



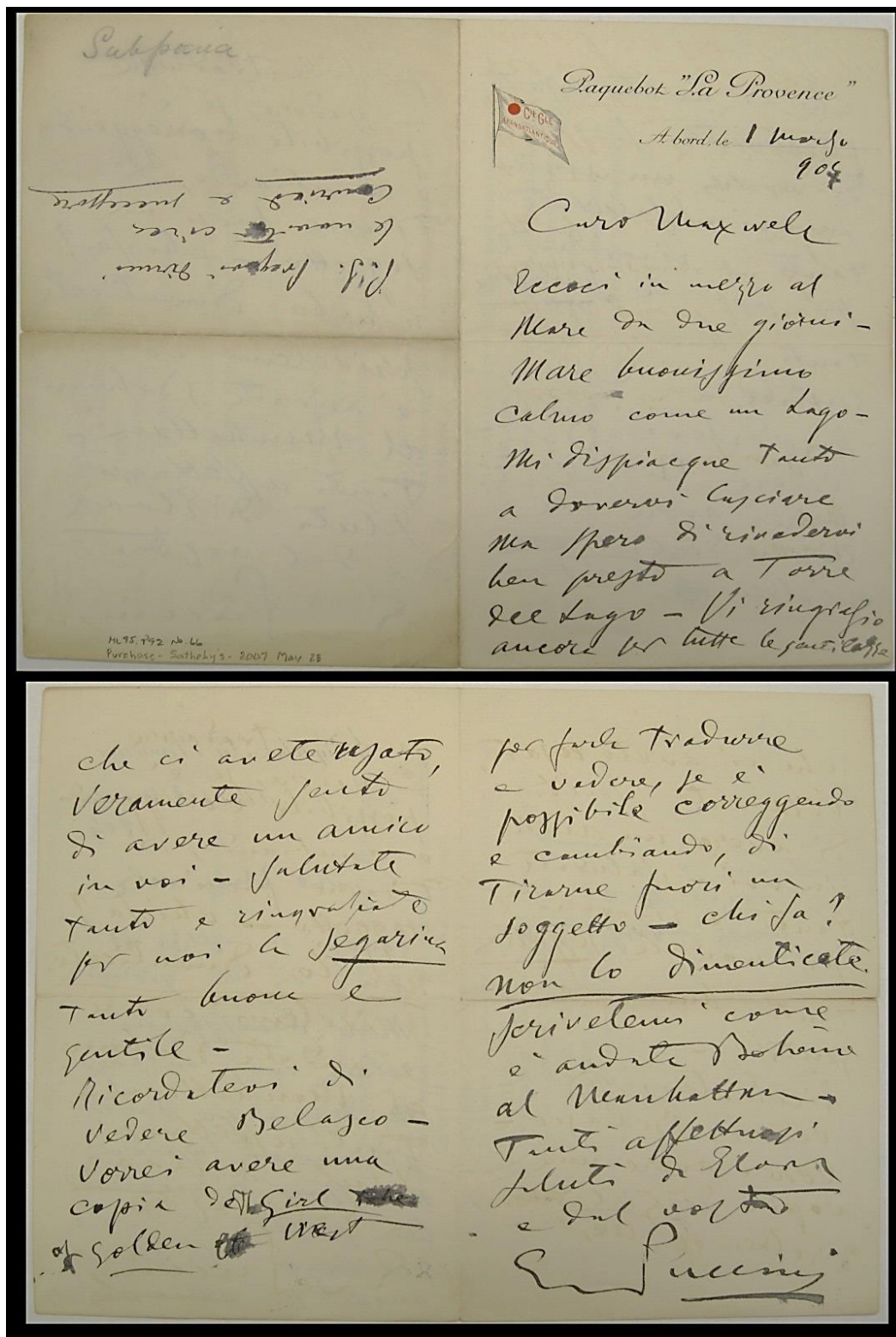
GIACOMO PUCCINI, AMEDEO BASSI, ALBERTO BIMBONI: TUSCAN CONNECTIONS IN AMERICAN MUSIC

BARBARA BOGANINI
(CAMERATA STRUMENTALE «CITTÀ DI PRATO»
AND ICAMUS - THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR AMERICAN MUSIC)

As already stressed by Davide Ceriani, when dealing with the influence of Italian composers and performers in the US in the very early 20th century, the highlight always appears to be Giacomo Puccini, in particular his “American Opera,” *La Fanciulla del West*, which was in 1910 the first Italian opera based on an entirely and authentically American subject. The drama, drawn from the play by David Belasco (San Francisco 1853 - New York 1931), *The Girl of the Golden West*, defines the entrance of the Far West and gold-seekers in the operatic literature.

Puccini first saw Belasco’s play during his stay in New York between January 9 and February 28, 1907, and his interest in the subject was immediate, as evident from the letter addressed to George Maxwell (Ricordi’s New York representative) written on board of the Paquebot “La Provence,” while returning to Europe on March 1st.¹

¹ Barbara Boganini, *Puccini, the U.S. and the Years of “La Fanciulla.” 2nd Edition - Illustrated*, ICAMus 2012; <http://www.icamus.org/en/archive/puccini-us-and-years-la-fanciulla-unpublished-correspondence-tra/> See Appendix A, p. 38.



Giacomo Puccini, Letter to George Maxwell, March 1st, 1907. The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, DC. In Barbara Boganini, *Puccini, the U.S. and the Years of “La Fanciulla.” 2nd Edition - Illustrated*, ICAMus 2012; <http://www.icamus.org/en/archive/puccini-us-and-years-la-fanciulla-unpublished-correspondence-tra/>

At the time of the genesis of *La Fanciulla del West*, exoticism was a fundamental ingredient in theater. Puccini, pursuing a modernization of musical and theatrical language, showed interest in American music traditions and was a pioneer in choosing a dramatic subject that had not yet found its way into Italian opera. Within a context of increasing popularity of the early American Western silent film, the novelty of Belasco's drama deeply struck the composer.²

La Fanciulla shows many interesting features; among them, the contact between the Italian composer and the American world, which occurred mainly through the subject, as we said. The influence and inspiration of American folk music and popular music on Puccini and his “American Opera”, *La Fanciulla del West*, has developed into a major line of research,³ still offering the opportunity for new discoveries and insights. It is a fascinating exploration, from which many elements emerge revealing the intense relationships, at the beginning of the twentieth century, between Italy and the United States,⁴ and specifically between Tuscany and the United States.

After the final choice of the subject for his new opera, which would premiere at the Metropolitan of New York on December 10, 1910, Puccini studied numerous American music publications, both of folk music and popular music. By the term “folk music,” we refer here to traditional Native American music, in the style of the transcriptions and arrangements that became largely popular at the time, adapted for educational and amateur purposes. This type of music was published at the beginning of the twentieth century by Wa-Wan Press, an American publishing company founded in 1901 by composer Arthur George Farwell,⁵ on the wave of the rising interest for ethnomusicological research. I will here consider in particular a notable collection published by Wa-Wan Press, *The Traditional Songs of the Zuñis*.

Puccini's source of one of the opera principal musical theme is a melody of the Zuñi Indians, *The Festive Sun-dance*, in this arrangement by Carlos Troyer.⁶

² Helen Greenwald, “Realism on the Opera Stage: Belasco, Puccini, and the California Sunset,” in *Opera in Context: Essays in Historical Staging from the Late Renaissance to the Time of Puccini*, Ed. Mark A. Radice (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1998): 279–96. See also Roger A. Hall, *Performing the American Frontier, 1870–1906* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

³ Annie J. Randall and Rosalind Gray Davis, *Puccini and the Girl: History and Reception of “The Girl of the Golden West”* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Allan W. Atlas, “Belasco and Puccini: ‘Old Dog Tray’ and the Zuñi Indians,” *The Musical Quarterly* 75, No. 3 (1991): 362–98; Linda B. Fairtile, “‘Real Americans Mean Much More’: Race, Ethnicity, and Authenticity in Belasco's *Girl of the Golden West* and Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*,” *Studi pucciniani* 4 (2010): 89–101.

⁴ Davide Ceriani, “Opera as Social Agent: Fostering Italian Identity at the Metropolitan Opera House during the Early Years of Giulio Gatti-Casazza's Management, 1908–1910,” in *Music, Longing, and Belonging: Articulations of the Self and the Other in the Musical Realm*, ed. Magdalena Walingóska (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 114–34.

⁵ Arthur George Farwell (1872–1952). Gilbert Chase and Neely Bruce, *Farwell, Arthur*, in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie, Eds. (London: MacMillan; New York: Groves Dictionaries of Music, 1986). Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York and London: Norton, 2001), 438–39; Michael V. Pisani, *Imagining Native America in Music* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 228–29.

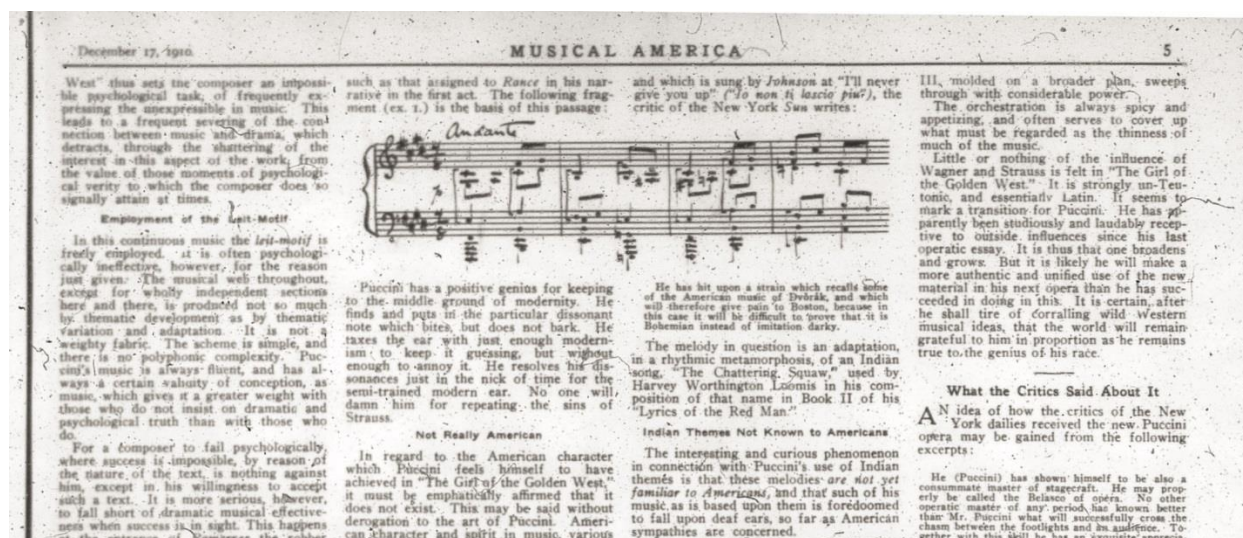
⁶ *Traditional Songs of the Zuñis*, Second Series: Transcribed and Harmonized by Carlos Troyer (Newton Center, Mass.: The Wa-Wan Press, 1904). Barbara Boganini, *Un caso di assimilazione: gli Indiani Zuñi, Troyer e Puccini. Analisi della citazione creativa di “The Festive Sun-dance” nella “Fanciulla del West”*, ICAMus 2011.



Traditional Songs of the Zuñis, Second Series: Transcribed and Harmonized by Carlos Troyer (Newton Center, Mass.: The Wa-Wan Press, 1904); illustrated Cover Page.

By the term “popular music”, we refer to original music by American composers, both from the time of *La Fanciulla*’s action (mid-19th century) and from the time of the performance of Belasco’s play and Puccini’s opera. Such body of music dates from the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century; those pieces were composed and published for entertainment purposes, both for private and social occasions, and both for professional and amateur users.

Puccini’s score is a kaleidoscope of musical exoticisms which recall and are inspired by American music through the songs by major authors like Stephen Collins Foster, George M. Cohan,⁷ and even by the musical heritage of Native Americans although it is the Native music filtered from a late-romantic perspective that was accessible to the Italian composer. However, Puccini’s style did not directly originate from ethnomusicological interests, since he was not interested in reproducing a background *tout-court* for his opera, or even in representing an identity. Rather, the combination of diverse cultural elements and musical sources, and their re-creation in an assimilatory process show the international stature of the Tuscan composer, who evidently shared certain compositional orientations inspired by the investigations about the American musical past. The expectations for an “American” opera by Puccini, fomented by the publicity machine in full swing, contributed to the debate over the identity of American music, as evidenced by the many chronicles and reviews of the time, whether they adhere to Puccini’s intentions or not.⁸



Section of Arthur Farwell’s article on *La Fanciulla del West*, in *Musical America* 13, No. 6, December 17, 1910, 5.

⁷ Stephen Collins Foster (1826-1864); George Michael Cohan (1878-1942). Charles Hamm, *Yesterday. Popular song in America* (New York-London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), 201-27, 311-17; Gilbert Chase, *American’s Music* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1955), 628-29.

⁸ “Writes American Music himself, but Puccini does not know MacDowell”, *Musical America* 13, No. 3, November 26, 1910; “True Americanism in Puccini Score?”, *Musical America* 13, No. 5, December 10, 1910; “The Music of Puccini’s Opera – Arthur Farwell Discusses Results of Composer’s Efforts to Create a Score Which Truly Reflects Western Life in America”, *Musical America* 13, No. 6, December 17, 1910, 4-5. Farwell’s extensive, detailed comments were part of a major coverage (5 full pages) featured in the December 17, 1910 issue of *Musical America*.

2

MUSICAL AMERICA

November 26, 1910.

WRITES AMERICAN MUSIC HIMSELF, BUT PUCCINI DOES NOT KNOW MACDOWELL

"Coon Songs" Occur First to Mind of Italian Composer When American Music Is Mentioned—Here for Production of "The Girl of the Golden West"

Sure that Music in His New Opera Reflects Spirit of America, and Particularly of the West, Which He Has Never Visited—Has Invented Own Themes

IN the sitting room of the suite, occupied by Giacomo Puccini at the Hotel Knickerbocker, New York, stands a grand piano. The grand piano is never closed, and upon its music rack stands a score of the most recent emanation from the composer's mind: Now, if you are a Puccini enthusiast, and are consumed with burning curiosity as to whether the "Girl of the Golden West" is really more wonderful than report has made it, all you need do is to find some reasonable excuse for calling upon the composer. With him you will find Tito Ricordi, of the Milan publishing house, a most obliging personage, who will be only too happy to seat himself at the instrument and give you a foretaste of some of the things you will hear at the Metropolitan on December 6—providing you can get in. Mr. Puccini will seat himself close by and occasionally help out the pianist by singing the vocal parts, meanwhile scanning the face of the listener to see what kind of an impression it all makes.

Matters are different when you come to question Mr. Puccini. Loquacity is not one of his strong points, and while he is willing to answer queries he seldom vouchsafes any information not absolutely required. Here again Mr. Ricordi saves the situation, so that one soon begins to turn instinctively to him for enlightenment on all things. He apparently knows as much about the opera and about the circumstances attending the creation of every bar of its music as does the composer himself. Moreover, he speaks an excellent English—a language with which his distinguished friend is still totally unfamiliar—and a far better French than the latter.

As is already known, the fashioning of the libretto of the "Girl," "Fanciulla," or whatever you choose to call it, took much longer than did that of the music, which required only eighteen months. The much-mooted question regarding the identity of its authors was settled definitely by Mr. Puccini on the occasion of an interview with a representative of *MUSICAL AMERICA*. "It is the work of Zangarini and Civini," he said. "There were only two authors, and not three as has so often been erroneously stated. And it is not true that Illica had a hand in it."

The changes made from Signor Belasco's play have already been made public, but on the whole they do not alter the original to any great extent. When I first saw the piece played I decided in very short time that it was just the sort of thing I was looking for, even though, on account of

Giacomo Puccini, photographed on his arrival in America, and the theme of "homesickness" from his new opera, "The Girl of the Golden West." This theme was sketched especially by Mr. Puccini for *MUSICAL AMERICA*. In the lower right hand corner is G. Viator's cartoon of Puccini's arrival reproduced from the New York "Morning Telegraph."

my unfamiliarity with English, I was unable to get the meaning of the text. The dramatic situations told me all I needed to know.

"For this drama I have composed music that, I feel sure, reflects the spirit of the American people and particularly the strong, vigorous nature of the West. I have never been West, but I have read so much about it that I know it thoroughly, and have lived the feelings of my characters so intensely that I believe I have hit upon the correct musical portrayal of them.

With very few exceptions I have borrowed no themes. All practically are of my own invention. It is American music, though Puccini at the same time."

"Here is an illustration of its American character," said Mr. Ricordi, opening the score. And he played a theme that, while not exactly partaking of the vulgarity of ragtime, was plainly the outcome of a study of popular music of a pronounced syncopated rhythm. Mr. Ricordi explained that it occurred near the beginning of the opera upon the entrance of the children.

Then came further illustrations of the opera's "Americanisms." The composer lent his assistance by singing the voice parts in an animated and enthusiastic fashion. He sang a part of the *Minstrel's* entrance, the Postman's song, and one of *Minstrel's* airs, after which Mr. Ricordi proceeded to illustrate the manner in which the rough vigor of the West was portrayed in a broad, square-cut theme of Indian character, harmonized with bold dissonances. In the *Minstrel* theme Puccini seems to have caught the genuine Stephen Foster flavor, though his harmonies have their own individual coloring. Of course, the unmistakable "Puccinisms" of the type that have won him so much favor are not found wanting, and once in a while an echo of Debussy makes itself heard in the accompaniments. The "theme of homesickness" which Mr. Puccini wrote down and which is herewith reproduced is a Zuni Indian tune and has been used by Carlos Troyer in his "Festive Sun Dance of the Zunis."

The *Minstrel*, as is already well known, sings "Old Folks at Home" in the first act. I have also used a certain Indian theme," declared the composer, "and find that the same one has been treated in one of the short piano pieces of Harvey Worthington Loomis. But, on the whole, I have written entirely original music. The more American it seems, the better."

All of which naturally led to the subject of such American music as has been written by others than Mr. Puccini.

"Are you familiar with the works of American composers?" he was asked.

"Do you mean coon songs?" came the answer.

Informed to the contrary, he looked doubtful. The name of MacDowell was mentioned, but, after three or four repetitions, Mr. Puccini evinced no sign of recognition.

"But do his works really reflect the spirit and character of the American people?" asked Mr. Puccini dubiously, after learning for the first time that an American composer called MacDowell had produced compositions on "American soil." And the expression on his face led one to infer that he considered such a thing more or less of an impossibility.

He did remember eventually that he had once "heard some *lieder*," that were the work of an American, though no names accompanied the information. Besides, he had just previously mentioned the name of Loomis and subsequently remembered that of Farwell.

But, however all these things may be, Giacomo Puccini is satisfied that he has written American music himself. *Gaudemus igitur?* H. F. P.

TO START BRANCH OF MUSIC SOCIETY

Pittsburg Composers Organizing—Symphony Orchestra on Brief Tour

PITTSBURG, Nov. 22.—A branch of the American Music Society is to be organized by prominent Pittsburg musicians. Steps to this end were taken at a recent meeting in the studio of Silas G. Pratt. All composers in the city will be brought into the organization, and the first gathering was exclusively of the city's composers.

The Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra played a number of out-of-town engagements last week and everywhere was well received. Large crowds welcomed the orchestra at Franklin, Warren and elsewhere. Christine Miller, Pittsburg's famous contralto, was the soloist at Warren and Franklin, and her appearance at both places won her new laurels.

Charles Heinrich, city organist at Carnegie Music Hall, yesterday played a popular program. His numbers included such offerings as Mendelssohn's "Midsummer

PIANIST FRIEDHEIM HERE FOR A TOUR

One of Liszt's Favorite Pupils Arrives for Concert Appearances in America

Arthur Friedheim, who was one of Liszt's favorite pupils and a close personal friend of the great composer, will make a tour of America this season. Friedheim's first visit to this country was in 1904, when he gave a series of historical recitals in the principal cities with distinct success.

Mr. Friedheim, who is German, traveled extensively after finishing his work with Liszt and continued his studies in Rome and Weimar. On the death of Anton Seidl, Friedheim was invited to succeed him as conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, but his position as director of the Royal Musical Conservatory at Manchester, England, made it necessary to refuse the offer.

It was shortly after this invitation that Friedheim found it was possible to come to this country, where his recognition was immediate and gratifying. Those who re-

member him say that Friedheim was a remarkably well-balanced pianist, musically. He has technique, interpretative gifts of the highest order, and his performances are characterized by finish and a well-governed temper.

Friedheim has won recognition as a composer. He has written among other compositions an opera entitled "The Dancing Girl," which was successfully performed in Cologne. He has also written a piano concerto which he hopes to play while in this country.

Mr. Friedheim comes primarily for a long tour in Canada, but which will extend into the United States. His first appearance here will be in a piano recital in Mendelssohn Hall on Saturday afternoon, December 17, under the management of the Quintan International Musical Agency.

To Banish Hats from Boston Concert

Boston, Nov. 17.—War has been declared upon the custom of women in wearing hats at the Boston Symphony Orchestra concerts and rehearsals, which has been in effect since time immemorial by the feminine portion of Boston's ultra-fashionable set. The management of Symphony Hall has been informed that in the future they should see to it that the patrons of the symphony rehearsals and concerts observe the anti-hat wearing ordinance. The Mayor issues the license for Symphony Hall, and can revoke it any time that he discovers that the management is not enforcing the laws and ordinances.

MUSICAL AMERICA

Vol. XIII. No. 5 NEW YORK EDITED BY *John C. Frank* DECEMBER 10, 1910 \$2.00 per Year
Cents per Copy

TRUE AMERICANISM IN PUCCINI SCORE?

Albert Mildenberg, in Critical Review of New Opera, "The Girl of the Golden West," Finds Remarkable National Traits in Music—How the Composer Has Utilized Folk Music

By Albert Mildenberg, the American Composer and Pianist

Two years ago, while living in Milan, I enjoyed the privilege of listening to the first motif of the music of the "Girl of the Golden West" that was put to paper, and now as the complete score lies before me I find this motif unchanged and in reality the basis of the most passionate outburst of the entire score and surrounded by wonder upon wonder of tonal beauty.

I fear that many of the reviewers of this masterpiece will resort to the usual technical terms to clothe their descriptions of the work or attempt to classify the composition in some way or another. If they do they will fail, for Puccini did not write this work like any thing that he has ever written before, nor because any other composer has written any other composition in any particular way or according to any set form.

To Belasco, the creator of this beautiful succession of pictures and the gripping story, it must be a double joy, to feel that like Boito when sitting at the right hand of Verdi, whose brain conceived those works by which we have judged all grand opera for over fifty years, Belasco now at the right hand of Puccini has created the epoch that marks the birth of grand opera on an American subject. A greater combination of talents can not be imagined and no more perfect realization of the result could be demanded by the most exacting of critics.

Art, knowing no country, clime nor race and having no creed but truth and the reflection of God and nature in man—whether his life was ushered in to the music of the crashing-cataracts and the soft ozone of the mighty pines of our Sierras—or that he breathed first the perfumed winds from the olive depths, the nespoli, magnolia or fig trees of sunny Fuscany—to music perhaps not so fierce but to music.

Puccini has reached across from his shack nestled in the olive groves of the Tuscan hills, across the vast ocean and over the Rockies down into the valley of the Yuba river and in his flight has not missed the scream of the eagle, the trembling, crashing roar of the old river that cut a six-mile gorge through the granite backbone of the American continent, nor has the plaintive little song of the blue jay escaped him as she sits aloft on some rocking mast of a mighty pine of the Redwood, as it rises aloft digging jagged holes into the clouds.

Some will say that Puccini has blazed a new trail—no, not a new trail—for that trail is as old as the world. It is nature's trail—let us follow upon it, get the rhythms and march on and tune our ears and souls to the same note. It is as if Puccini had transferred to every page of this beautiful work the smell of the pine, and like the huge wild moose—forcing his head and shoulders through the thick underbrush—stands alert with twigs, leaves, damp moss and cobwebs hanging from his bristling fur and the sweet green smell of the wild wood steaming from his sinewy body.

Who will question Puccini's form of writing? We know he is a studied man—



MME. LYDIA LIPKOWSKA
Russian Prima Donna Who Has Won a Popular Following as a Member of the Boston Opera Company. (See page 6)

SCHARWENKA AGAIN PLAYS IN NEW YORK

After Long Absence Noted German Pianist Shows Himself as Artist Rather than Virtuoso

It is presumable that Xaver Scharwenka would like to be able to give a piano recital without playing his famous "Polish Dance," but it is equally probable that it is impossible for him to do so. At all events, when he played the first few chords of it near the end of his recital at Mendelssohn Hall, New York, on Saturday afternoon, December 3, the audience broke into an uproar and he into a broad smile simultaneously. The program of his recital was as follows:

Chopin, Fantasia, op. 40, F Minor; Liszt, A. Ricordanza, b. Mephisto Waltz; Beethoven, Sonata, op. 17, F Minor (Appassionata); Xaver Scharwenka, a. Theme and Variations, op. 48, b. Novellette, op. 22, c. Spanish Serenade, op. 63; Two Polish Dances, op. 15 and op. 31; Staccato Etude, op. 27.

Scharwenka is a pianist who has a big command of his resources, and these are, in the main, intellectual grasp and technique. Playing in the manner of the older German school, without the freely swung arm of the Leschetizky epoch, he plays with a certain heaviness of manner, which, while it may take away something of the quality of elasticity, lends his playing an aspect of solidity and authority.

His playing is further re-enforced by a splendid rhythmic power. There is delicacy also in Scharwenka's playing, but a delicacy of a rather staid nature. Perhaps the most satisfactory thing about the playing of this artist is that it is nature; the listener may be absolutely confident that he will hear only a mature, balanced and reflective interpretation.

The Chopin "Fantasia" was played with dramatic perspective, but was somewhat lacking in poetry. The pianist lent distinction to both of the Liszt pieces—to the first in his management of the delicate harp effects, and to the second by a peculiarly velvety tone effect in the passage upon which it would seem that Wagner drew for his Paris version of the "Bacchanale" from "Tannhauser."

The Beethoven sonata was Mr. Scharwenka's best work. Here the mature artistic vision of the pianist came to the front to compel admiration for his broad and forceful interpretation.

Of his own compositions, the "Theme and Variations" was the most ambitious. The theme, itself, is of rich quality, and the work throughout is structurally ingenious in a high degree. A light staccato movement is one of the most original and pleasing of the Variations, and the transition to the last variation is poetic. It is difficult to see the necessity for new sets of variations based on the old plan. Thematic development has advanced so much of late, and the color possibilities of music have so greatly advanced, also, that there seems little reason to-day for variations which do not reflect later musical development.

A spirited and Viennese-sounding "Novelletto" and a very charming "Spanish Serenade," which the pianist-composer was obliged to repeat, were both very pleasing. The pianist did not repeat his famous "Polish Dance" despite the deafening applause, but went right into the closing "Staccato Etude," a refreshing and brilliant work. A large bunch of chrysanthemums was presented to the somewhat embarrassed pianist.

Daily press comments:

Mr. Scharwenka's playing is musically sincere, and has the high intelligence of a master of his instrument, who has taken thought about his art. It does not often strike the eye or kindle the imagination of his listeners; and yet it can be brilliant and dashy, as it was in Liszt's diabolically clever Mephistophelian waltz.—Times.

Mr. Scharwenka's piano compositions are almost invariably melodious, clear and symmetrical in form, and perfectly adapted to the utterance of the instrument. They are furthermore most congenial to his own charmingly smooth and fluent style of performance.—Sun.

Mr. Scharwenka to-day is more artist than virtuoso, a pianist symphonist rather than brilliant in the modern and technical way.—World.

a master of all that has gone before in the art of composition, and those who will try to trace the form of his work by the measure and rule of textbook will be disappointed. Hereby is not the word to express his contempt for the conventionalities of so-called rules.

Puccini has used the same scale that the wind is tuned to, when it screams and howls over the chilled peaks of Alaska's icy mountains. His intervals are the bounding, thumping bass notes of falling boulders from lofty jagged crags down into bottomless gorges cleft by angry nature, and yet that order of things, of all things, is present here. He gives us the roar of the torrent. He gives us also the sob of the homesick boy, and when those tones rise up from the orchestra your tear ducts will open and will fall a quivering drop that will say to you as tender a message as a mother's prayer ever carried to her boy in the mines. Chopin's tenderest mood has not reached such depths. The melancholy of that sobbing melody as it floats out over the muted strings with the interruption of the pastoral figure of short staccato chords at odd and unlooked for periods of the phase carries it over the mountain valleys to the soul yearning and waiting; will swell every breast of the audience to tears and make the past a painful memory.

As in "Tosca" Puccini leaps into the atmosphere of the work in the very first phrase. The harp with a fortissimo arpeggio leads the way up to a succession of crashing chords that might easily represent the roar of the tumbling waters of

(Continued on page 35.)

Entered at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., as matter of the Second Class

Article on *La Fanciulla del West*, in *Musical America* 13, No. 5, December 10, 1910, 1.

In any case, the reciprocal influences and inspirations arising from the widespread discussion on these issues should be recognized as an important cultural enrichment, not only at the historical and musicological level.

After the first performance of *La Fanciulla del West* at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York on December 10, 1910, lead by Arturo Toscanini, with the famous singers Emmy Destinn as Minnie, Enrico Caruso in Dick Johnson's role and Pasquale Amato as the Sheriff Jack Rance, the opera made its successful debut in other cities in North America.

This was possible thanks to important opera companies engaged in those years in a “virtuous” competition with the Metropolitan.

One of the most important was the Chicago Grand Opera Company, that was born following the example of the Manhattan Opera House, the competitor company of the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

The principal maker of the success of the Chicago Company was certainly the Italian conductor Cleofonte Campanini (1860-1919), who showed broad musical horizons and organizational skills, matured during his experience with the Manhattan Opera Company, which he himself had contributed to create.

In Chicago, in addition to outstanding artistic masses - orchestra and choir - Campanini assembled a talented cast, guaranteeing high-level opera performances.

From a chronicle of an overseas theatrical magazine, in this case an Italian periodical, *L'Arte Melodrammatica*, we read:

... The Chicago Grand Opera Company is not the usual team of a few brilliant singers with many mediocre artists ... But its greatest strength comes from the number of young artists with excellent qualities that put all the enthusiasm in their interpretations.”⁹

Among the prominent singers of the Chicago Opera Company was Amedeo Bassi.

⁹ *L'Arte melodrammatica*, Anno VII - No. 133, Milano, 16 marzo 1911.



Amedeo Bassi in a photographic portrait by Mario Nunes Vais (1856-1932), 1912; print on canvas, Museo Amedeo Bassi, Montespertoli (Florence); original print at Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, Rome.

The Italian tenor was born in Montespertoli (Florence) in 1872 from a humble family of farmers. He was exceptionally gifted, and thanks to intense commitment, he made his debut in the small Tuscan town of Castelfiorentino in 1897, and then in prestigious Florentine theaters, where in 1898 he obtained a personal success in the role of the Duke of Mantua in Verdi's *Rigoletto*.



Original poster of *Rigoletto*, Teatro Pagliano (currently Teatro Verdi), Florence, March 1898, featuring Bassi's Florence debut. Archivio Storico Teatro Regio, Turin; reproduced by permission.

Engagements with important Italian and international theaters quickly followed. In 1903, we find him in the summer-fall season of several South American theaters, and on December 19, 1906, he made his debut, conducted by Campanini, at the Manhattan Opera House in New York, the new theater built by Oscar Hammerstein (1847-1919). Amedeo Bassi's journey towards celebrity, from the Tuscan countryside to the

European, South American and North American theaters, was thrillingly impressive, and what strikes more is the artist's sensibility and awareness of the importance of his own art. Bassi's contribution to the Italian art of singing was considerable; his role was emphasized by many American reviews praising not only the beauty and effectiveness of his voice but also his skills as interpreter and actor. Traditionally such features were highly considered in the US; these combined elements would later become essential qualities in modern theatrical productions, such as the American musical comedy. In addition to the musical quality of his performances, also in this respect we can consider Bassi as a truly modern performer.¹⁰

10

MUSICAL AMERICA

December 24, 1910.

AMADEO BASSI

ESTABLISHED AT ONCE AS A FAVORITE TENOR IN CHICAGO

SOME NEWSPAPER EXCERPTS IN EVIDENCE:

"AIDA"

If the Chicago Opera Company has many tenors whose art is as fine and whose voice is as sonorous as that of M. Bassi it may, indeed, be counted among the lucky organizations of the earth. Good tenors are almost as scarce as the do-do. When Mr. Bassi, of the Boston Opera, came with his company to Chicago last season he told a harrowing tale of the almost insupportable difficulty of discovering tenors for his troupe. Mr. Dippel has evidently been more fortunate. If Bassi is a sample of the vocalists whose voices have yet to be set forth.

Mr. Bassi is a tenor of the robust school. The searching lyricism of such a singer as Mr. Dippel is not his to command, but his voice, big and thrilling, is on occasions colored with softer tints. His first opportunity came, as it comes to all tenors who sing the famous measures of "Aida," in the "Crisis Aida" of the opening act. This number, the most difficult in all the range of opera, was excellently done. It would, perhaps, have been further improved by a larger installment of that more business quality of lyrical tone previously referred to, but Mr. Bassi did admirably things with the air, and brought out his high note at the end with the ringing sonority beloved of opera audiences.

In the scene at the gate before Thelus the tenor presented a charming picture, as he appeared in his panoply, a flaming sun of burnished brass behind his head and a scintillating coat of mail upon his breast.—*Record-Herald.*

The latter Amadeo Bassi came as a delightful surprise. The boyish freshness of his voice gave little hint at first of the resources it developed as the evening progressed. It met each demand as it came after climax was passed without effort, with its same youthful freshness unimpaired and its sympathy and warmth of tone unswayed by any indication of effort. It is quite the most comfortable tenor who has recently interpreted this trying role and he came in for a large share of the approval of the public.—*Chicago Tribune.*

But it remained for Amadeo Bassi to rouse his auditory to the realization that they were listening to a performance far above the ordinary. His "Crisis Aida" was voiced with beautiful tones; his style was sincere and distinguished by good taste; his effective rendering of the great favorite created between the company and the audience a feeling of sympathy to replace the apprehension natural to such functions.—*Inter-Ocean.*

Amadeo Bassi has a surprisingly good voice, with plenty of youthful enthusiasm to back it and a smile that will never down, even in his sterner moments. He surprised and gratified as Rhadames and shared honors with his towering associate.—*Daily News.*

It would be an extremely accomplished artist who could have improved on Bassi's portrayal of the unhappy Rhadames. It would be difficult to find an artist who combines singing and acting in such a uniform degree of excellence. Moreover, and this is no small matter in making the role enjoyable, he looked the part. The great role of the part "Crisis Aida" comes early in the first act. There is no doubt, however, that Rhadames in this

one song effectively dispelled any doubts as to his ability. It was very nobly sung, and the rest of the role was performed even better. Bassi has a very winning smile in acknowledging applause. It should have been given to a prima donna and not wasted on a mere man. He that so, it may, there was occasion for it to be much in evidence during the evening, and Bassi may be declared to have secured a real success.—*Chicago Journal.*

"MADAME BUTTERFLY"

In the role of Pinkerton Mr. Bassi made a further addition to his versatile efforts. He sang the music with some charm of voice, but in the love songs of the first act—and all his most important opportunities occur in this—he appeared to be suffering from an antipathy to the tender passion, which emotion, abhorrently harkened as it is, is not without its value to the interpreters of opera.—*Record-Herald.*

Amadeo Bassi appeared as Pinkerton, and in his song the credit of thoughtful preparation. The new tenor proved himself to be a dependable member of the company. In the role of Suzuki was Giuseppe Giannini, who rendered worthy assistance to the other principals.—*Daily News.*

"PAGLIACCI"

Sharing the honors with Sammarco was Amadeo Bassi in the role of Ciccio. Here again was a great treat in singing. In fact, his performance of the "Lament" at the end of the first act was more than singing. It was an expression of the living, suffering man, in so far as opera singing can express life. An opera is a highly artificial medium, but Bassi comes into it defying its limitations.—*Daily News.*

Mrs. Osborn-Hannah repeated her success of Saturday evening in the role of Nedda, and Mr. Bassi's singing of the "Hill Fugitive" again made a splendid climax and earned him many rounds. This able young tenor promises to be one of the most attractive and popular artists of the company. The youthful freshness of his voice, that impressed so favorably on the opening evening, is by no means the only quality of his art that recommends him to the affection of the public. He has that marked dramatic talent which is so frequently the heritage of Italian blood, and his pleasing personality will make him many friends.—*Chicago Tribune.*

"TOSCA"

The Cavaradossi of Amadeo Bassi was a good performance, although not at all the equal of his Carlo in "Pagliaccio." But his great, warm tenor voice charmed last evening whenever there was a chance for him to sing a little connected phrase; his acting, especially in the second act, was commendable.—*Inter-Ocean.*

There should be a special word about the singer setting of the second act, a room as we have seen in the Fornace Palace, complete in all its appointments. Also the last act, where both Miss Krenzelow and Mr. Bassi reached the highest point in dramatic singing that they have either of them reached this season, and they have already reacted high.—*Chicago Examiner.*



—Photo by Nature, Chicago

AMADEO BASSI

Cavaradossi has had rather short shift in the past as to tenors, but last night Mr. Bassi was cast for the part and did it well. He has youth and the freshness of it about his action and his voice. He throws himself into all he does and proves again the truth that there is peculiar charm about the earnestness of the man who is making his reputation and has still the joy of success undimmed by too much past glory. He has won his spurs, but not so long ago that he has grown tired of them, so he gives his whole self to his audience, and they respond to him. The second act he played with more complete realization of its dramatic possibilities than any we have seen here.—*Chicago Evening Post.*

"LA BOHEME"

Rodolfo gives a man a chance to sing if it be in him, which Mr. Bassi did in most enjoyable fashion. His "accout" in the first act he did so well, with such beauty of tone, so much intensity, including the high C, that the audience tried to have him repeat it, and in the third act his voice was fine. There is an earnestness in what he does; he puts himself so completely into the part that he makes himself a sympathetic personality to his hearers.—*Evening Post.*

Amadeo Bassi's singing of the music of Rodolfo was one of the best things which so far he has done. He permitted the belief that the tenor is of all Mr. Dippel's collection the most useful and the most versatile. It certainly brought much pleasure to the ear; for he is in possession of a voice of so little charm and he uses it with uncommon effectiveness. His recital in the first act brought rapturous applause.—*Record-Herald.*

"LA BOHEME"

In which Mrs. Melba elected to return to the playhouse her friends in this city, was interesting last evening mainly by reason of the fiction and the work of Amadeo Bassi, in the role of Rodolfo. The good opinion, recorded of this singer earlier in the season, made justification with almost every performance.—*Inter-Ocean.*

Last evening as Rodolfo, his real caliber could be gauged and he was more than equal to the role. He is young and has certain handsome traits in his depiction of the poet which appeals to us. He is suave and gentle and so far his singing of the music is in much more within the range of his voice. He gave the narrative in the first act with vocal charm and in the act at the barrier he sang with feeling and warmth. He dresses the role in an unconventional manner and he makes a very good appearance in this new-fangled character of Bohemian.—*Examiner.*

The most important manifestation of the new disposition was voiced in Amadeo Bassi, the young tenor, who gave a new and valuable vocalization as well as surprising attention to the part of Rodolfo, making it really the best thing that has marked his surprising progress this season. He revealed his power in the recital of the first act and built upon this foundation with a subtlety and power that was surprising, compensating the difficulties of the last act with a fervor that was impressive.—*Daily News.*

Page on Amadeo ("Amadeo") Bassi, *Musical America* 12, No. 7, December 24, 1910, 10.

¹⁰ "Established at Once as Favorite Tenor in Chicago", *Musical America* 13, No. 7, December 24, 1910.

Among the highlights in Bassi's career was Puccini's music and, in particular, *The Girl of the Golden West*. After the New York premiere, *La Fanciulla* debuted in Chicago on December 27, 1910 with Bassi as Johnson, Carolina White as Minnie and Maurice Renaud as Sheriff Rance, conducted by Cleofonte Campanini. Tito Ricordi, Puccini's music publisher, attended that production and was much impressed by Bassi's performance. Puccini telegraphed the artist of Montespertoli the following words: “I warmly congratulate you, and thank you for the success of Fanciulla del West. Yours Sincerely. Puccini.”



Amedeo Bassi as Dick Johnson. Photographic proofs of *La Fanciulla del West*, Chicago production, 1911.
Archivio Storico Teatro Regio, Turin; reproduced by permission.

After the *Fanciulla's* tour with the Chicago Opera Company in numerous US cities, Amedeo Bassi succeeded Enrico Caruso at the Metropolitan Opera House on March 2, 1911, in the production conducted by Toscanini, making his debut in the most important New York theater. There were great expectations for his Dick Johnson performance, after the news of his successes in the West. Moreover, Bassi's appointment was a challenge, since his only predecessor in the same role was the “Italian Divo”, Caruso, who was a star of the Metropolitan.

The chronicles of the main newspapers tell us that expectations were not disappointed and Bassi’s success much increased his popularity.¹¹



Amedeo Bassi as Dick Johnson in *La Fanciulla del West*, from the 1911 Chicago production photographic proofs. Archivio Storico Teatro Regio, Turin; reproduced by permission.

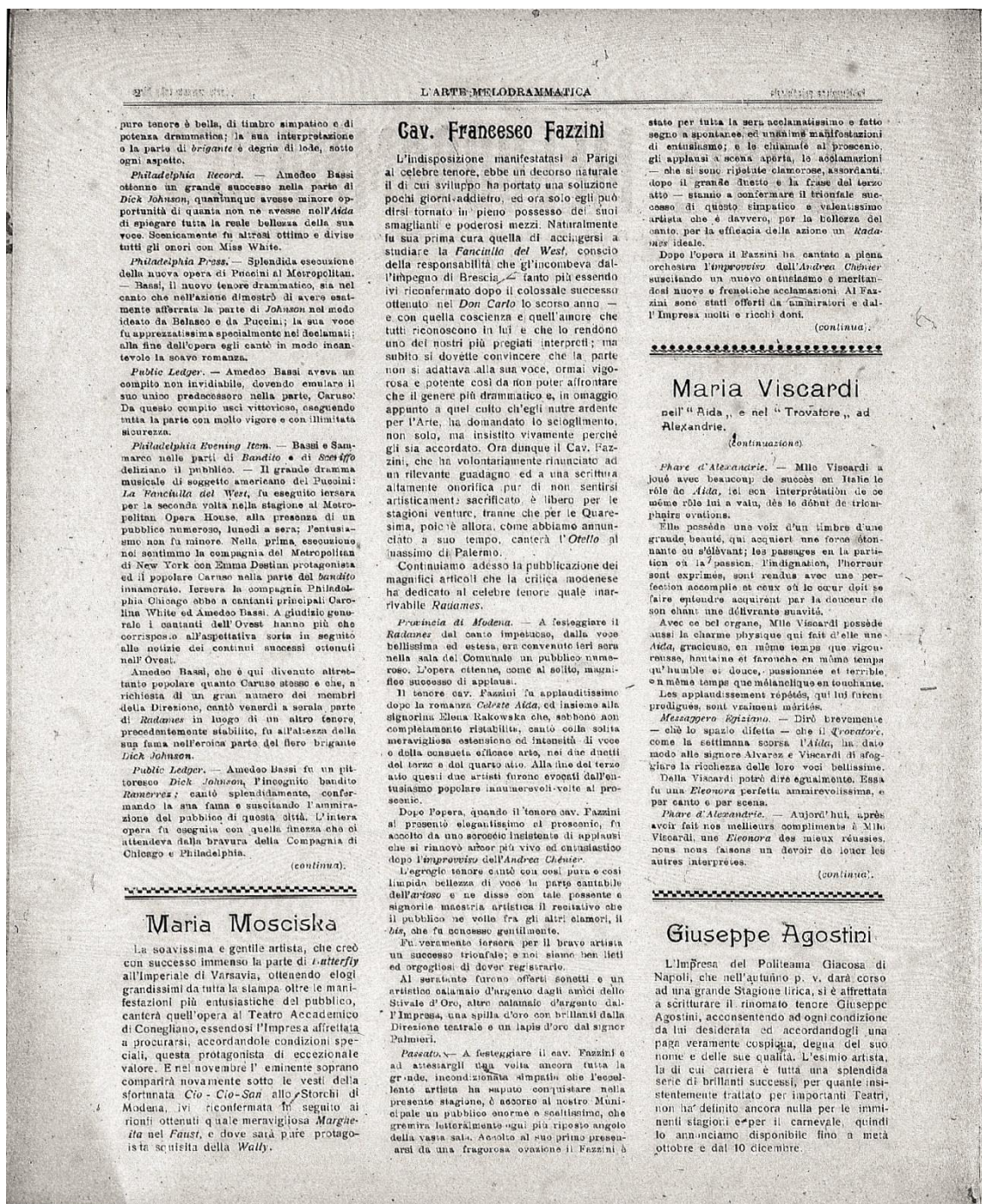
Interestingly, he is acknowledged not only as a performer but also as valuable “collaborator” of Puccini and Belasco for his musical performance and dramatic interpretation.¹²

¹¹ *L'Arte melodrammatica*, Anno VII – No. 133, Milano 16 Marzo 1911 and No. 140, Milano, 1 Agosto 1911.

¹² *L'Arte melodrammatica*, Anno VII – No. 145, Milano, 1 Novembre 1911.



Article celebrating Amedeo Bassi, *L'Arte melodrammatica*, Anno VII – No. 133, Milano, 16 Marzo 1911 and No. 140, Milano, 1 Agosto 1911 (Part 1).



Maria Mosciska

La soavissima e gentile artista, che creò con successo immenso la parte di *latterfly* all'Imperiale di Varsavia, ottenendo elogi grandissimi da tutta la stampa oltre le manifestazioni più entusiastiche del pubblico, canterà quell'opera al Teatro Accademico di Conegliano, essendosi l'Impresa affrettata a procurarsi, accordandole condizioni speciali, questa protagonista di eccezionale valore. E nel novembre l'eminente soprano comparirà novamente sotto le vesti della sfortunata *Cio-Cio-San* allo Storch di Modena, ivi riconfermata fu seguito ai ricami ottenuti quale meravigliosa *Margherita* nel *Fanciullo*, e dove sarà pure protagonista nella *Wally*.

Cav. Francesco Fazzini

L'indisposizione manifestatasi a Parigi al celebre tenore, ebbe un decorso naturale di cui sviluppo ha portato una soluzione pochi giorni addietro, ed ora solo egli può dirsi tornato in pieno possesso dei suoi smaglianti e poderosi mezzi. Naturalmente fu sua prima cura quella di accingersi a studiare la *Fanciulla del West*, consolo della responsabilità che gli incombeva dall'impegno di Brescia, tanto più essendo ivi riconfermato dopo il colossale successo ottenuto nel *Don Carlo* lo scorso anno — e con quella coscienza e quell'amore che tutti riconoscono in lui e che lo rendono uno dei nostri più pregiati interpreti; un subito si dovette convincere che la parte non si adattava alla sua voce, ormai vigorosa e potente così da non poter affrontare che il genere più drammatico e, in omaggio appunto a quel culto che egli nutre ardente per l'Arte, ha domandato lo scioglimento, non solo, ma insistito vivamente perché gli sia accordato. Ora dunque il Cav. Fazzini, che ha volontariamente rinunciato ad un rilevante guadagno ed a una scrittura altamente onorifica pur di non sentirsi artisticamente sacrificato, è libero per le stagioni venturose, frange che per le Quaresime, poiché allora, come abbiamo annunciato a suo tempo, canterà l'*Otello* al Massimo di Palermo.

Continuiamo adesso la pubblicazione dei magnifici articoli che la critica modenese ha dedicato al celebre tenore quale inarrivabile *Radames*.

Provincia di Modena. — A festeggiare il *Radames* dal canto impetuoso, dalla voce bellissima ed estesa, era convenute ieri sera nella sala del Comune un pubblico numeroso. L'opera ottenne, come al solito, magnifico successo di applausi.

Il tenore cav. Fazzini fu applauditissimo dopo la romanza *Colate Alga*, ed insieme alla signorina Emma Bakovska che, sebbene non completamente ristabilita, cantò colla solita meravigliosa estensione ed intensità di voce e della consueta efficace arte, nei due duetti del terzo e del quarto atto. Alla fine del terzo atto questi due artisti furono evocati dall'entusiasmo popolare innumerevoli volte al processo.

Dopo l'opera, quando il tenore cav. Fazzini al prosonto elegantissimo al prosonto, fu accolto da uno scroscio insistente di applausi che si rinnovò ancora più vivo ed entusiastico dopo l'improvviso dell'*Andrea Chénier*.

L'egregio tenore cantò con così pura e così limpida bellezza di voce la parte cantabile dell'*Arturo* e ne disse con tale possente e signorile maestria artistica il risultato che il pubblico ne volle fra gli altri clamori, il *bis*, che fu concesso gentilmente.

Fu veramente forsara per il bravo artista un successo trionfale; e noi siamo ben lieti ed orgogliosi di dover registrarlo.

Al serbatoio furono offerti sonetti e un aristocratico calice d'argento dagli amici dello Stivale d'Oro, altro calice d'argento dall'Impresa, una spilla d'oro con brillanti dalla Direzione teatrale e un lapis d'oro dal signor Palmieri.

Passato. — A festeggiare il cav. Fazzini e ad accorgersi che volge ancora tanta la grande, incondizionata simpatia che l'eccezionale artista ha saputo conquistare nella presente stagione, è accorso al nostro Municipale un pubblico enorme e scaltissimo, che gremiva l'intera sala. Ascolto al suo primo presentarsi da una fragorosa ovazione il Fazzini è

stato per tutta la sera acclamatissimo e fatto segno a spontanee ed unanimi manifestazioni di entusiasmo; e lo chiamò al prosonto, gli applausi a scena aperta, lo acclamazioni — che si sono riputate clamorose, assordanti, dopo il grande *Arturo* e la frase del terzo atto — stanno a confermare il trionfale successo di questo simpatico e valentissimo artista che è davvero, per la bellezza del canto, per la efficacia della azione un *Radames* ideale.

Dopo l'opera il Fazzini ha cantato a piena orchestra l'improvviso dell'*Andrea Chénier* suscitando un nuovo entusiasmo e meritandosi nuove e frenetiche acclamazioni. Al Fazzini sono stati offerti da ammiratori e dall'Impresa molti e ricchi doni.

(continua).

Maria Viscardi

nell'*Idem*, e nel *Travatore*, ad *Alexandrie*.

(continuazione).

Phare d'Alexandrie. — Mlle Viscardi a joué avec beaucoup de succès en Italie le rôle de *Aida*, tel son interprétation de ce même rôle lui a valu, des le début de triomphes ovations.

Elle possède une voix d'un timbre d'une grande beauté, qui acquiert une force étonnante en s'élevant; les passages en la partition et la *Passion*, l'indignation, l'effort sont exprimés, sont rendus avec une perfection accomplie et ceux où le cœur doit se faire entendre acquiescent par la douceur de son chant: une délicate suavité.

Avec ce bel organe, Mlle Viscardi possède aussi la charme physique qui fait d'elle une *Aida*, gracieuse, en même temps que vigoureuse, tantôt et farouche en même temps qu'humile et douce, passionnée et terrible en même temps que mélancolique en touchante.

Les applaudissements répétés, qui lui furent prodigués, sont vraiment mérités.

Message d'Alexandrie. — Direi brevemente — che lo spazio difetto — che il *Quattro*, come la settimana scorsa, l'*Aida*, ha dato modo alla signora Alvarez e Viscardi di sfoggiare la ricchezza delle loro voci bellissime.

Della Viscardi potrà dire egualmente. Essa fu una *Eleonora* perfetta ammirabilissima, e per canto e per scena.

Phare d'Alexandrie. — Aujourd'hui, après avoir fait nos meilleurs compliments à Mlle Viscardi, une *Eleonora* des mieux réussies, nous nous faisons un devoir de louer les autres interprètes.

(continua).

Giuseppe Agostini

L'Impresa del Politeama Giacomini di Napoli, che nell'autunno p. v. darà corso ad una grande Stagione lirica, si è affrettata a scritturare il rinomato tenore Giuseppe Agostini, acconsentendo ad ogni condizione da lui desiderata ed accordandogli una paga veramente cospicua, degna del suo nome e delle sue qualità. L'esimo artista, la di cui carriera è tutta una splendida serie di brillanti successi, per quante insistentemente trattato per importanti Teatri, non ha delinito ancora nulla per le imminenti stagioni e per il carnevale, quindi lo annunciamo disponibile fino a metà ottobre e dal 10 dicembre.

Article celebrating Amedeo Bassi, *L'Arte melodrammatica*, Anno VII - No. 133, Milano, 16 Marzo 1911 and No. 140, Milano, 1 Agosto 1911 (Part 2).

Later, Puccini himself would qualify Bassi as "an ideal interpreter," and make efforts for having him to sing the role of Dick Johnson in European theaters.¹³

This happened on May 29, 1911 at the Covent Garden in London, where the first European performance of *La Fanciulla* took place, and later at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome, that hosted the June 12, 1911 Italian premiere.

In this regard, it is of special interest to observe the inscription on the back of the Chicago photographic proofs. Mario Bassi, second-born son of the tenor, gave a brief report of the facts when dedicating this picture to his niece Marcella Ceppi Pontello (See Appendix B for a transcript and translation of this document).

Roma. 13.6.1974.

Mia cara Marcella -

1911 - Chicago -

Sono i provini fotografici del costume, e degli atteggiamenti, per la prima recita di *Fanciulla del West*, in quella città - data contemporaneamente a New York con Caruso -

- Sempre nel 1911, il basso creò per la prima volta, interpretando il personaggio di ~~il~~ Dick Johnson - il bandito RAMERIZ - al Covent-Garden di Londra, direttore Cleofonte Campanini, e anche a Roma al Costanzi il 12.6.1911, direttore TOSCANINI con EUGENIA BURZIO, e PASQUALE AMATO -

Fecce solo tre recite, e fu ripreso da Ettore Martinelli. Se basso era stato ceduto per una sola settimana dal Covent-Garden su pressione di Giacomo Puccini -

A Te, Marcella cara questo caro ricordo -

- Mario

7-4-1980 G. Berutto
ARCHIVIO STORICO TEATRO REGIO
Leontessa
Donator: Ceppi Pontello
Proprietà Teatro Regio Torino

ARCHIVIO STORICO TEATRO REGIO
Donat:
GIANFRANCESCO GIANNINI
ARCHIVIO
Proprietà Teatro Regio Torino

Mario Bassi, Inscription (1974) on back of *La Fanciulla del West* photographic proofs, Chicago 1911. Archivio Storico Teatro Regio, Turin; reproduced by permission.

¹³ *L'Arte melodrammatica*, Anno VII - No. 138, Milano, 16 Giugno 1911.

Giacomo Puccini was evidently a supporter and an admirer of Amedeo Bassi. Through his “American” Opera, the composer also promoted other Italian artists, so contributing to the rich network of Italian-American artistic connections.

On August 23, 1911, Puccini, together with the two librettists Carlo Zangarini and Guelfo Civinini, attended the production of *La Fanciulla* at the Teatro Grande in Brescia. On his arrival, he received an ovation from conductor Giorgio Polacco (1873-1960) and all the performers. The American press echoed the success.¹⁴

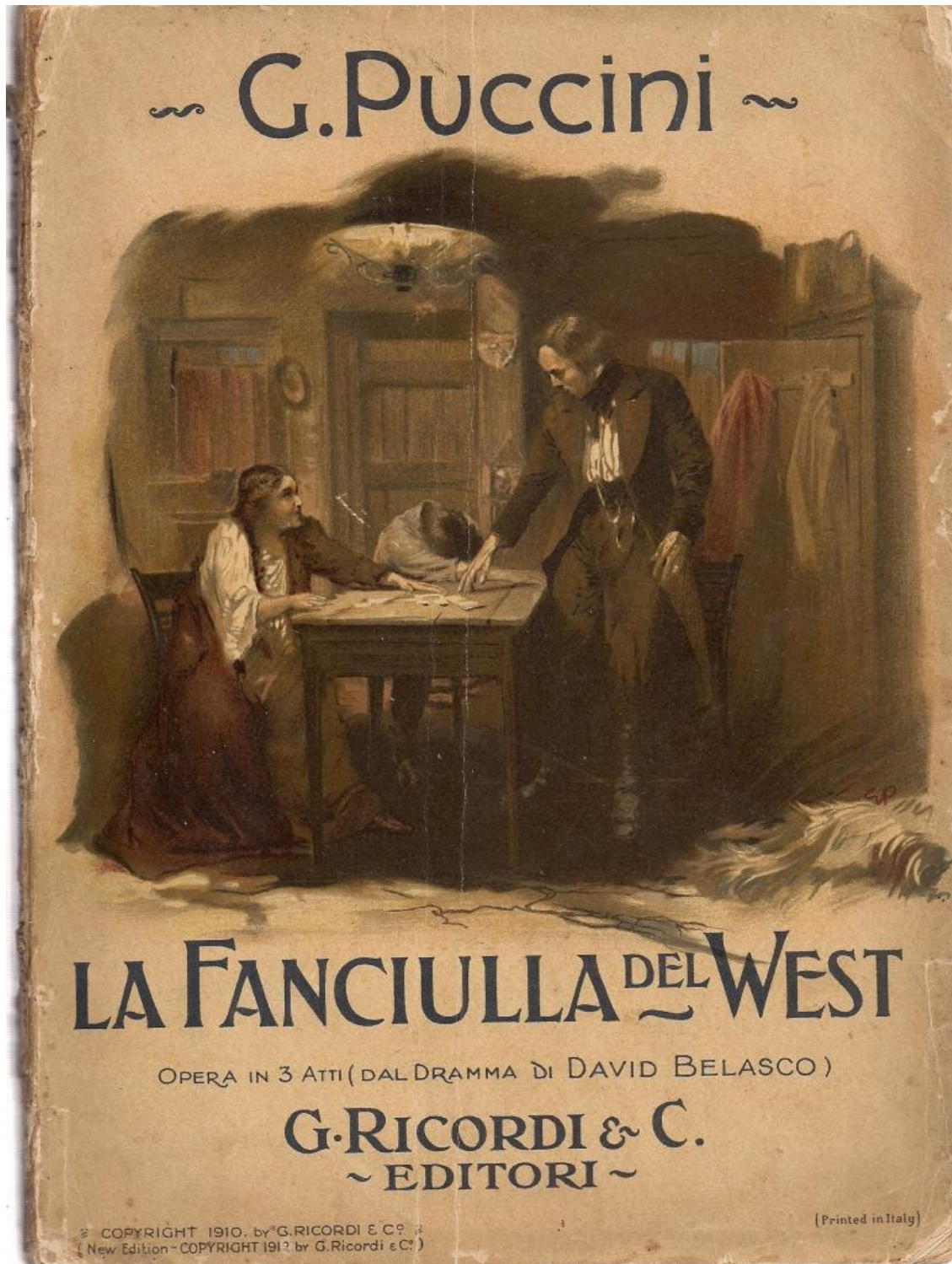
Interestingly, in the autumn of that same year, we find Giorgio Polacco conducting the Savage Opera Company, one of the last traveling English-language companies, in a long North American tour of Puccini’s *The Girl of the Golden West*. Young conductor, Alberto Bimboni (1888-1960), who had recently moved to the United States, also participated in that tour.

It is probable that Puccini’s experience with *La Fanciulla del West* and the widespread interest in the American musical heritage inspired young Bimboni to participate in the debate on the “Americanness” of the visual and sound imagery, and on the renewal of opera. These direct or indirect interconnections demonstrate the internationality of the Tuscan protagonists who participated in the American musical life at that time.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the acquisition of additional critical and investigative instruments matured in the field of American-music research, influences and mutual inspirations with Europe, can shed new light on other topics, as well as create sociological connections. All these perspectives can provide a significant contribution to the fascinating study of the cultural intersections between “Old and New World”.

I wish to thank ICAMus and Aloma Bardi. She provided research information by sending me from the US primary source material, such as several articles of *Musical America*. Many thanks are due to the Amedeo Bassi Archive - Biblioteca Comunale “Balducci” and the Museo Amedeo Bassi in Montespertoli (Firenze), as well as to the Archive of the Teatro Regio of Turin, for making various research materials available to me. Finally, I would like to thank Anna Maria Gasparri Rossotto, Amedeo Bassi’s biographer, for her knowledgeable and wise counsel in a beautiful morning spent in the Tuscan countryside of Montespertoli.

¹⁴ “Italians Pay Homage to Puccini”, *Musical America* 14, No. 18, September 9, 1911.



Libretto of *La Fanciulla del West*, First Edition (Milan: Ricordi, 1910); Cover Page.

APPENDIX A

Folder 66

1. Lettera manoscritta penna nera

Carta intestata
Paquebot “La Provence”

A bord, le 1 marzo 907

Caro Maxwell,¹
eccoci in mezzo al mare da due giorni - Mare buonissimo calmo come un lago -
Mi dispiacque tanto a dovervi lasciare ma spero di rivedervi ben presto a Torre del Lago -
Vi ringrazio ancora per tutte le gentilezze che ci avete usato, veramente sento di aver un amico in voi -
Salutate tanto e ringraziate per noi la Segarich tanto buona e gentile -
Ricordatevi di vedere Belasco - Vorrei avere una copia de The Girl of Golden West per farla tradurre e vedere se è possibile correggendo e cambiando, di tirarne fuori un soggetto - Chi sa? Non lo dimenticate
Scrivetemi come è andata Bohème al Manhattan² -
Tanti affettuosi saluti da Elvira e dal vostro
Giacomo Puccini
P.S. Pregovi dirmi le novità circa Conried³ e successore.

Dear Maxwell,
Here we are: in the middle of the sea for two days – Smooth sea, as calm as a lake -
I was so sorry I had to leave you but hope to see you again soon at Torre del Lago -
Thank you again for all your kindness, I do feel I have a friend in you -
Please greet and thank for us good, kind Mrs. Segarich -
Remember to see Belasco - I would like to get a copy of The Girl of the Golden West to have it translated and see whether it's possible, with corrections and changes, to make it into a subject - Who knows? Don't forget
Write me how Bohème went in Manhattan -
Many affectionate greetings from Elvira, and from your
Giacomo Puccini
P.S. Please share the news about Conried and successor.

1 George Maxwell (?-1931), agente di Ricordi a New York. Dal 1914 al 1924 fu il primo presidente della ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers). Nel 1931 lasciò la Casa Ricordi e fondò a New York la Galaxy Music Corporation, successivamente acquisita da E.C. Schirmer. Poco dopo morì a Parigi.
2 L'impresario teatrale Oscar Hammerstein (1847-1919) aveva costruito nel 1906 il Manhattan Opera House per creare un teatro d'opera concorrente al Metropolitan Opera House. *La Bohème* debuttava quella sera al Manhattan dopo lunghe vicissitudini legate al fatto che Ricordi non volle concedere in uso la copia della partitura di Puccini.
3 Heinrich Conried (1855-1909), manager del Metropolitan Opera House, predecessore di Gatti-Casazza alla direzione del teatro newyorkese.

APPENDIX B

Transcript of inscription on the back of Fanciulla del West Chicago photographic proofs.

Roma, 13.06, 1974

Mia Cara Marcella -
1911 - Chicago -
Sono i provini fotografici del
costume, e degli atteggiamenti
per la prima recita di Fanciulla
del West, in quella città - data
contemporaneamente a New York
con Caruso -
- Sempre nel 1911, il babbo creò per
la prima volta, interpretando il
personaggio di Dick Johnson – il bandito RAMERREZ -
al Covent Garden di Londra, direttore Cleofonte Campanini
e anche a Roma al Costanzi il 12.6.1911, direttore TOSCANINI
con EUGENIA BURZIO e PASQUALE AMATO -
Fece solo tre recite, e fu ripreso al tenore Martinelli.
**Il babbo era stato ceduto per una sola settimana dal Covent Garden
su pressione di Giacomo PUCCINI -**
A te, Marcella cara questo caro ricordo.
Mario

Rome, 13.06.1974

My dear Marcella,
1911 - Chicago -
These are the photographic proofs
of the costumes and poses
for the premiere of Fanciulla
del West, in that city -
produced at the same time in New York
with Caruso -
- Still nel 1911, Dad
premiered
the character of Dick Johnson - the bandit RAMERREZ -
at the Covent Garden in London, Cleofonte Campanini conducting
and also in Rome at the Costanzi on June 12, 1911, TOSCANINI conducting
with EUGENIA BURZIO and PASQUALE AMATO -
He only gave three performances, and was replaced by tenor Martinelli.
**Dad was granted to sing only one week by arrangement with Covent Garden
under Giacomo PUCCINI's pressure -**
To you, dear Marcella, this precious memory.
Mario





Barbara Boganini presenting at “Intersections/Intersezioni” - ICAMus Session, Kent State University, Florence Program, June 1st, 2017.