

From Paris to Rome. Alfredo Casella and Béla Bartók in the Early Twentieth Century*

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, several scholars have investigated the reception of Béla Bartók in Italy during the first half of the twentieth century.¹ The present article aims to further explore this field of research through an examination of the artistic relations between the Hungarian musician and Alfredo Casella. It analyses in particular the influence of Bartók on Casella as a composer, pianist, and concert organiser by drawing on some important primary sources (scores, letters, articles, concert-related ephemera, music manuscripts), including the archival materials held at the Fondo Alfredo Casella (henceforth FAC) of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia; henceforth FGC). The time period covered by this research spans from the early 1910s, when Casella discovered the ‘new Hungarian music’ in Paris, to 1925, when he organised Bartók’s first concert tour in Italy.

The article consists of two sections. The first section is dedicated to the reception of Béla Bartók in France in the years before the First World War. Casella, who was one of the most prominent émigré musicians active in Paris during this period,

constitutes a crucial figure in order to understand this phenomenon. The second section shows how Bartók's music continued to be a critical point of reference for Casella after his return to Italy in 1915.

PARIS (1910–1914)

Born in Turin in 1883, Casella moved to Paris in 1896 to study at the Conservatoire.² He then began a career as a pianist and composer in the French capital and collaborated with several periodicals. He also worked as a concert organiser and, in 1911, became the general secretary of the Société musicale indépendante (SMI).³ These activities allowed him to integrate into the French musical milieu to such an extent that his *First Symphony*, op. 5 (1905–1906) and his *Second Symphony*, op. 12 (1909) were considered as the works of a French composer by the Sous-sécretariat d'État aux Beaux-Arts.⁴ Nevertheless, Casella did not obtain French citizenship and cultivated a strong relation with Italian expatriate intellectuals. In 1909 he composed the orchestral rhapsody *Italia*, op. 11 and in 1913 wrote a plea in support of 'l'avenir musical de l'Italie [Italy's musical future]' in the newspaper *L'Homme libre*.⁵ In 1914 he organised a concert at the Salle des agriculteurs dedicated to the 'young Italian school' (Bastianelli, Casella, Davico, Ferrante, Malipiero, Pizzetti).⁶ His desire to return to Italy was realised in 1915, when he became professor of piano at the Liceo di Santa Cecilia in Rome.

In his autobiography *I segreti della giara*,⁷ published in 1941, Casella exalts his 'italianità [Italianness]' and devotion to Mussolini (probably as a defence against the allegations of anti-patriotism levied by the periodicals *Il Tevere* and *Perseo*).⁸ At the same time, he does not conceal the formative value of his Parisian sojourn, as well as his 'strong admiration'⁹ for Schoenberg. The significance of these French years calls for a reassessment of Casella's position within European musical culture. As Parrino has pointed out, the 'stylistic connections linking his pre-1915 French music with the works he wrote during the Fascist period' – a thesis advanced by Waterhouse as early as 1981 – have some 'potential socio-political implications'.¹⁰ Moreover, according to Fontanelli, the idea of a 'continuità stilistica [stylistic continuity]' in Casella's output undermines the assumption of a radical antithesis between 'avanguardia [avant-garde]' and 'classicismo [classicism]'.¹¹

It was in the final years of his French sojourn that Casella firstly took an interest in Bartók's music. In his autobiography, the Italian composer writes:

At the same time [in the early 1910s], I came in contact with the new Hungarian music. Some piano pieces of Zoltán Kodály were played at the Société musicale indépendante and caused a noisy scandal. The first important compositions of Béla Bartók began to appear, through which one glimpsed a very strong personality. This music was interesting in the highest degree

because of its complete originality and independence. We began to see how much the true Hungarian music differed from the too well-known rhapsodies of Liszt, which might better be called “gypsy rhapsodies”.¹²

Casella identifies a new Hungarian school constituted by Kodály and Bartók, which scandalised the Parisian public in the early 1910s (the same period that saw the emergence of Schoenberg’s ‘revolutionary art’¹³ and Stravinsky’s ‘cyclopean and terrifying’ *Rite of Spring*).¹⁴ He also underlines the radical novelty of this new Hungarian art in relation to the Lisztian heritage: Bartók’s and Kodály’s music is not ‘gypsy’ but truly ‘Hungarian’.

Casella’s retrospective observations are corroborated by the historical data related to the reception of Bartók and Kodály in France. Before the First World War, the idea of a ‘new Hungarian school’ was relatively popular among Parisian musical circles. In June 1914, in the newspaper *L’Homme libre*, Casella himself exalted this ‘école florissante [flourishing school]’ as ‘l’une des premières d’Europe [one of the best in Europe]’.¹⁵ The French debut of the new Hungarian music took place on 12 March 1910 at the Hotel des Modes, where Bartók was invited by the Hungarian pianist Sándor Kovacs to perform at a Festival hongrois. The concert featured Kodály’s *Cello Sonata*, op. 4 (1909–1910), Bartók’s *Fourteen Bagatelles*, op. 6 BB 50 (1908) and the world premiere of the first, *Allegro vivace*, of Bartók’s *Two Romanian Dances*, op. 8a BB 56 (1909–1910).

Within the history of Bartók’s reception, this concert is also associated to the genesis of his most famous piano piece, *Allegro barbaro*, BB 63 (firstly published in 1913). Indeed, according to Kodály, Bartók used the adjective *barbaro* in the title of this piece as an ironic reference to the expression ‘jeunes barbares hongrois [young Hungarian barbarians]’ employed by a French music critic in a review of the 1910 concert.¹⁶ Although there is no trace of this review in the newspapers and periodicals of the time, the stereotype that associates Bartók with the adjective ‘barbarian’ spread rapidly and still persists today.¹⁷ As Frigyesi states: ‘Among musicians, the heavily accented and rigid ostinato is casually referred to as “Bartókian”. The situation is exacerbated when the music is marked *forte*, and accented notes are superimposed on the ostinato’.¹⁸

Casella probably did not attend the 1910 Festival hongrois. Nevertheless, he was one of the first musicians to appreciate the ‘barbarian’ music of the young Hungarians. Bartók’s stylistic influence is blatant in some of Casella’s *Nove pezzi* for piano, op. 24 (1914). For example, the second piece is entitled *In modo barbaro* (EXAMPLE 1). This allegro, marked *forte*, begins with a heavily accented and rigid ostinato, based on a perfect fourth (G₂–C₃). In the continuity draft of the work (FAC, Quaderno n. 4, 1913–1914, M. 74, sheet 34v; FIGURE 1), Casella firstly writes ‘sempre pesante [always heavy]’, but then decides to emphasise this indication

(‘maestoso e feroce [fierce]! sempre pesante’). Further down, he writes ‘forte e ruvido [rough]’ and defines the triple acciaccaturas starting at bar 11 as ‘feroce’. This pianistic style can be interpreted as a linguistic intensification of Casella’s *prima maniera* – e.g. *Toccata*, op. 6 (1904) – or be associated with the four-hand arrangement of Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* (published in 1913). Nonetheless, the relationship between Bartók’s piano music and Casella’s *In modo barbaro* could hardly be denied: in this piece, the Italian composer considers the *Allegro barbaro* as an artistic manifesto and pushes the percussive treatment of the piano to the extreme. It is worth noting that the first piece (entitled *Preludio*) of Casella’s *Cinque pezzi per quartetto d’archi*, op. 34 (1920) is marked *Allegro vivace e barbaro*.

EXAMPLE 1. Alfredo Casella, *Nove pezzi per piano*, op. 24, no. 2 *In modo barbaro*, bb. 1–24 © 1915, by Ricordi, Milano, 115420

IN MODO BARBARO

Nove Pezzi
N. 2.

ALFREDO CASELLA

Sempre maestoso, feroce e pesante

Allegro molto mod.^{to}

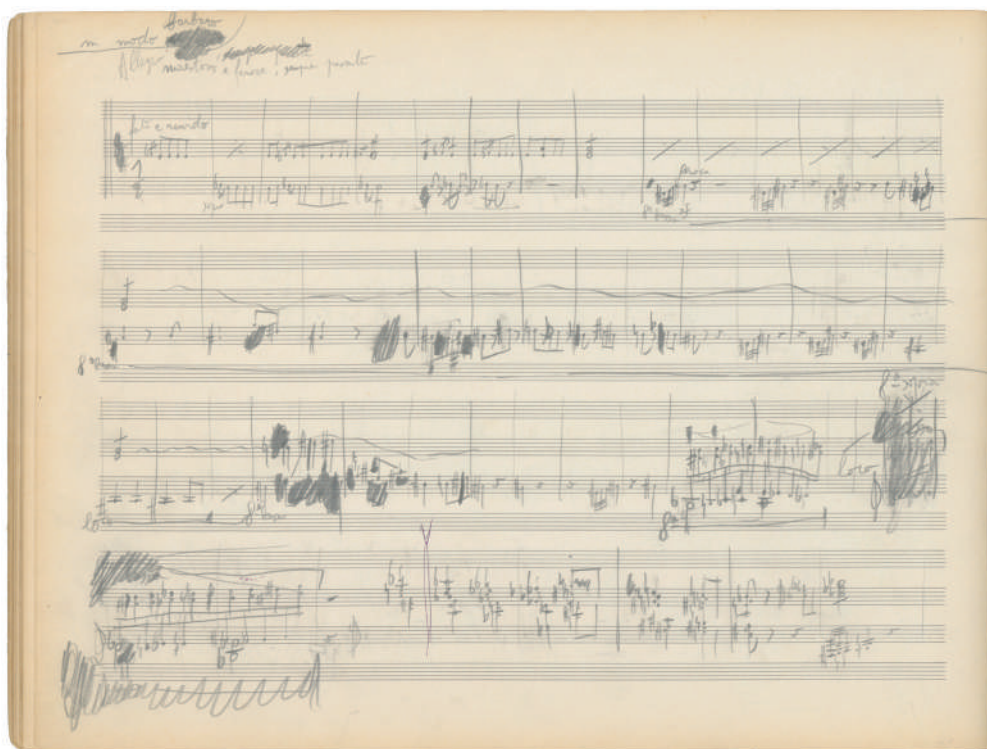
f sempre forte e ruvido

*stacc.
(sopra la m.d.)*

molto forte

sf

FIGURE 1. Alfredo Casella, *Nove pezzi* for piano, op. 24, no. 2 *In modo barbaro*: continuity draft, sheet 34v. Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Alfredo Casella



Shortly after the Hungarian *soirée* of March 1910, Theodor Szántó performed six of Kodály's *Nine Pieces* for piano, op. 3 (1905–1909) during the inaugural concert of the SMI. The event took place on 20 April 1910 at the Salle Gaveau and is mentioned by Casella in his memoirs.¹⁹ Indeed, judging by the reviews, the concert caused a sensation and contributed to the fame of both the Hungarian school and the SMI.²⁰ In the following years, the members of the SMI discussed the possibility of performing Bartók's *String Quartet no. 1*, op. 7 BB 52 (1908–1909) in Paris²¹ and Casella himself played Kodály's *Cello Sonata* on two occasions: on 3 May 1913 at the Salle Gaveau and on 20 February 1914 at the Salle des agriculteurs.²²

In November 1911, an article published in the French journal of the Société Internationale de Musique set out to describe the musical renaissance inaugurated by Bartók and Kodály. In this piece, entitled 'La jeune école hongroise', Kovács illustrates the development of Hungarian music from Hans von Koessler and

Ödon Mihalovich, the masters who ‘ayant fondé la nouvelle école par leur apostolate didactique [founded the school through their didactic evangelism]’, to Bartók and Kodály, the pupils who ‘la révolution qui s’accomplissait dans leur esprits curieux [accomplished the revolution]’.²³ In Kovács’s opinion, the so-called ‘Hungarian’ style of Gypsy musicians, glorified by Liszt,²⁴ contributed to the creation of a national consciousness during the nineteenth century, but at the same time prevented the full development of a ‘true’ and ‘pure’ Magyar musical style. The revolution initiated by Bartók and Kodály is based on the collection and analytical study of Hungarian peasant music, which is then incorporated into their own compositions. According to Frigyesi, Kovács’s claim that Bartók and Kodály ‘au fond des villages de la Hongrie, le debussysme et le ravellistisme [*sic*] sont allés les trouver [went to find Debussyism and Ravelism at the heart of villages in Hungary]’²⁵ expresses both ‘the Hungarian modernists’ idealisation of the French modernists [and] the direct link they made between cosmopolitan modernism and the traditional music of rural Hungary’.²⁶ Kovács concludes his article with a nationalistic homage to the new Hungarian music. In his opinion, the true ‘Barbarians’ are those who do not acknowledge the importance of these new musical ‘heroes’: in the young Hungarian composers, ‘we can find the seeds of a national art [...]. In their revolutionary bravery, we find the revolt of our heroes, who for thousand years have defended themselves against the Barbarians’.²⁷

The poetics of the new Hungarian school, based on the discovery and assimilation of rural folk music, had an influence on Casella. For instance, the last of his *Nove pezzi*, entitled *In modo rustico* and dedicated to Malipiero, contains explicit references to the first of Bartók’s *Two Romanian Dances* (EXAMPLE 2).²⁸

EXAMPLE 2. Béla Bartók, *Two Romanian Dances* for piano, op. 8a BB 56, no. 1 *Allegro vivace*, bb. 1–4

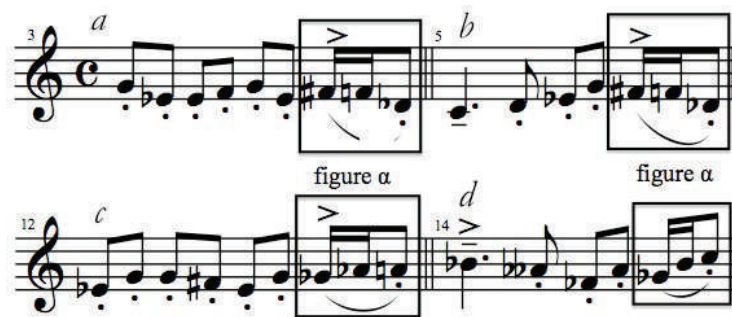


The first *Romanian Dance*, marked *Allegro vivace*, was performed in Paris on at least two occasions before the First World War: the first time during the 1910 *Festival hongrois* as a world premiere and the second time by Szántó on 23

April 1914 at the Salle des agriculteurs. This piece shows the paradigm shift that occurred in Bartók's poetics at the beginning of the twentieth century: as attested by the title of the diptych, these dances are not 'Hungarian' but 'Romanian'. Bartók, who had begun collecting folk songs with Kodály in 1906 in the vast rural territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, soon became fascinated by the Romanian repertoires of Transylvania (his native region). Nevertheless, according to Bartók, these *Romanian Dances* are 'based on original thematic material and not on folk tunes'.²⁹ They constitute a sort of *imagined* or *invented transcriptions*,³⁰ in which 'the composer does not make use of a real peasant melody but invents his own imitation of such melodies'.³¹

Bartók's *Allegro vivace* is in a ternary form (ABA', *Allegro vivace*/Lento/Tempo I) and is based on motif *a* and its derivations³² (EXAMPLE 3).

EXAMPLE 3. Béla Bartók, *Two Romanian Dances* for piano, op. 8a BB 56, no. 1 *Allegro vivace*: four melodic units *a*, *b*, *c* and *d*

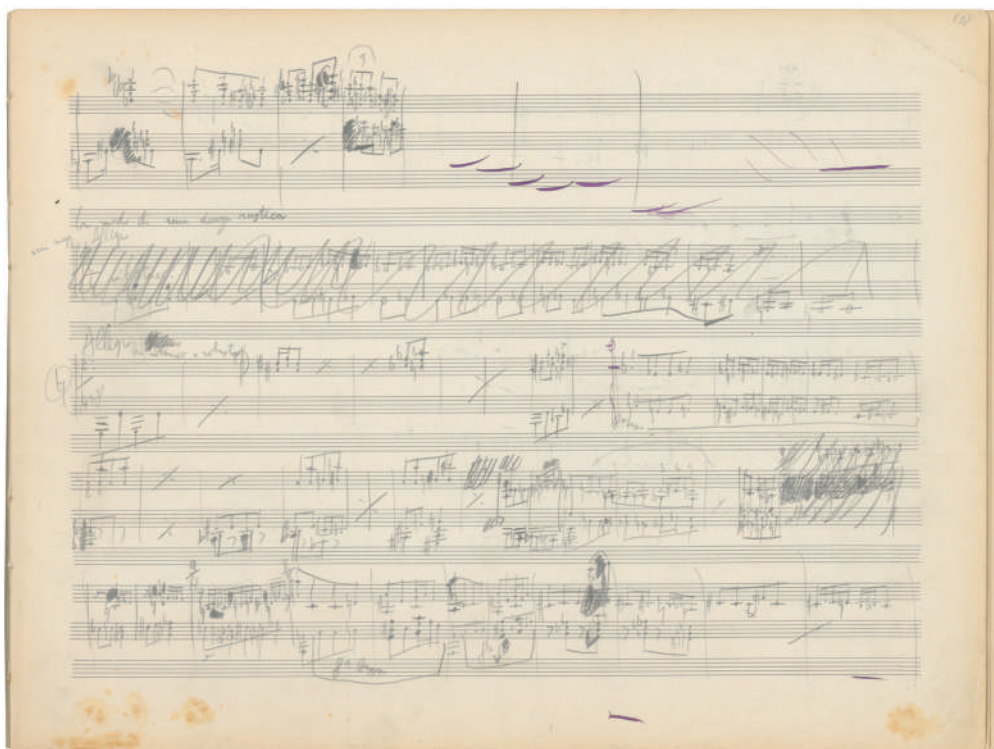


According to Suchoff, the rhythmic schema of *a* and its drone-like accompaniment constitute 'a clone of a Romanian Drâmbă (jew's harp) dance-melody motif'.³³ Furthermore, the descending rhythmic figure (two semiquavers plus a quaver) on the last beat of each bar (figure α), which has a prominent role in the piece, is a 'borrowing from a Romanian jeering song'.³⁴ Bartók derives the unit *b* from *a*. Moreover, *c* and *d* are the approximate inversions of *a* and *b*. As suggested by Cooper, these melodic units appear many times in the outer sections of the piece: they are played in different registers and are transposed to several tonal areas, as if in a 'folk performance'.³⁵ In addition, from a harmonic point of view, the piece is an example of the polymodal chromaticism that Bartók was consciously developing at this time (such as in the *Bagatelles*).³⁶

There are several similarities between Casella's *In modo rustico* and Bartók's *Romanian Dance no. 1*. It is likely that the Italian composer listened to this piece in

1914 and we can even imagine that Casella had access to the printed score (which was published in Budapest in 1910).

FIGURE 2. Alfredo Casella, *Nove pezzi for piano*, op. 24, no. 9 *In modo rustico*: continuity draft, sheet 4r. Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Alfredo Casella



The continuity draft of *In modo rustico*, completed on 16 August 1914 (FAC, Quaderno n. 5, 1916–1916, M. 75, sheet 4r), has a provisional title that is highly allusive: *In modo di una danza rustica* (FIGURE 2). Furthermore, Casella employs the tempo marking *Allegro vivace* and adds the indications ‘ritmico e robusto [rhythmic and robust]’. These references to Bartók’s *Romanian Dance no. 1* are confirmed by musical quotations within the piece (EXAMPLE 4).

EXAMPLE 4. Alfredo Casella, *Nove pezzi for piano*, op. 24, no. 9 *In modo rustico*, bb. 1–28 © 1915, by Ricordi, Milano, 115420

Allegro vivace, ritmico e robusto

figure *a* (*mf*)

mf stacc.

motif *a*

mf marcato

sf (poco)

sf (poco)

motif *a'*

p subito

(sempre stacc.)

motif *a'*

marcato

In modo rustico is built on the obstinate recurrence, in different registers and dynamics, of the aforementioned rhythmic figure *a*. Moreover, motif *a* is used extensively – e.g. bb. 9–10, 23–26. The rhythmic profile is the same, whereas the intervallic profile is slightly different. It is worth noting that *a* also appears in Casella's later piano works: in the third movement (bb. 54–61) of *Sonatina*, op. 28 (1916) and in the first (*Preludio*, bb. 32–34) of *Undici pezzi infantili*, op. 35

(1920). The rhythmic figure α and a derivation of motif a also appear in the fourth of the *Nove pezzi*, entitled *In modo burlesco* (bb. 26–41, right hand. EXAMPLE 5).

EXAMPLE 5. Alfredo Casella, *Nove pezzi* for piano, op. 24, no. 4 *In modo burlesco*, bb. 26–41
© 1915, by Ricordi, Milano, 115420

The musical score for 'In modo burlesco' is presented in three systems. The first system begins with the tempo marking 'vivace e grottesco' and the dynamic 'molto staccato'. The second system includes the instruction '(sempre pp)'. The third system features 'senza rall.' and 'pp'. The piece concludes with a 'lunga' (long) note. The notation is dense, with numerous accidentals and a complex rhythmic structure.

In October 1915, one year after the composition of the *Nove pezzi*, Casella left Paris for Rome. The *Nove pezzi* symbolise this crucial move: they were composed in France (1914) and published in Italy by Ricordi (1915). According to Fontanelli, these pieces came to represent one of the first attempts to reform musical culture in Italy³⁷ or, as Casella put it, to create ‘an art which would be not only Italian but also European in its position in the general cultural picture’.³⁸ The second half of this article will show how Bartók’s music continued to be a major point of reference for Casella as a composer and concert organiser after 1915.

ROME (1915–1925)

In 1917, soon after his return to Rome, Casella was one of the founders of the Società Italiana di Musica Moderna (SIMM). In the following two years, the SIMM gave many concerts of contemporary music (both Italian and foreign) and published a magazine called *Ars nova*. Casella wrote a sort of manifesto of the SIMM in 1918, an article entitled ‘La nuova musicalità italiana’. In this piece, the composer criticises the isolation and autarky of the Italian musical culture and, at the same time, rejects the models of musical nationalism based on the ‘ingenious’ use of folklore, in the manner of Grieg, Rimsky-Korsakov or Albéniz.³⁹ Casella believes that nationality in music is a deeper and ‘imponderabile [imponderable]’ feeling and that the ‘caratteri eterni [eternal characteristics]’ of the ‘spirito italiano [Italian spirit]’⁴⁰ cannot be fully expressed by verismo.⁴¹ Casella also maintains that the fundamental quality of Italian creativity is the ability to produce a ‘classical’ synthesis of the most advanced foreign techniques and styles – such as the ‘audace fantasia degli ultimi ungheresi [daring creativity of the young Hungarians]’.⁴²

Bartók’s music was not featured in the concerts organised by the SIMM. Nevertheless, his name appears in the articles of *Ars nova* and Casella himself makes some references to the piano pieces of the Hungarian composer in his trilingual treatise, *The evolution of music through the history of the perfect cadence*, written in 1919 and published in 1924.⁴³ Moreover, as mentioned before, several piano works composed by Casella during the second half of the 1910s are influenced by Bartók’s poetics. These include the *Sonatina* and the *Undici pezzi infantili*.⁴⁴ Some stylistic similarities have also been noted between Bartók’s ‘Night Music’ pieces and Casella’s *Notturnino*, e.g. the fourth piece of *Pupazzetti*, op. 27a for piano four hands (1915).⁴⁵

Casella’s interest for Bartók’s music is further demonstrated by his theatrical experiences during the war. In 1918, when he was asked by the Futurist painter Fortunato Depero to choose the music for the *Balli Plastici* (an experimental ballet in which machine-like puppets replace human actors and dancers), Casella transcribed several contemporary works for chamber orchestra, including Bartók’s *Bear Dance* (from the *Ten Easy Pieces* for piano BB 51 [1908]). Curiously, the Hungarian was neither mentioned in the programme notes nor in the theatrical posters of the premiere, which took place on 15 April 1915 in Rome. In contrast, the *Bear Dance* (renamed *L’orso azzurro*) was attributed to a non-existent composer called ‘Chemenov’, without Bartók knowing about it.⁴⁶

During the 1920s, knowledge of Bartók’s music began to spread throughout Europe, and Italy was no exception. Bartók’s collaborations with the Vienna-based publishing house Universal Edition and with Egisto Tango – who conducted

In 1922, Casella himself published a review of Bartók's *String Quartet no. 2*, op. 17 BB 75 (1915–1917), in which he exalted its 'semplicità quasi primitiva [quasi-primitive simplicity]'.⁴⁸ In Casella's opinion, this peculiar quality is not a sign of intellectual 'povertà [poverty]'. Bartók's 'semplicità bella [beautiful simplicity]' is an expression of 'chiarezza [clarity]' and sculptural 'rilievo [relief]' and brings to the fore the continuities between the poetics of the Hungarian composer and Casella's latest compositional developments.⁴⁹ According to the Italian composer, Bartók's output also contains some of the most significant examples of polytonal music. In his essay entitled 'Tone-problems of to-day' (1924), Casella quotes an extract⁵⁰ from the opera *Bluebeard's Castle* (1911) in order to show the superposition of two different tonalities (F major and G $\flat$ major), separated by a minor second (EXAMPLES 6 AND 7).⁵¹ As for Bartók, it is worth observing that the Hungarian composer appreciated Casella's music (such as the *Cinque pezzi per quartetto d'archi*) and, in 1921, asked Universal Edition to send the piano reduction of *The Wooden Prince* to Casella.⁵²

(b)

sol b maggy.

fa maggy.

(B. Bartók)

EXAMPLE 7. Béla Bartók, *Bluebeard's Castle*, opera in one act, op. 11 BB 62: vocal score, bb. 45–49 © 1921, by Universal Edition, Wien, UE 13641

al tempo

47

più vivo $\text{♩} = 132$

a tempo $\text{♩} = 116$

Jud.
Jud.

Gib mir auch die an-der-n Schlüssel!
Add i - de a lób - bi kul-csot!

f (Cord.)

molto espr.

p

cresc.

Eventually, in March 1925, Bartók made his first concert tour in Italy as a pianist and composer. The Hungarian musician played his own compositions in Milan (10 March), Rome (12 March), Naples (13 March) and Palermo (13 March). The recitals were organised by the *Corporazione delle Nuove Musiche* (CDNM), a cultural association founded two years earlier by Casella and Malipiero under the mentorship of D'Annunzio. According to Casella, who had left the Italian Society of Modern Music in 1919, the CDNM should have provided a showcase for European avant-garde music. Thanks to the CDNM, Schoenberg conducted *Pierrot Lunaire* in several Italian theatres in 1924 and, furthermore, Stravinsky's *Les Noces* were performed in 1927.

In fact, the correspondence between Casella and Emil Hertzka, the director of Universal Edition, shows that the Italian composer was planning to perform Bartók's chamber music in Rome as early as November 1920.⁵³ Moreover, in April 1922, Casella asked Hertzka for several Bartók's scores: *Two Portraits* for orchestra, op. 5 BB 48b (1907–1911), *Sonatina* for piano, BB 69 (1915), *Five Songs* for voice and piano, op. 16 BB 72 (1916), *String Quartet no. 2*, the vocal score of *Bluebeard's Castle* and the piano reduction of *The Wooden Prince*.⁵⁴ In 1923 Casella tried again to present Bartók's *String Quartet no. 2* to the Italian public, but only succeeded two years later.⁵⁵

The correspondence between Bartók and Casella – now held chiefly at the Bartók Archivum in Budapest and at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (FAC, L.215) – began in the spring of 1924.⁵⁶ On 11 June 1924, on behalf of the CDNM, Casella proposed an Italian concert tour to Bartók to be carried out in 1925.⁵⁷ In his letter, the Italian musician makes reference not only to Bartók's piano pieces, but also to his *Sonatas for Violin and Piano nos. 1 and 2*, BB 84 and 85 (1921, 1922). In his reply (FIGURE 3), Bartók shows his enthusiasm for the project and gives his detailed opinion on the Italian concert programmes.⁵⁸

FIGURE 3. Letter from Béla Bartók to Alfredo Casella, Budapest, 20 June 1924. Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Alfredo Casella

Budapest, Szilágyi tér 4.
20. VI. 1924.

Cher ami,

malheureusement je n'ai reçu que votre "Sonatine" (mille remerciements !) — votre lettre contenant l'indication de la "Casa Tebarca" n'est pas arrivée ! D'abord j'étais bien embarrassé, mais enfin j'ai trouvé un assez bon hôtel à Venise : l'Hotel Métropole.

Quant au concert que vous me proposez, je suis bien content de pouvoir débiter à Rome dans votre "Corporation". L'époque entre ^{le} 15 fevr. et 15 mars me convient très bien. Je suis d'avis qu'il serait mieux de ne pas joindre à ce concert le 2. quatuor, et n'avoir un programme qu'avec mes œuvres pour piano la 2. sonate pour piano et violon, et 4 ou 5 "Chants populaires hongrois" (leur texte sont traduits en allemand).

Que c'est que vous pensez : dois-je mettre au programme aussi quelquesunes de mes piano-compositions "folkloristiques", comme ma "Sonatine" ou les "Danses roumaines

populaires ? Ou bien ne jouer que des œuvres originales ?
 J'espère que madame Munk-Vio à laquelle j'ai
 répondu immédiatement après avoir reçu sa lettre,
 réussira à me procurer quelques engagements dans
 les autres villes. Je réserve donc l'espace entre le
 15. fevr. et le 15. mars pour cette tournée en Italie ; je
 voudrais bien apprendre les dates définitives aussi tôt
 que possible.
 Mille amitiés de votre
 Béla Bartók

Casella's ambitious project was fully realised in March 1925. Moreover, at the beginning of that month, Bartók's recitals were preceded by the concerts of the Amar-Hindemith Quartet, which played Bartók's *String Quartet no. 2* in Rome, Naples and Milan. It is also worth noting that, on 12 March, the Hungarian

musician played together with Giovanni Chiti (violin), Gitta Lénárt (voice), Amleto Fabbri (cello) and Casella (piano) during a chamber music evening in Rome devoted not only to his works but also to contemporary Italian repertoire (Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Veretti).

EPILOGUE: 'A CULTURAL MONUMENT FOR HUNGARY'

From the early 1910s onwards, Bartók's music represented a valuable source of inspiration and comparison for Casella. This process of reception, which culminated in Bartók's first Italian concert tour of 1925, paved the way for the success of the Hungarian composer in fascist Italy. Indeed, despite his hostility to fascist violence, up to the end of the 1930s Bartók made many piano tours in Mussolini's Italy and his compositions were broadcast by the Italian radio and included on the syllabuses of Italian conservatoires. In addition, all of his masterpieces were performed in the most important Italian festivals and theatres, such as the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, BB 116 (premiered at Venice's Festival of Contemporary Music in 1937), *Bluebeard's Castle* (Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, 1938), the *Sonata for two Pianos and Percussion*, BB 115 (Venice, 1939) and the ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*, BB 82 (Teatro alla Scala, 1942).⁵⁹

Finally, on 28 November 1946, fourteen months after Bartók's death in New York, an entire symphonic concert was dedicated to the composer and broadcast by the Italian radio (Rete Rossa). The concert featured the Italian premieres of Bartók's *Concerto for orchestra*, BB 123 (1943) and *Piano Concerto no. 1*, BB 91 (1926). Before the event, Casella gave a commemorative speech, ending with an apotheosis of the Hungarian composer:

Béla Bartók experienced an immense sorrow when he came to know that his homeland had been occupied and destroyed by a blind and cruel war. But, on closing his eyes, he was aware that he had spent his "earthly life" well and, above all, that he had raised, through his art, a cultural monument for Hungary that could not be destroyed by any war or any human tragedy.⁶⁰

This was probably Alfredo Casella's last public speech. He died less than four months later, on 5 March 1947.

Appendix

Béla Bartók's compositions known by Alfredo Casella before 1925

Bartók's composition	Date of composition (C), world premiere (WP), first edition (FE)	References in Casella's output, correspondence and publications	
		Description	Date
<i>Two Portraits</i> for orchestra, op. 5 BB 48b	C: 1907–1911 WP: 1911 (Budapest) FE: 1911 (Budapest, Rozsnyai Károly)	On 20 April 1922, Casella sent a letter to Universal Edition (Emil Hertzka) in order to ask for the score of the <i>Two Portraits</i> (FAC, L.1818).	1922
<i>Fourteen Bagatelles</i> , op. 6 BB 50	C: 1908 WP: 1908 (Baden/Vienna) FE: 1909 (Budapest, Rozsnyai Károly)	Presumed influence on Casella's 1910s piano pieces. On 12 March 1910, Bartók played his <i>Fourteen Bagatelles</i> at the Hotel des Modes, Paris.	early 1910s
<i>Ten Easy Piano Pieces</i> , BB 51, no. 7 <i>Dawn</i>		Dawn (bb. 21–34) constitutes example no. 83 of the following treatise: Alfredo Casella, <i>The evolution of music through the history of the perfect cadence</i> , London: Chester, 1924. The first version of the manuscript was completed in 1919 (FAC, S.82).	1919
<i>Ten Easy Piano Pieces</i> , BB 51, no. 9 <i>Finger Study</i>	C: 1908 WP: 1909 (Budapest) FE: 1909 (Budapest, Rozsnyai Károly)	The fifth, <i>Omaggio a Clementi (esercizio per le cinque dita)</i> , of Casella's <i>Undici pezzi infantili</i> for piano, op. 35 could have been inspired by the ninth, <i>Finger study</i> , of Bartók's <i>Ten Easy Piano Pieces</i> .	1920
<i>Ten Easy Piano Pieces</i> , BB 51, no. 10 <i>Bear Dance</i>		In 1918, Casella transcribed Bartók's <i>Bear Dance</i> for chamber orchestra (flute, oboe, clarinet BH, bassoon, horn F, trumpet B♭, strings without double bass) and renamed it <i>L'orso azzurro</i> . This transcription was used for the <i>Balli Plastici</i> and premiered on 15 April 1918 in Rome.	1918
<i>String Quartet no. 1</i> , op. 7 BB 52	C: 1908–1909 WP: 1910 (Budapest) FE: 1911 (Budapest, Rózsavölgyi és Társa)	The members of the SMI (including Casella) discussed the possibility of performing Bartók's <i>String Quartet no. 1</i> in Paris in 1913. See the letter that Florent Schmitt sent to Igor Stravinsky on 21 January 1913, quoted in: Francesco Fontanelli, <i>Casella, Parigi e la guerra. Inquietudini moderniste da Notte di Maggio a Elegia eroica</i> , Torino: Albisani e De Sono, 2015, p. 45. Waldbauer Quartet performed Bartók's <i>String Quartet no. 1</i> in Paris in 1911.	1913

<i>Two Romanian Dances</i>, op. 8a BB 56, no. 1 <i>Allegro vivace</i>	C: 1909–1910 WP: 1910 (Paris) FE: 1910 (Budapest, Rózsavölgyi és Társa)	The recurring motif of Bartók's <i>Allegro vivace</i>, from the first of his <i>Two Romanian Dances</i>, is quoted in several 1910s piano pieces by Casella: - <i>Nove pezzi</i> for piano, op. 24, no. 4 <i>In modo burlesco</i> and no. 9 <i>In modo barbaro</i>; 1914 (op. 24) - <i>Sonatina</i> for piano, op. 28, III, <i>Finale. Allegro molto</i>; 1916 (op. 28) - <i>Undici pezzi infantili</i> for piano, op. 35, no. 1 <i>Preludio</i> 1920 (op. 35) Bartók's <i>Two Romanian Dances</i> were performed in Paris on 12 March 1910 by Bartók and on 23 April 1914 by Theodor Szántó.
<i>Four Dirges</i> for piano, op. 9a BB 58, no. 4 <i>Assai andante</i>	C: ca 1909–1910 WP: 1911 (Budapest) FE: 1912 (Budapest, Rózsavölgyi és Társa)	<i>Assai andante</i> (bb. 63–70), from Bartók's <i>Four Dirges</i>, constitutes example no. 84 of the following treatise: Alfredo Casella, <i>The evolution of music through the history of the perfect cadence</i>, London: Chester, 1924. The first version of the manuscript was completed in 1919 (FAC, S.82). 1919
<i>Bluebeard's Castle</i>, opera in one act, op. 11 BB 62	C: 1911 WP: 1918 (Budapest) FE: vocal score – 1921; full score – 1925 (Vienna, Universal Edition)	On 14 May 1922, Casella sent a letter to Universal Edition in order to ask for the vocal score of <i>Bluebeard's Castle</i> (FAC, L.1819). 1922 (letter) Casella makes reference to the vocal score of <i>Bluebeard's Castle</i> (rehearsal number 47) in one of his essays: Alfredo Casella, 'Problemi sonori odierni', <i>La prora</i>, 1/1, 1924, pp. 5–18: 16. 'Problemi sonori odierni' was written in the summer of 1923. It was translated into English in 1924: Alfredo Casella, 'Tone-problems of to-day', <i>The Musical Quarterly</i>, trans. by Theodore Baker, X/2, 1924, pp. 159–171. 1924 (article)
<i>Allegro barbaro</i> for piano, BB 63	C: 1911 WP: 1913 (Kecskemét, Hungary) FE: 1913 (<i>Nyugat</i>, VI/1)	Presumed influence on Casella's piano and chamber pieces: 1914 (op. 24) - <i>Nove pezzi</i> for piano, op. 24 (1914), no. 2 <i>In modo barbaro</i>; 1920 (op. 34) - <i>Cinque pezzi per quartetto d'archi</i>, op. 34 (1920), no. 1 <i>Preludio</i> ('Allegro vivace e barbaro').
<i>Sonatina</i> for piano, BB 69	C: 1915 WP: 1920 (Bratislava) FE: 1919 (Budapest, Rózsavölgyi és Társa)	On 20 April 1922, Casella sent a letter to Universal Edition in order to ask for the score of the <i>Sonatina</i> (FAC, L.1818). 1922
<i>Five Songs</i> for voice and piano, op. 16 BB 72	C: 1916 WP: 1919 (Budapest) FE: 1923 (Vienna, Universal Edition)	On 20 April 1922, Casella sent a letter to Universal Edition in order to ask for the score of the <i>Five Songs</i> (FAC, L.1818). 1922

<i>The Wooden Prince</i> , ballet in one act, op. 13 BB 74	C: 1914–1917 WP: 1917 (Budapest) FE: piano reduction – 1921; full score – 1924 (Vienna, Universal Edition)	On 11 July 1921, Bartók asked Universal Edition to send the piano reduction of <i>The Wooden Prince</i> to Casella (letter held at the Bartók Archivum, Budapest).	1921 or 1922
		On 20 April 1922, Casella sent a letter to Emil Hertzka (Universal Edition) in order to ask for the piano reduction of <i>The Wooden Prince</i> (FAC, L.1818).	
<i>String Quartet no. 2</i> , op. 17 BB 75	C: 1914–1917 WP: 1918 (Budapest) FE: 1920 (Vienna, Universal Edition)	Presumed influence on Casella's <i>Cinque pezzi per quartetto d'archi</i> , op. 34 (1920).	
		Casella was planning to organise a performance of Bartók's chamber music in Rome as early as November 1920. See the letter that Casella sent to Universal Edition on 22 November 1920 (FAC, L.1795).	1920 (op. 34)
		In 1922, Casella published a review of Bartók's <i>String Quartet no. 2</i> : Alfredo Casella, 'Recensioni', <i>Il pianoforte</i> , III/1, 1922, pp. 28–31.	1922 (review)

Notes

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- * This article is a result of my six-month archival research (from August 2015 to February 2016) at the Istituto per la Musica of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia). I would like to thank Gianmario Borio, Angela Carone and Francisco Rocca for their praiseworthy scientific support. I am also particularly grateful to Ben Earle, Francesco Fontanelli, Malcolm Gillies, Gaja Maestri and Sally Davies for their suggestions.
- 1 Virág Büky and Maria Grazia Sità, 'Bartók e l'Italia. Viaggi, contatti, concerti', *Fonti Musicali Italiane*, XVIII, 2013, pp. 119–175; Nicolò Palazzetti, "Il musicista della libertà." L'influenza di Béla Bartók nella cultura musicale italiana degli anni Quaranta e Cinquanta del Novecento', *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, L, 2015, pp. 147–197; Nicolò Palazzetti, 'The Bartók myth. Fascism, modernism and resistance in Italian musical culture', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, XLVII/2, 2016, pp. 289–314; Maria Grazia Sità, 'Gli esordi bartókiani di Donatoni (via Guido Turchi)', in: *Franco Donatoni. Gravità senza peso*, a cura di Candida Felici, Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2015, pp. 91–114.
- 2 *Alfredo Casella. Gli anni di Parigi. Dai documenti*, a cura di Roberto Calabretto, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki (Studi di musica veneta, 25), 1997.
- 3 Raffaele Pozzi, 'Jeunesse et indépendance: Alfredo Casella et la Société musicale indépendante', *Musica e storia*, IV, 1996, pp. 325–348.
- 4 Justine Comtois, *Nationalisme et cosmopolitisme chez Alfredo Casella (1883–1947)*, Doctoral Dissertation in Music, History and Society, EHESS/University of Montreal, 2011, p. 77.
- 5 Alfredo Casella, 'L'avenir musical de l'Italie', *L'Homme libre*, 8 September 1913, w.p.
- 6 Comtois, *Nationalisme et cosmopolitisme*, pp. 61–62.

- 7 Alfredo Casella, *I segreti della giara* [1938], a cura di Cesare De Marchi, Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2016 (first edition Firenze: Sansoni, 1941); Alfredo Casella, *Music in my time. The memoirs of Alfredo Casella*, trans. by Spencer Norton, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.
- 8 Mila De Santis, 'Casella nel ventennio fascista', in: *Italian music during the fascist period*, ed. by Roberto Illiano, Turnhout: Brepols, 2004, pp. 371–400: 399.
- 9 Casella, *Music in my time*, p. 106.
- 10 Francesco Parrino, *Between the avant-garde and fascist modernism: Alfredo Casella's aesthetics and politics*, Doctoral Dissertation in Musicology, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2006, p. 27. See also John C. G. Waterhouse, 'Continuità stilistica di Casella', in: *Musica italiana del primo Novecento. La generazione dell'80*, a cura di Fiamma Nicolodi, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1981, pp. 63–82.
- 11 Francesco Fontanelli, *Casella, Parigi e la guerra. Inquietudini moderniste da Notte di Maggio a Elegia eroica*, Torino: Albisani e De Sono, 2015, p. 76.
- 12 Casella, *Music in my time*, p. 111.
- 13 Casella, *Music in my time*, p. 105.
- 14 Casella, *Music in my time*, p. 110.
- 15 Alfredo Casella, 'La saison 1913–14 (suite)', *L'Homme libre*, 15 June 1914.
- 16 See Denijs Dille, 'L'Allegro Barbaro de Bartók', *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* XII/1–4, 1970, pp. 3–9: 4–5.
- 17 See, for instance, Émile Vuillermoz, 'L'édition musicale', *Le Temps*, 3 December 1920, p. 4.
- 18 Judit Frigyesi, 'How barbaric is Bartók's forte?', in: *The string quartets of Béla Bartók. Tradition and legacy in analytical perspective*, ed. by Dániel Péter Biró and Harald Krebs, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 200–242: 216.
- 19 Casella, *Music in my time*, p. 111.
- 20 Pierre Lalo, 'La musique', *Le Temps*, 31 August 1910, w.p.; Amédée Gastoué, 'Causerie musicale. L'année Händel (1909–1910)', *Le Mois littéraire et pittoresque*, 12, 1910, pp. 627–634.
- 21 Letter from Florent Schmitt to Igor Stravinsky, 21 January 1913, in: Fontanelli, *Casella, Parigi e la guerra*, p. 45.
- 22 Roberto Calabretto, 'Alfredo Casella a Parigi. Un musicista italiano di adozione francese', in: *Alfredo Casella. Gli anni di Parigi*, pp. v–xxv.
- 23 Sándor Kovács, 'La jeune école hongroise', *Revue Musicale SIM*, VII/11, 1911, pp. 47–64: 48, 56.
- 24 Franz Liszt, *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie*, Paris: Librairie Nouvelle/A. Bourdilliat, 1859.
- 25 Kovács, 'La jeune école hongroise', p. 57.
- 26 Lynn M. Hooker, *Redefining Hungarian music from Liszt to Bartók*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 235.
- 27 'Nous y voyons les germes d'un art national, attendu, espéré depuis longtemps. Nous trouvons, en sa hardiesse révolutionnaire, la révolte de nos héros, qui depuis mille ans se défendent contre les Barbares'. Kovács, 'La jeune école hongroise', p. 59.
- 28 The relationship between Casella's *In modo rustico* and Bartók's *Two Romanian Dances* was first mentioned in John A. Krebs' Doctoral Dissertation: *Alfredo Casella's solo piano music. A descriptive survey with emphasis on elements of stylistic change and continuity*, Doctoral Dissertation in Musicology, University of Maryland, 1991, p. 115. See also Nicolò Palazzetti, "'Nature and mystery." The influence of Bartók's night music in Italy', *Analitica*, VIII, 2015, gatm.it/analitica/aojs/index.php/analitica/article/view/123/126

- 29 Béla Bartók, 'Introduction to *Béla Bartók Masterpieces for the Piano* (1945)', in: *Béla Bartók essays*, ed. by Benjamin Suchoff, London: Faber & Faber, 1976, pp. 442–433: 432.
- 30 The expression is mine and is derived from the world-famous concepts developed by the historians Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso, 2006 (first edition 1983); *The invention of tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. See also Jean-François Boukobza, *Bartók et le folklore imaginaire*, Paris: Cité de la musique, 2015.
- 31 Béla Bartók, 'The influence of peasant music on modern music (1931)', in: *Béla Bartók essays*, pp. 340–344: 343.
- 32 David Cooper, *Béla Bartók*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015, p. 101.
- 33 Benjamin Suchoff, 'Fusion of national styles: Piano literature, 1908–11', in: *The Bartók companion*, ed. by Malcolm Gillies, London: Faber & Faber, 1993, pp. 124–145: 134.
- 34 Suchoff, 'Fusion of national styles', p. 134.
- 35 Cooper, *Béla Bartók*, p. 100.
- 36 Firstly, the pitches from the first two melodic units, *a* and *b*, 'can be seen to emerge from the overlapping of the lower five notes of the Phrygian (C–D $\flat$ –E $\flat$ –F–G) and Lydian (C–D–E–F $\sharp$ –G) modes on C'. Secondly, 'the four units *a–d* together fill almost the entire chromatic space and only the pitch B, which is a focus of the middle section, is missing'. See Cooper, *Béla Bartók*, p. 101.
- 37 'tentativo di riforma culturale'. Fontanelli, *Casella, Parigi e la guerra*, p. 187.
- 38 Casella, *Music in my time*, p. 223.
- 39 Alfredo Casella, 'La nuova musicalità italiana', *Ars nova*, II/2, 1918, pp. 2–4: 4.
- 40 E.g. 'grandiosità [greatness]', 'severità [severity]', 'concisione [conciseness]', 'pienezza plastica [sculptural fullness]', 'equilibrio architettonico [architectural balance]'. Casella, 'La nuova musicalità italiana', p. 4.
- 41 Casella, 'La nuova musicalità italiana', p. 4.
- 42 Casella, 'La nuova musicalità italiana', p. 4.
- 43 Alfredo Casella, *The evolution of music through the history of the perfect cadence*, London: Chester, 1924. The first version of the manuscript was completed in 1919 and is kept in the FAC, S.82. Two musical examples featured in the treatise, no. 83 and 84, derive from Bartók's piano music: the seventh, entitled *Dawn*, of *Ten Easy Piano Pieces*, BB 51 (1908) and the fourth, *Assai andante*, of *Four Dirges* for piano, op. 9a BB 58 (1909–1910).
- 44 In the unpublished report of my Doctoral Dissertation in Music, History and Society "*Le musicien de la liberté*". *Le reception de Béla Bartók en Italie* (presented during the viva voce examination, which was held on 1 September 2017 at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris), Ben Earle suggests that *Omaggio a Clementi (esercizio per le cinque dita)*, the fifth of Casella's *Undici pezzi infantili*, could be interpreted as an 'imitation' of the ninth, *Finger study*, of Bartók's *Ten Easy Piano Pieces*.
- 45 Palazzetti, "Nature and Mystery"; Francesco Fontanelli, 'Casella prima della "chiarificazione"'. La musica della notte degli anni 1913–1918', *Studi musicali*, VIII/2, 2017, pp. 405–462.
- 46 'We heard that the *Bear Dance* was orchestrated and performed somewhere behind our back; we don't know where exactly, but we suspect that it happened in Italy... these things happen only in Italy!'. Letter from Márta Ziegler to Paula Voit, 16 November 1920, in: Béla Bartók, *Családi levelei*, ed. by Béla Bartók jr. and Adrienne Gombocz-Konkoly, Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1981,

- pp. 308–309. See also Luisa Curinga, ‘Le musiche per i *Balli Plastici* di Fortunato Depero’, in: *Musiche e immagini degli anni Dieci* (DVD), a cura di Guido Salvetti, Milano: Società Italiana di Musicologia 2013, w.p.
- 47 Béla Bartók, ‘Lettera da Budapest’, *Il pianoforte*, II/5, 1921, pp. 153–154; ‘Della musica moderna in Ungheria’, *Il pianoforte*, II/7, 1921, pp. 193–197; ‘Lettera da Budapest’, *Il pianoforte*, II/9, 1921, pp. 277–278.
- 48 Alfredo Casella, ‘Recensioni’, *Il pianoforte*, III/1, 1922, pp. 28–31: 29.
- 49 Casella, ‘Recensioni’, p. 29.
- 50 I would like to thank Ben Earle for his help in the identification of this extract.
- 51 Alfredo Casella, ‘Problemi sonori odierni’, *La prora*, I/1, 1924, pp. 5–18: 16. The essay was written in the summer of 1923. See also Alfredo Casella, ‘Tone-problems of to-day’, *The Musical Quarterly*, trans. by Theodore Baker, X/2, 1924, pp. 159–171.
- 52 Unpublished letters (in German) from Béla Bartók to Universal Edition, 18 July and 25 August 1921 (Bartók Archivum, Budapest), quoted in Büky and Sità, ‘Bartók e l’Italia’, p. 140.
- 53 Unpublished letter (in French) from Alfredo Casella to Emil Hertzka (Universal Edition), 22 November 1920 (FAC, L.1795).
- 54 Unpublished letters (in French) from Alfredo Casella to Emil Hertzka (Universal Edition), 20 April and 14 May 1922 (FAC, L.1816, L.1819).
- 55 Unpublished letter (in French) from Alfredo Casella to Emil Hertzka (Universal Edition), 1 January 1923 (FAC, L.1826).
- 56 As regards the organisation of Bartók’s first Italian tour, see also Büky and Sità, ‘Bartók e l’Italia’, pp. 140–144 and 161. An unpublished letter (in French) from Alfredo Casella to Béla Bartók (15 April 1942) is held in the Béla Bartók Holding at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel.
- 57 Letter from Alfredo Casella to Béla Bartók, 11 June 1924, in: *Documenta bartókiana*, III, ed. by Denijs Dille, Budapest and Mainz: Akadémiai Kiadó and Schott, 1968, p. 120.
- 58 Unpublished letter from Béla Bartók to Alfredo Casella, 20 June 1924 (FAC, L.215). A draft of the letter was already published in: *Documenta bartókiana*, III, p. 274.
- 59 See Nicolò Palazzetti, ‘Bartók against the Nazis. The Italian premieres of *Bluebeard’s Castle* (1938) and *The Miraculous Mandarin* (1942)’, in: *The Routledge companion to music under German occupation, 1938–1945. Propaganda, myth and reality*, ed. by Erik Levi and David Fanning, London: Routledge, 2018, forthcoming.
- 60 ‘Nel caso Bartók poi, egli deve avere provato l’immenso dolore di sapere la propria patria invasa e mezza distrutta da una guerra cieca e feroce. Ma non gli sarà però mancata – chiudendo gli occhi – la suprema serenità di avere bene speso la sua “giornata terrena”, soprattutto la certezza di avere innalzato all’Ungheria, colla sua arte, un monumento che nessuna guerra, nessuna vicenda umana potrà mai distruggere’. Alfredo Casella, ‘In memoria di Béla Bartók’, in: Alfredo Casella and Roman Vlad, *In memoria di Béla Bartók*, Roma: Biblioteca dell’Accademia Italiana d’Ungheria, 1947, pp. 5–8: 7–8. See also, Alfredo Casella, ‘Béla Bartók, o la morte in esilio’, *Cosmopolita. Settimanale di vita internazionale*, 11 October 1945.