattern of whole steps and half-steps changes. One suggestion for overcoming this difficulty is to first learn the pitches intervallically and to mark the intervals in the score. Though this practice may seem initially tedious, it will help to increase pitch security, such that later on the song may begin to feel more natural. This method is similar to the way one would approach learning a twelve-tone piece, a fact that makes the dedicatee of this song a very interesting piece of the puzzle when trying to uncover more about this strange but interesting song by Pizzetti. In fact, the opening scale motive does encompass all twelve notes of the chromatic scale, though it does not appear that Pizzetti used a traditional twelve-tone technique to derive this scale. Since this song is so short—only thirty-two measures in all—fatigue is not a factor, as it sometimes might be in Pizzetti’s longer, more vocally challenging songs. This is one of

167Pomfret, 89.
two settings of Sappho by Pizzetti; the other is his “Oscuro è il ciel,” written in 1931.
These two songs might make an interesting pairing for a recital, especially since both songs work well for the mezzo-soprano voice.
“Bella lucente luna” from *Tre canti d’amore*

Text: Popular Greek, translated by Niccolò Tommaseo (1802–1874) and rhythmically revised (*rielaborato ritmicamente*) by Ildebrando Pizzetti

Date composed: 1959

Publication information: Forlivesi, 1960

Range: A3 – A-flat5

Tessitura: F4 – C5

Key: F minor

Meter: Mixed; mostly 4/4, with some measures of 2/4 and 3/4

Tempo: Adagio, disteso (Slow and stretched out)

Duration: 4’30”

Difficulty: Voice: Difficult

Piano: Difficult

Mood: Tormented; unstable

Voice type: Soprano

'Sella luˈʃente luna che scendi al tuo tramonto,
Bella luˈcente luna che scendi al tuo tramonto,
Beautiful shining moon that descends to your waning,
saˈlutami ki `amo ki laˈmor `mio ruˈbo
salutami chi amo, chi l’amor mio rubò.
greet whom I love, who my love stole.
(greet the one whom I love, the one who stole my love)
mi baˈʧava e diˈʧeva `mai t’abbandoneˈro
Mi baciava, e diceva: mai t’abbandonerò.
He kissed me and said: never will I abandon you.

E poi mabbandoˈnava `kome `kanna nel `kampo
E poi m’abbandonava, come canna nel campo,
And then he abbandoned me, like cane in the field,

`kome `kjeza interˈdetta `kome ʧiT ta preˈdata
come chiesa interdetta, come città predata.
like (a) church forbidden, like (a) city pillaged.
Io maledirlo voglio, ma poi io lo compongo; I curse him want, but then I him mourn:
(I want to curse him, but then I mourn him:)

Io maledirlo voglio, ma poi io lo compongo; I curse him want, but then I him mourn:
(I want to curse him, but then I mourn him:)

e mi 'pjanon le 'viʃʃere e 'lanima mi 'pjandʒe
and weeps the viscera, and the soul weeps.
(and I weep from deep within, and my soul weeps for me.)

Meglio ch’io 'l maledica, e faccia Dio che vuole
better that I curse him, and do God what he wants
(and that God does what he wishes)

'dei 'mjel sos’piri e 'dʒemiti
with my sighs and groans,

'e dell ar'dore e 'delle imprekat’sjoni
and with the ardor and with the curses.

Salga sopra un cipresso per il fiore:
May he climb on top of a cypress tree for the flower:

preʃi piti dal’lalto a 'terra 'kada
May he plunge from the heights, to earth fall;

'kome vetro si 'spezzi,
like glass may he break,

'kome 'fera si 'strugga
like wax may he melt;

cada su 'turke 'spade e su 'franki kal'telli
may he fall on Turkish swords and on French knives.

Lo tengen cinque medici ma dieci lo gwa’riskano.
Him hold five doctors but ten him cure.
(May five doctors hold him but ten cure him.)
(And may I pass nearby there and spot them.)

ben lavo’rate o ’mædifi e im ’bene ’sia la ’prøva
Ben lavorate, o medici, e in bene sia la prova.
Well work, oh doctors, and for the better may be the proof.

‘taʎʎino i ’ferri ’vostri ne ’lanima vi ’pjanga
Taglino i ferri vostri, né l’anima vi pianga:
may cut your tools, neither may your soul lament you:
(may your instruments cut, and your conscience not bother you:)

perk’eʎʎi si lo’dava e ’mai di ’f eva tabbandone’rɔ
perch’ egli si lodava e mai, diceva, t’abbandonerò.
because he praised himself and never, he said, will I abandon you.

E poi m’abbandonava come canna nel campo.
And then abandoned me like cane in the field.

‘tutte le ‘pjage a’prite ‘keʎʎi a nel ‘kərpo ’suo
Tutte le piaghe apri te ch’egli ha nel corpo suo.
All the wounds open that he has in his body.

‘io ‘panni ço da far ‘fila
Io panni ho da far fila,
I cloths have for making thread,

len’tswɔli ‘io ço da ‘stænderʎi
lenzuoli io ho da stendergli;
sheets I have for laying him out;

e se nomɔ ’fanno i ‘panni ‘io ‘taʎʎo il ’mio grem’bjule
and if won’t do the cloths, I cut my apron,

E se vuol sangue, sangue a medicina,
And if you want blood, blood as remedy,
Like many of Pizzetti’s songs, the score of “Bella lucente luna” has a dedication: 

“A Nicoletta, affettuosamente, il suo nonno Ildebrando” (“To Nicoletta, affectionately, [from] your grandfather Ildebrando”). This song, and the one that follows it in this set of three songs, was dedicated to Nicoletta Braibanti to commemorate her marriage to Cesare Valletti (1922–2000), the famous Italian tenor.168 It no doubt made for a curious wedding present, considering that the text is from the perspective of a scorned and vengeful woman. For information about Tre canti d’amore, see the entry for the first song of the set, “Scuote amore il mio cuore.”

The music of “Bella lucente luna” is through composed, with no real form to speak of except that the music follows the format of the poem. There is a brief moment of repeated text at the words “e poi m’abbandonava” (“and then he abandoned me” in mm. 12–15 and later in mm. 49–52) in which Pizzetti quotes the earlier passage of music. The most important motive in this song is the chromatically descending, four sixteenth-note pattern that occurs for the first time in the piano accompaniment in m. 5. This figure is actually derived from the intervals in the vocal line in m. 4 with the words “salutami che l’amò” (“greet the one who I love”). These words are recalled each time the listener hears the descending chromatic sixteenth-notes, and the repetitions of this motive are numerous and seem incessant. One concludes, upon hearing the many iterations of this motive, that the speaker in the poem has become mentally unhinged. This psychological

168Ildebrando Pizzetti, Tre canti d’amore, (Florence, Italy: A. Forlivesi, 1960), II-1; Pomfret, 79.
instability is reflected in the music in others ways, as well, such as the constantly shifting sense of tonal center and mode, and the disjunct vocal lines that momentarily seem to conform to melodic norms but always thwart the listener’s expectations.

The challenges for the singer are many in this difficult song. First of all, a very wide vocal range is required, though the pitches extend no higher than A-flat5. However, a very good, strong low register is often called upon, and the lower end of the vocal line extends on one occasion (m. 28) down to low A3. Additionally, this song contains frequent wide intervals and leaps, making rapid register shifts a common occurrence. Prominent examples of this occur in m. 28, in which the voice leaps up a major twelfth with only one beat of rest in between; m. 44, in which the voice leaps up a minor 10th to a high G-flat5; m. 49, in which the voice leaps up an augmented octave; and m. 67, in which the voice descends a minor tenth by way of four disjunct, chromatically altered sixteenth-notes in the span of only one beat.

The amount of chromatically altered pitches alone in this song is a challenge. Pizzetti clearly includes so much chromaticism as a response to the text, musically representing the protagonist’s confused and frazzled mind. This provides little comfort or aid for the singer tasked with learning the song, however musically appropriate the intent. Sometimes it is the notation itself that is misleading. For example, the composer has included many cautionary, parenthetical accidentals that may be unnecessary and seem to make things rather more complicated than they otherwise would be. One instance of this occurs in m. 33, in which the first note is parenthetically indicated to be A-natural, even though this is already indicated in the key signature. It is conceivable

Pizzetti includes optional notes in case the singer is not able to comfortably sing the lower pitches. However, the low A3 is preferred.
that one might assume A-flat here, because of the A-flats in the piano in the last half of the previous bar, but the singer was probably more likely to sing the correct pitch, A-natural, because of the note’s presence in the left hand of the piano part and the A-naturals in the previous measure for the singer. A similarly confusing cautionary accidental occurs in m. 12, except this time on the pitch E-natural, and other examples abound. Trickier still is m. 30, in which an E-natural is followed by another E-natural, but the second is marked with a cautionary natural sign, while the first is not. Pizzetti’s reasons for doing so are evident, since the piano part has an E-flat on the fourth beat of that measure, but for the singer, it is simply another layer of complication in a song that already has many such layers. The juxtaposition of sharps and flats within the same measure and phrase is also a potentially tricky feature of this song for the singer. For instance, in m. 53, the first beat contains sharps while the rest of the measure contains flats. This creates misleading-looking intervals, and the singer would be wise to simply write in the score what the “real” intervals are in order to learn them accurately. This characteristic also creates instances of the interval of an augmented second, not a difficult interval to sing but deceptive to the eye, nonetheless.

There is a mistake in score in m. 6. Since there are only two beats in this measure, the vocal line should consist of an eighth-note, a quarter-note, and an eighth-note. The spacing of the notes in the bar make this evident, but the harmony beneath this line does not.

“Bella lucente luna” is a rather long, taxing song—not as long as some of Pizzetti’s earliest songs, such as “I pastori” or “La passeggiata,” published in 1916, or the very long “La Pietà” from Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti, published in 1937, which is
at least twice as long—but the vocal demands in this one make it every bit as arduous as any of Pizzetti’s songs.
“Surge, propera, amica mea” from *Tre canti d’amore*

Text: *Song of Songs*

Date composed: 1959

Publication information: Forlivesi, 1960

Range: E3 – A4  
Tessitura: B-flat3 – E4

Key: G minor/major  
Meter: 4/4 with occasional measures of 2/4, 3/4, and 5/4  
Tempo: Largo (ma fervente, non lento)  
Duration: 3’00’’

Difficulty: Voice: Difficult  
Piano: Difficult

Mood: Exotic; fervent

Voice type: Tenor

ˈsurdʒe  ‘prɔpɛra  ˈaˈmika ˈmea

*R surge, propera, amica mea,*  
Rise up, quickly, lover mine,

kɔˈlumbə  ‘mea  ‘fɔrˈmɔsa  ˈmea  et  ˈveni

columba  mea, formosa  mea, et veni.

Dove mine, beautifully formed one mine, and come.

jam  ‘ɛnim  ‘hiems  ‘transiit  ‘imber  ‘abiit  et  reˈʃɛsɛt

Jam enim hiems transiit, imber abiiit et recessit.

Already truly winter passed, the rains are gone and receding.

ˈflores  appelluˈɛrunt  in  ‘tɛrra  ‘nɔstra

Flores apparuerunt in terra nostra,

Flowers appear on earth ours,

ˈtɛmpos  putatsiˈɔnis  adˈvɛnit  vɔks  ‘turturis

tempus putationis advenit, vox turturis

time singing has come, voices (of) turtle-doves

auˈdita  ˈɛst  in  ‘tɛrra  ‘nɔstra

audita est in terra nostra.

heard is on earth ours
The dedication of “Surge, propera, amica mea” reads, “A Nicoletta e a Cesare augurio nuziale,” which means, “To Nicoletta and to Cesare, best wishes on your wedding day.” Nicoletta Braibanti, Italian socialite and Pizzetti’s granddaughter, and Cesare Valletti, the famous Italian tenor, were getting married, and this song was to be a wedding present. For more information about the three songs of Tre canti d’amore, please see the entry for the first song of the set, “Scuote amore il mio cuore.”

This text, taken from the Song of Songs, was a popular source of inspiration for composers of the Renaissance. Many settings from this time period survive, including those by Palestrina, Guerrero, and Praetorius; the tunes associated with some of these settings were used as source material for parody masses by Lassus and Victoria, among others. In all likelihood, Pizzetti was probably aware of many or all of these settings, due to his interest in the music of this period. It was perhaps his familiarity with these historic pieces that caused him to set the text in such an uncharacteristic way for him.

First of all, the vocal line is not syllabic, unlike most of his other songs. Only in a few isolated sections do we find Pizzetti’s standard recitative-arioso style in this song. Instead, the vocal line is very florid, which contributes to the song’s peculiar antique mood. Repetition of text is also very unlike Pizzetti, but here it occurs with some

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170Ildebrando Pizzetti, Tre canti d’amore, III-1; Pomfret, 79.
regularity. Even the first word of the song is repeated three times, indicating a break from the composer’s usual faithfulness to setting the text exactly as appears in the original poem.

The opening theme is a virtuosic display for the pianist. It creates an exotic atmosphere for the text that is to follow. Made up of several flourishes of sixteenth-note triplets and widely-spaced parallel octaves, it is really only the first two beats of this theme that return later in the piece as a recurring motive (examples include m. 11, m.19, and m. 26). However, the sixteenth-note triplets do return later, though they do not have the specific pitches of the opening theme tied to them (m. 5, m. 34).

The rising scale is also an important musical gesture in this song, both in the piano part and in the vocal line. However, the patterns of whole-steps and half-steps are inconsistent and change according to context. This is especially important for the singer to notice, since the scales in m. 10 and m. 36 appear at first glance to be similar but are, in fact, different scales.

“Surge, propera, amica mea” ends in the same way as the other songs of Tre canti d’amore, with the piano part dying away, and the overall motion of the song slowing through rhythmic augmentation. This feature points out the fact that these three songs were probably never intended to be performed together, since they do not feature a great deal of contrast between them.

One of the more interesting aspects of this song is the vocal range that it encompasses. The vocal line avoids the low end of the range that is usually a part of Pizzetti’s songs and includes one climactic high A at the end of the song in the final phrase. Pizzetti was an operatic composer, after all, and so he had a good understanding

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171 Pomfret, 80.
and appreciation for the tenor voice. This was one of Pizzetti’s only songs specifically written for the tenor voice, though many others of his earlier songs are also well suited for this voice type. Cesare Valletti had a light, high tenor voice. He specialized in *bel canto* tenor roles and other *tenor di grazie* roles. It is conceivable that Pizzetti wrote this song with his voice in mind, considering the florid, high-lying moments in the vocal line and the lack of low notes throughout. It is not known whether Valletti ever sang this song, however. This song is a challenging one to learn and differs in many ways from the rest of Pizzetti’s song output. Despite its difficulties, it would make for a rewarding, unusual rarity on a recital program and a nice vocal showpiece for a tenor interested in singing a song that is a definitely off the beaten path.
The songs of Ildebrando Pizzetti represent an important part of twentieth-century Italian art song, yet they have largely fallen out of the established vocal repertoire. It is necessary that scholars and performers rediscover, research, and perform these songs if they are to become better known. This paper was written to increase awareness of Pizzetti’s songs among singers and teachers of singers, and also with the goal of making them more approachable for performers. Toward this end, thirty-three of Pizzetti’s songs are discussed in this paper (all of his published songs for voice and piano save two), which is more than are explored in any other resource. Along with a chart that provides essential information for each song, I have included texts, translations, and phonetic transcriptions in the song entries, making this paper a valuable and unique reference work for singers and teachers of singers. This paper also corrects numerous errors pertaining to these songs and in published literature on the subject. Among these errors are editorial mistakes in the musical notation or the texts, inaccurate publication information found in various resources, and translation mistakes found in previous translations, which are often the only English translations that have existed for these songs.

Pizzetti’s songs are useful for teachers, students, and professional performers. As a pedagogical tool in the voice studio, these songs provide interesting, unusual repertoire for voice students. They are demanding songs, but they present many excellent opportunities for learning. By studying and singing Pizzetti’s songs, the singer will be: (1) exposed to underperformed songs from the early twentieth-century Italian school, (2)
challenged by the rhythmic and musical complexities that are present in many of these songs, (3) compelled to increase their facility in the Italian language in order to perform any of the more complicated songs, (4) aided and vocally enriched by the composer’s healthy approach to writing for the voice, (5) motivated by having the uncommon opportunity to sing Italian songs of substance and worth, and (6) inspired by the composer’s commitment to crafting sensitive musical settings of first-rate poetry.

My ambition in writing this document has always been to make Pizzetti’s songs better known and to encourage more performances of them. These goals will ultimately be achieved only if more courageous performers become interested in performing challenging, early twentieth-century Italian repertoire and choose to champion these songs in recitals. Joyce Didonato, mezzo-soprano and Metropolitan opera star, has done just that by performing at least one Pizzetti song, “Oscuro è il ciel,” in recent concert appearances. Perhaps her example will lead other singers of note to program Pizzetti songs on their recitals. Another important step for increasing awareness and performances of these songs is that the musical scores must become more widely available. Currently, many of his songs are only obtainable from libraries (and sometimes only in one or two!) and are not available for purchase. However, Ricordi has recently published two volumes of Italian art songs that contain a few Pizzetti songs each.172 This is tantalizing, and one hopes that this important action by the publisher may lead to similar volumes or perhaps even an anthology of songs by Pizzetti. Until then, this document will serve as a resource for those interested in Pizzetti’s songs, providing

\[^{172}\text{Maurizio Carnelli, ed., Liriche del novecento Italiano: per voce acuta e pianoforte (Milan, Italy: Ricordi, 2005), 75–119; Liriche del novecento Italiano: per voce media e pianoforte (Milan, Italy: Ricordi, 2008), 45–50.}\]
information and assistance so that the songs may be performed and preserved for future
generations of singers, teachers, and scholars.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Dictionaries


Scores


———. *Due liriche drammatiche napoletane*. Rome, Italy: A. Forlivesi, 1918.


Appendix A.

**Complete list of Pizzetti’s works for solo voice.**

The following is a list of Pizzetti’s published and unpublished songs and other works for solo voice, such as vocalises and excerpted (published) arias. In creating this list, I have synthesized information from multiple resources, all found in the bibliography for this paper, especially those by Bruno Pizzetti (the composer’s son), Rachel Ann Jensen, Bonnie Pomfret, and also the entry on Pizzetti in the Grove Dictionary of Music, co-written by Guido M. Gatti and John C.G. Waterhouse. However, as with many lists of composers’ works such as this, there is always the possibility that Pizzetti wrote songs of which I am not aware that were excluded from these aforementioned resources. This list is intended to serve as a tool for the student of the songs of Pizzetti and as a chronology of composition dates for the songs.

Songs that were initially published as a set and were composed during the same year are grouped below in one entry, such as the *Tre liriche*, which were composed in 1904 and published together in 1908. *Cinque liriche*, on the other hand, which was published in 1916, represents a group of songs by Pizzetti that have a less tidy history of composition and publication. This set contains songs that were not composed during the same year and songs that were published separately before being published as a group. For this set and others like it, I have chosen to list each song separately below, in an attempt to make this list as accurate as possible as to the chronology of composition for these songs. For a few of the songs listed below, only the date of the first performance is known, and not the composition date. In these cases, I have used the first performance date in place of the composition date and placed the word “before” prior to that date. All
songs in this list were written for voice and piano, unless otherwise noted. Where there has been any discrepancy between the aforementioned resources, especially related to the ordering of the songs, dates of composition, or spelling of song titles, I have tended to rely on Bruno Pizzetti’s authoritative book.

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<th>Title (composed/year completed)</th>
<th>Poet</th>
<th>Publication Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nuvole (1899)</td>
<td>unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Epitaphe</strong>&lt;sup&gt;173&lt;/sup&gt; (1903)</td>
<td>Victor Hugo</td>
<td>La Nuova Musica, 1911</td>
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<td>Tre liriche (1904)</td>
<td>Ildebrando Cocconi</td>
<td>Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana, 1908</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Vigilia nuziale</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Remember</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antifona Amatoria di Basiliola</td>
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<td>from <em>La nave</em> (1907)</td>
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<td>Sera d’inverno (1907)</td>
<td>Mario Silvani</td>
<td>Casa Editrice Musicale Italiana, 1908</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due antifone (1908)</td>
<td>Song of Songs</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. In lectulo meo</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem . . .</td>
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<td>L’annuncio (1908)</td>
<td>Térésah (Teresa Corinna Ubertis Gray)</td>
<td><em>Grandi Magazzini di Musica Estera e Italiana</em> (1912)</td>
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<td>Gabriele’Annunzio</td>
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<td>Forlivesi, 1916 (as part of <em>Cinque liriche</em>)</td>
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<td>La madre al figlio lontano</td>
<td>Romualdo Pàntini</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1916 (as part of <em>Cinque liriche</em>)</td>
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<td>(1910)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erotica (1911)</td>
<td>Gabriele d’Annunzio</td>
<td>Pizzi, 1922</td>
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<sup>173</sup>Bold type indicates that a discussion of the song is included in the body of this paper.
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<td>L’Eroica, 1912</td>
<td>Forlivesi, 1916</td>
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<td>Niccolò Tommaseo,</td>
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<td>Forlivesi, 1916</td>
<td>as part of <em>Cinque liriche</em></td>
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<td>Giovanni Papini</td>
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<td>Forlivesi, 1916</td>
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<td>1. Angeleca (1916)</td>
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<td>Forlivesi, 1939</td>
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<td>Gerda Dalliba</td>
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<td>A Lament (1920)</td>
<td>Percy Bysshe Shelley</td>
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<td>Francesco Petrarca</td>
<td>Ricordi, 1923</td>
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<td>In morte di Madonna Laura (1922)</td>
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<td>popular Tuscan poetry</td>
<td>Ricordi, 1927</td>
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<td>for voice and string quartet</td>
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<td>1. Donna lombarda</td>
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**Tre canzoni** (1926)  
version for voice and piano  
1. **Donna lombarda**  
2. **La prigioniera**  
3. **La pesca dell’anello**  

Popular Tuscan poetry  
Ricordi, 1927

**Vocalise-Etude** (1929)  
--  
Répertoire Moderne de Vocalises-Etudes, Leduc, 1929

**Tre vocalizzi** (1929)  
--  
Vocalizzi nello stile moderno con accompagnamento di pianoforte, Ricordi, 1929

1. Allegretto vivace e leggero  
2. Quasi lento  
3. Largo

**Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem**  
2nd version including  
“In lectulo meo” (before 1932)

Song of Songs  
Ricordi, 1933

**Oscuro è il ciel** (1931)  
Giacomo Leopardi, after Sappho  
La Nuova Italia Musicale, 1932  
Ricordi, 1933

**Tre canti Greci** (1932)  
1. **Augurio**  
2. **Mirologio per un bambino**  
3. **Canzone per ballo**  
Pio Bondioli, translator  
Ricordi, 1933

**Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti**  
for baritone and four instruments  
1. La Pietà (1935)  
2. Trasfigurazione (1936)  
Giuseppe Ungaretti  
Ricordi, 1937

**Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti**  
version for voice and piano  
by Maffeo Zanon  
1. La Pietà (1935)  
2. Trasfigurazione (1936)  
Giuseppe Ungaretti  
Ricordi, 1937

**Oscuro è il ciel** (1935)  
version for voice and orchestra  
Giacomo Leopardi, after Sappho  
unpublished
Due inni Greci (1936?)
for soprano, chorus and orchestra
1. Inno a Pallade Atena Homer
2. Inno a Colono Sophocles

Due inni Greci (1936?)
Reduction for voice and piano
by Maffeo Zanon
1. Inno a Pallade Atena Homer
2. Inno a Colono Sophocles

Il clefà prigione (1937)
version for voice and orchestra
Niccolò Tommaseo, unpublished translator

e il mio dolore io canto (1940)
Jacopo Bocchialini Forlivesi, 1945

Oritur sol et occidit (1943)
Ecclesiastes unpublished
for baritone and organ

Tre liriche (1944)
1. Bebro il suo cavallo Niccolò Tommaseo, translator
2. Vorrei, signor, quel ch’io non voglio Michelangelo Buonarroti
3. In questa notte carica di stelle Manlio Dazzi

Due liriche drammatiche Napoletane (1945)
version for voice and small orchestra
1. Angeleca
2. Assunta

Tre liriche (1946)
version for voice and orchestra
1. Bebro il suo cavallo Niccolò Tommaseo, translator
2. Vorrei, signor, quel ch’io non voglio Michelangelo Buonarroti
3. In questa notte carica di stelle Manlio Dazzi
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Edition Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tre sonetti tragici (1948)</td>
<td>Alfredo Zerbini</td>
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| 1. Che calma in gir! Che pada sepoltala!  
2. La va pian pian clà portanten’na scura  
3. Al Marchesén, povrén, ch’l’era un bulot |            |            |                |
| Oritur sol et occidit (1950)  | Ecclesiastes           |            | unpublished    |
| Scuote amore il mio cuore (1956) | Manara Valgimigli    |            | Forlivesi, 1960 (as part of *Tre canti d’amore*) |
| Sei tornato da me (1951)      | Jacopo Bocchialini     |            | unpublished    |
| Scuote amore il mio cuore (1956) | Manara Valgimigli    |            | Forlivesi, 1960 (as part of *Tre canti d’amore*) |
| Vocalizzo (1957)              | --                     |            | Curci, 1959    |
| Bella lucente luna (1959)     | Niccolò Tommaseo,      |            | Forlivesi, 1960 (as part of *Tre canti d’amore*) |
|                             | translator             |            |                |
| Surge, propera, amica mea (1959) | Song of Songs        |            | Forlivesi, 1960 (as part of *Tre canti d’amore*) |
| Vocalizzo (1959)              | --                     |            | Curci, 1960    |
|                             | for mezzo-soprano and piano |            |                |
| Cinque liriche per canto e piccola orchestra (1964) |            |            | unpublished    |
|                             | for voice and small orchestra |            |                |
| Tre sonetti del Petrarca (1964) | Francesco Petrarca     |            | unpublished    |
|                             | version for voice and small orchestra |            |                |
|                             | 1. La vita fugge e non s’arresta un’ora  
2. Quel rosignuol che si soave piagne  
3. Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov’era |            |                |
| Due canti Greci (1964)        | Pio Bondioli           |            | unpublished    |
|                             | version for voice and small orchestra |            |                |
|                             | 1. Mirologio per un bambino  
2. Canzone per ballo |            |                |
Appendix B.

Annotated bibliography of related sources in English

What follows is not intended to be an exhaustive list of resources about Pizzetti’s songs. Rather, it is a list of some important documents that may aid the English-speaking singer who is seeking more information about these songs. Some of these resources provide mostly general information while mentioning specific songs in significant ways; others describe many songs in detail. This is an annotated bibliography of sorts, though in actuality it is simply a list of documents that pertain to Pizzetti songs, detailing which songs are covered within each source in question. Only resources that include information pertaining to interpretation and performance were included. Therefore, documents that mention songs only by publication date or to acknowledge their existence are excluded from this list, such as Bruno Pizzetti’s invaluable text, *Ildebrando Pizzetti: Cronologia e Bibliografia*. This text, written by the composer’s son, gives us much information that would not otherwise be available to us about the songs, such as composition and publication dates, as well as information regarding the first performances of these works, but does not offer insights pertaining to performance or interpretation. Additionally, keeping in mind the target audience for this study of Pizzetti’s songs, I have excluded from this list sources that have only been published in Italian. The songs below will not be listed in alphabetical or chronological order but by the order in which they appear in the document being described. For brevity’s sake, I have not included the set, if any, in which a particular song was published (unless the entire set is referenced) or any other identifying information, such as its publication date.
That kind of detailed information is available in the included list of songs by Pizzetti, found in Appendix A. Instead, here I have simply listed the songs by name.


This short article, written by noted English musicologist and composer Herbert Antcliffe (1875–1964), provides insight into how some of the earliest of Pizzetti’s songs were received by the musical *conoscenti* of his generation. In addition to including an expert description of Pizzetti’s song composition techniques, this article examines the five songs of *Cinque liriche* and the two Neapolitan songs, “Angeleca” and “Assunta.”


This book was written by a contemporary of Pizzetti’s who had first-hand knowledge of the composer. While most of this book is concerned with biographical information and descriptions of his operas, there is a short chapter discussing his songs. None of the songs are presented in great detail, but the following songs are mentioned: “Incontro di marzo,” “Sera d’inverno,” “I pastori,” “La madre al figlio lontano,” “San Basilio,” “Angèlica,” “Clefta prigione,” “Assunta,” *Tre Sonetti di Petrarca*, “Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov’era,” *Tre Canzoni*, *Tre Canti Greci*, “Donna Lombarda,” “La pesca dell’anello,” “Augurio,” “Canzone per ballo,” *Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti*, and *Tre liriche*.


This article is part one of a two-part series on Pizzetti; the second installment does not appear in this listing because it does not specifically deal with Pizzetti’s songs. The opening portion of this article is biographical in nature, while later the aesthetics of Pizzetti’s art are discussed. Specific songs discussed are “Vigilia nuziale,” “Remember,” “Incontro di Marzo,” “Sera d’Inverno,” “I pastori,” “La madre al figlio lontano,” “San Basilio,” “Il Clefta prigione,” “Passeggiata,” “Erotica,” “Angeleca,” and “Assunta.”


This is an important and relatively recent doctoral dissertation that reflects up-to-date research and synergizes many resources that pertain to Pizzetti, his poets, and his songs. Particular attention is paid to characteristics of the poetry and how Pizzetti responds musically to the texts themselves. Included are translations for thirty-one of Pizzetti’s songs, a survey of the literature on the songs, a short biography of the composer, and analyses of nine songs and their poems. The songs discussed in detail are “I pastori,” “Erotica,” “Angèleca,” “La vita fugge e non s’arresta un’ora,” “Quel
rosignuol che si soave piagne,” “Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov’era,” “Mirologio per un bambino,” “Canzone per ballo,” and “Bebro e il suo cavallo.”


This text is an indispensable and frequently used textbook for college-level classes on Art Song literature throughout the United States. It is, by necessity, an overview of each included composer’s song output, and lacks critical details and in-depth analysis for the songs. One imagines that, in order to keep the book’s length reasonable and to include as many important composers as possible, Dr. Kimball has had to make hard choices regarding which songs to include and which to omit. For instance, for the entry on Pizzetti, only “I pastori” and “Quel rosignuol che si soave piagne” are discussed.


This is an important and one-of-a-kind guide to and overview of Italian art songs that details the works of late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century Italian song composers. It contains a survey of Italian song from 1600 through the twentieth century, individual miniature biographies of twenty-eight Italian composers, and translations of the poetry and suggestions for interpretation of over two-hundred songs. Pizzetti songs discussed are “I pastori,” “La madre al figlio lontano,” “San Basilio,” “Il clefà prigione,” “Passeggiata,” “La vita fugge e non s’arresta un’ora,” “Quel rosignuol che si soave piagne,” “Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov’era,” “Erotica,” “Donna lombarda,” “La prigioniera,” “La pesca dell’anello,” “Oscuro è il ciel,” “Augurio,” “Mirologio per un bambino,” “Canzone per ballo,” and “e il mio dolore io canto.”


This is a dissertation written from an interesting point-of-view for readers of this doctoral document—the author is a singer and a voice teacher. This paper contains chapters on Pizzetti’s life, Pizzetti’s critical writings and attitude towards the solo song, Pizzetti’s musical style, the texts of Pizzetti’s songs, and a discussion of six contrasting Pizzetti songs. It also contains numerous important appendices, such as a list of Pizzetti’s operas, incidental music, and choral works, a list of operas by other Ottanata composers (composers born in or around the year 1880), a chronological list of Pizzetti’s songs, and an appendix that traces the Italian folk song sources for his *Tre canzone*. Pizzetti songs discussed in detail are “I pastori,” “Quel rosignuol che si soave piagne,” “La prigioniera,” “Trasfigurazione,” “Surge, probera, amica mea,” and “Scuote amore il mio core.”


This is an insightful article written by Franco Sciannameo; a violinist, film musicologist, and cultural historian who was born in Italy and studied at the Accademia
Nazionale di Santa Cecilia during the time when Pizzetti was Professor of Advanced Composition there. References to Pizzetti’s songs are few in this substantial article, since most of the author’s focus is on the operas, the music for the movie Scipione l’Africano, and Pizzetti’s relationship with Mussolini. However, in describing Pizzetti’s musical and personal relationship with Gabriele D’Annunzio near the beginning of the article, there is a small section extolling “the small-scale perfection of ‘I pastori,’” among other superlatives invoked.


This informative book only includes one paragraph on Pizzetti in the chapter on Italian song from the modern period, written by Anthony Milner. Four of Pizzetti’s songs are briefly discussed—“Quel rosignuol che si soave piagne” (with musical example), “Bebro e il suo Cavallo,” “Vorre’ voler, signor, quel ch’io non voglio,” and “In questa notte.”
Apprendix C.

**Idiomatic English translations for Due poesie di Giuseppe Ungaretti.**

**Mercy,** Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888-1970)

I.
I am an injured man.

And I would like to go away
and finally arrive,
Mercy, where one hears
a man who is by himself, alone.

I have nothing but goodness and pride.

And I feel exiled in the midst of men.

But for them I am in pain.
Am I not worthy to return to me?

I have populated the silence with names.

Have I torn up my heart and mind
Only to fall into slavery to words?

I rule over phantoms.

O dried leaves,
Soul carried here and there…

No, I hate the wind and its voice
of an unremembered beast.

God, do those that implore you
now only know you by name?

You have banished me from life
And will you banish me from death?

Perhaps man is also unworthy of hope…

Is the spring of remorse also dry?
Of what use is sin,  
if it no longer leads to purity?

The flesh barely remembers  
that once it was strong.

Raving and used up, the soul.

God, look at our weakness.

We would like a certainty.

Do you not even mock us anymore?  
And you lament us then, cruelty.

I cannot stand to remain walled off  
within desire without love.

Show us a trace of justice.

What is your law?

Lightning strike my poor emotions.  
Free me from worry.

I am tired of howling without a voice.

II.  
Melancholy flesh  
where once joy amassed,  
eyes half-shut of tired reawakening,  
you see, soul too wise,  
what I will become, fallen to earth?

The road of the dead runs through the living.

We are the river of shadows.  
They are the seed that explodes in our dreams.

Their is the distance that remains.

And theirs is the shadow which gives weight to names.

The hope of a pile of shadows  
and nothing else is our fate?
And are you would be nothing but a dream, God?

At least a dream, we wreckless ones,
Want you to resemble.

Oh!...It is the fruit of the clearest insanity.

It doesn’t tremble in clouds of branches
like sparrows of the morning
at the edge of the eyelids.

A mysterious wound resides and languishes in us.

III.
The light that stings us
and is a thinner thread.
Will you no longer dazzle, if you don’t kill?

Give me this highest joy.

IV.
Man, monotonous universe,
believes that he is expanding the limits
and from his feverish hands
nothing but limits emerge.

Clinging in the emptiness
to the spider’s web,
he fears and seduces
only his own cry.

To make reparations, he raises monuments,
and when he thinks of you, Eternal one,
he has but blasphemies.

**Transfiguration**

I am astride a bale of dried, golden hay.
A bitter spasm bursts and swarms
in wide furrows.
I was born happily from men who work the earth.

I feel, to the weathered man whose eyes are fixed
to the phases of the sky,
like the skin of mulberries that he prunes.
I feel, in the childish faces,
like the rotting, rosy fruit
between naked trees.

Like a cloud I filter myself in the sun
I feel diffused by a kiss
that consumes and calms me."

---

* English translation by Mark Whatley and Dr. Edward Anderson.