THE NEW CLASSICISM: ALFREDO CASELLA'S SINFONIA,
ARIOSO AND TOCCATA, OP. 59, A LECTURE RECITAL,
TOGETHER WITH THREE RECITALS OF SELECTED
WORKS OF CHOPIN, MOZART, BARTÓK, BACH,
SCHUMANN, ARENSKY, BRUCH AND OTHERS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas
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Doctor of Musical Arts (Piano), May, 1981, 36 pp., 20 illustrations, bibliography, 33 titles.

The neo-classic movement in Italy, which gained momentum in the early 1920's, was rooted in an instrumental style patterned after that of the Baroque era. The term "new classicism," proposed by Ferruccio Busoni in 1920, represented a reaction against the extreme chromaticism and large performance forces of the late nineteenth century. The pianist-composer Alfredo Casella, after earlier periods in which he was influenced by such diverse composers as Mahler, Debussy, and Schoenberg, soon became the chief spokesman for the neo-classic movement in Italy.

Casella considered the *Sinfonia, Arioso and Toccata* his most important work for the piano, because of its size and musical content. It is notable for its usage of thematic transformation, much of which is based on the interval of a fourth or fifth. This study includes a formal outline of each movement, showing sectional divisions and tonal regions, as well as illustrations of thematic transformation and intervallic patterns. Also discussed are the work's neo-classic style characteristics, including counterpoint, pandiatonicism, modality, and linear cadential treatment.
The *Sinfonia, Arioso and Toccata* is compared with two works from Casella's earlier compositional periods—the *Toccata*, op. 6, and the *Sonatina*. The comparison reflects a synthesis and refinement of elements from the earlier styles, and a pronounced emphasis on certain traits of the Italian Baroque.
Tape recordings of all performances submitted as dissertation requirements are on deposit in the North Texas State University Library.
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NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
presents

Nancy Copeland
in a Graduate Piano Recital

Monday, March 6, 1978  8:15 p.m.  Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Capriccio (on the interval of a second)  Dello Joio

Sonata in B flat Minor, Op. 35  Chopin
  Grave; Doppio movimento
  Scherzo
  Marcia Funebre; Lento
  Finale; Presto

Intermission

Sonata in A Major, K. 331  Mozart
  Andante grazioso and Variations
  Menuetto-Trio-Menuetto
  Rondo alla Turca

Sonata  Bartok
  Allegro moderate
  Sostenuto e pesante
  Allegro molto

Presented in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts
NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
presents

NANCY COPELAND
in a Graduate Piano Recital

Monday, February 5, 1979
3:15 p.m.
Concert Hall

PROGRAM

Prelude and Fugue in A flat, W.T.C. Bk. I ... Bach

Sonata in G Minor, Op. 22 ... Schumann
  Presto
  Andantino
  Scherzo
  Rondo: Presto

INTERMISSION

Four Nocturnes—
  in A Major ....................................................... John Field
  in C Minor, Op. 48, No. 1 ................................. Chopin
  in E flat Minor, Op. 33, No. 1 ...................... Faure
  in D flat, for the left hand, Op. 9, No. 2 .... Scriabin

Birds 2 (1973) ... ................................. Seymour Bernstein
  Myna Bird
  The Swan
  The Robin
  The Owl
  Roadrunner
  Condor
  The Nightingale
  The Guinea Hen
  Phoenix

Presented in partial fulfillment
of requirements for the degree
Doctor of Musical Arts
North Texas State University
School of Music
presents

Nancy Copeland
piano

in a Chamber Music Recital

assisted by

Rebecca Rathbun, violin
Deborah Petty, cello

Monday, October 27, 1980  8:15 p.m.  Concert Hall

PROGRAM

Trio in D Minor, Op. 32
Allegro moderato
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Elegie; Adagio
Finale: Allegro non troppo

Trio in C Minor, Op. 5
Andante molto cantabile;
Allegro assai
Presto

Anton Arensky

Max Bruch

There will be a brief interval between the two works.

Presented in partial fulfillment
of requirements for the degree
Doctor of Musical Arts
NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

Nancy Copeland, pianist

in a

Lecture Recital

Monday, March 9, 1981 6:30 p.m. Concert Hall

PROGRAM

The New Classicism — Alfredo Casella's
Sinfonia, Arioso and Toccata, Op. 59

Presented in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree
Doctor of Musical Arts
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CHAPTER I

NEO-CLASSIC CURRENTS IN EUROPE DURING THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the early 1920's, a movement to return to the musical ideals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries gained momentum in Europe. Few composers of the period were unaffected by these principles. Generally termed neo-classicism, the movement was characterized by a revival of contrapuntal writing, use of the smaller absolute forms of the Baroque and Classical eras, a reduction in orchestra size, less emphasis on tone color for its own sake, and more consideration given to simplicity and clarity of melodic lines.

In Italy, after the first World War, composers aspired to return the country once again to the forefront of the musical world. Italy in the nineteenth century had seen a predominating emphasis on opera, with little attention to instrumental music until Giuseppe Martucci (1856-1909) and Giovanni Sgambati (1843-1914), both of whom favored, however, a more Germanic style similar to that of Brahms.  

composers of the next generation, born between 1880 and 1890, wanted to create a more universal instrumental style patterned after the chamber music of the Baroque era. The poet Gabriele d'Annunzio influenced many Italian composers before and during World War I through his nationalistic writings and love of Italian history. D'Annunzio collaborated with Gian Francesco Malipiero and Ildebrando Pizzetti to edit a National Collection of early Italian music, by Carlo Gesualdo, Claudio Monteverdi, and Antonio Vivaldi. This music was regarded as a point of departure from which the clarity of the old styles would be merged with modern compositional technique. 2

One of the most outspoken critics of romanticism was the German-Italian composer and pianist, Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924). Busoni had a great reverence for the music of Beethoven, Mozart, and especially Bach, whose Well-Tempered Clavier he edited. He transcribed many of Bach's organ works for the piano and based several of his own compositions on quotations from the Baroque master. The most prominent of these works is the Fantasia Contrappuntistica (1910), containing three fugues, each with a variation. In the final portion, the three fugue subjects are combined with the principal subject from Bach's Art of the Fugue.

2. Ibid., 225-26.
Busoni turned his attention to the classics late in life, after earlier experiments with new scale systems, microtones, and Italian folk music. His writings often anticipate later ideas, while emphasizing that form, as the most important element in art, must take precedence over expression. In 1920, he proposed the term "new classicism," which he defined as "the mastery, the sifting, and the turning to account of all the gains of previous experiments, their inclusion in strong and beautiful forms." Busoni called for the departure from thematic treatment and a return to melody as the "ruler of all voices." The new classicism, he said, is often misunderstood by the public as a "turning back," rather than signifying "completion in a double sense; completion as perfection and completion as a close. The conclusion of previous experiments [sic]." Busoni considered himself, appropriately, as a pioneer of neo-classic thinking, with the ultimate realization of the movement a task to be accomplished by younger composers.

Toward the end of Busoni's life, Alfredo Casella became the chief spokesman for the neo-classic movement in

Italy. Born in 1883, Casella soon made rapid progress as a pianist, memorizing the complete Well-Tempered Clavier by the time he was eleven years old. He entered the Paris Conservatory at the age of thirteen, studying composition with Gabriel Fauré, who instilled in him "a sense of artistic order, taste, and balance." Casella toured Europe as harpsichordist in the Society of Ancient Instruments, a position which gave him the opportunity to meet many leading figures of the time, among them Gustav Mahler, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and Stravinsky, who was to have a large influence on Casella's music. (Many of Stravinsky's works had their first Italian performances under the direction of Casella.) Also important was Maurice Ravel, a former classmate who introduced Casella to the music of the Russian "Five" through four-hand piano arrangements. Ravel gave him valuable advice in his composition as well. Casella relates, "In less than five minutes . . . Ravel was able to show me so clearly the poverty of [the whole-tone scale] that I lost permanently the desire to employ it."

Casella lived in Paris almost twenty years, during a period when it was the artistic and intellectual center of

11. Ibid., 60. 12. Ibid., 197. 13. Ibid., 61.
Europe. He was present at the first performances of many significant works, including Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* and *Rite of Spring*, Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloë*, and Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. This music made a great impression on Casella, and he retained from it that which he believed relevant to his own composition.  

During this time in Paris, Serge Diaghilev, the Russian Ballet impresario, rapidly capitalized on the growing popularity of Baroque music, commissioning Ottorino Respighi for a ballet inspired by Cimarosa (*Cimarosiana*), Stravinsky for a work based on Pergolesi (*Pulcinella*), and Vincenzo Tommasini for a ballet based on Scarlatti sonatas (*The Good-Humored Ladies*). In his inaugural address at the Paris Schola Cantorum in 1900, Vincent d'Indy spoke of the need to return to the Italian art of Gregorian chant, Palestrina, and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This idea pleased Casella and incited him to action in promoting a style based on Italy's great instrumental tradition, yet in a contemporary idiom.

Casella returned to Italy in 1915 to teach piano at the Liceo di Santa Cecilia in Rome. His feeling of patriotism had been further inspired by Filippo Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto of 1909, since it was, he said, "the first indication of a bold, rebellious, and youthful spirit to come

from Italy, which had been considered for so many years to be 'the land of the dead' with regard to art." Along with Respighi, Pizzetti, Malipiero, and others, he began a National Music Society in 1916 for the purpose of combating mediocrity in composition. The movement met with much resistance from the public, which, curiously, labeled Casella's music as un-Italian. His style during this period, from 1914 to 1918, was almost atonal, owing much to Schoenberg. Casella admits that although he identified more readily with Stravinsky,

... the phenomenon of Schoenberg caused in me serious wavering for several years. Although I remained bound to the tonal sense ... there was a period during which my conviction that the twelve-tone system was the supreme goal of modern evolution tended to increase. Casella also turned his attention to scholarly writing, publishing The Evolution of Music Throughout the History of the Perfect Cadence (1924) and a biography of Stravinsky (1926).

Casella's attraction to the forms of the Italian Baroque began to appear in several of his works dating from the 1920's--the Scarlattiana suite for chamber orchestra with piano concertato (based on themes from Scarlatti's harpsichord sonatas), the Partita for piano and orchestra (containing a sinfonia, passacaglia, galliard, and gigue),

16. Ibid., 82. 17. Ibid., 140. 18. Ibid., 106.
and the Roman Concerto for organ and orchestra. Casella says,

It was natural that the baroque, which constitutes so great a part of the magnificence of Rome, should exercise a profound influence on my art. This served as a complement to the influence of musicians like Bach and Vivaldi, whose disciple I had been for so many years. That sense of relief in the masses, in the mouldings, in the chiaroscuro, which goes back directly to the greatest Roman art; that liberty and fantasy in interpreting the classic forms; that preference for certain violent plastic contrasts; the grandeur of this purely Italian art which became international through the enormous influence it exerted over all of Europe—all of these were elements which sooner or later were to cause a definite evolution in my taste and my creative activity.\(^{19}\)

Just as he had earlier been influenced by the styles of Mahler and Debussy, Casella, in his "third period," beginning in the 1920's and lasting until his death in 1947, assimilated diverse elements into a mature classic, yet modern, style firmly rooted in tonality.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 172.
CHAPTER II

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT IN THE SINFONIA, 
ARIOSO AND TOCCATA

Casella wrote the Sinfonia, Arioso and Toccata for the 1936 Festival of Contemporary Music in Venice, where the work was performed by Ornella Puliti-Santoliquido, to whom it is dedicated. Casella says that it is apparently my most important work for the piano, not only because of its size, but above all for its musical content. . . . The triptych seems to me to mark a decisive point in my production. . . .

This work has several precedents in triptychs by other composers, notably César Franck's Prélude, Chorale and Fugue (1884) and Prélude, Aria and Finale (1887), and Debussy's suite Pour le Piano (1901). The Prélude, Chorale and Fugue employs the cyclic thematic treatment characteristic of Franck's music, and found to a more subtle degree in Casella's Sinfonia, Arioso and Toccata. In the Franck work, two themes from the Prélude and one from the Chorale are combined in the four-voice Fugue, with the fugue subject arising from the second theme of the Prélude. Similarly, in the Prélude, Aria and Finale, themes from the

20. Ibid., 214.
first two movements appear again in the Finale. The Aria consists of a theme with variations, while the Finale is written in sonata form with two contrasting themes. Debussy's suite Pour le Piano is comprised of three movements with eighteenth-century titles—a prélude, sarabande, and toccata. The prélude and toccata contain driving sixteenth-note figuration in a moto perpetuo style. The sarabande retains its characteristic rhythm (\( \frac{J}{J} \) \( \frac{J}{J} \) \( \frac{J}{J} \) \( \frac{J}{J} \)), with an added impressionistic emphasis on parallel seventh chords. In each movement there is considerable modal usage.

Perhaps more immediately apparent in its external relation to Casella's work is the influence of Beethoven's piano sonata, Op. 111, a work edited by Casella along with the other Beethoven sonatas. Both compositions begin in C minor with a slow introduction, marked maestoso, featuring unison dotted rhythms in a bold declamatory style (Examples 1 and 2).

Example 2. Casella, Sinfonia, measures 1-3.

Largo, maestoso

In both cases, the persistent dotted rhythm recalls the French overture of the seventeenth century. The rhythmic motive (\(\begin{array}{cccccc}
\hline
& & & & & \\
\hline
& & & & & \\
\hline
\end{array}\)) opening the Allegro animato of the Sinfonia (Example 3) is identical with the second part of the Allegro subject in the Beethoven sonata (Example 4).

The slow movements of both works—Beethoven's Arietta and Casella's Arioso—conspicuously employ the intervals of a fourth and fifth, both melodically and harmonically.

The Sinfonia follows a large three-part plan, with an abbreviated return, at the end, of the Largo opening. Within this external layout, there are many sectional divisions, marked by linear cadences moving by half step in contrary motion. These divisions are linked by transition passages comprised of sequential chords played by alternating hands (Example 5).
Example 5. Formal outline of *Sinfonia*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Tonal Regions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>i -- v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>i -- N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans.</td>
<td>#IV VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>i iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans.</td>
<td>modulatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans.</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans.</td>
<td>modulatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans.</td>
<td>vi bvi V N v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a'</td>
<td>i vi V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans.</td>
<td>V #iv vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>i</td>
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</tbody>
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The driving Stravinsky-like rhythmic motion of the Allegro animato (section B) is generated chiefly by a recurrent motive somewhat related to the dotted figures in the introduction. This motive, represented by two eighth notes preceded by two eighth rests, creates an insistent iambic effect through its constant repetitions (Example 6).


When first introduced, the eighth-note motive appears in an incidental manner, marked piano (measure 83), as a backdrop for more important melodic material. On its return, the motive is expanded to provide thematic interest for a lengthy section, with a dynamic range from mezzo forte to forte. Here the motive serves also as a short ostinato-like accompaniment to sixteenth-note runs in the right hand. In its final appearance toward the end of the Allegro, the motive has its most emphatic statement, marked triple forte, in both hands simultaneously for five measures (measures 181-185).
The interval of a fourth or fifth, usually preceded or followed by a major or minor second, is conspicuous in all three movements. In the Sinfonia, this interval combination occurs first in the opening Largo (Example 7a) where it establishes its importance as the source of much of the thematic material in the entire work. (In the first sixteen bars, almost every melodic interval is that of a fourth or a second.) The fourth is emphasized here not only in the top voice, but in the left-hand accompaniment which also spans a fourth, first in stepwise motion and then by skips preceded and followed by seconds. Also introduced in this opening passage is a major seventh chord comprised of two superimposed fourths, one perfect and one augmented, seen on the third beats of measures 1 and 2. This sonority, along with the diminished octave, occurs often in most of Casella's works. (It is especially prevalent in the earlier Toccata, Op. 6, and the Sonatina.) The fourth is also prominent in an imitative two-voice fugato-like passage at measure 50 (Example 7b). After the first statement on C, the second entrance is a perfect fourth higher on F, with the last entrance beginning on the tritone, F sharp. In addition, the second and fourth (and their inversions) are emphasized melodically in the subject of this passage, beginning with a major seventh, or inverted minor second, in measure 50. These intervals occur prominently again in a secondary theme.
at measure 85 (Example 7c), which employs the same rhythmic pattern \(\text{rlrm}\) as the main theme of the Allegro. Seconds and fourths are also found in the many transition passages played by alternating hands, seen in measures 99-100 (Example 7d). For purposes of comparison, Examples 7e and 7f illustrate the intervallic pattern as it appears in the main theme of the Arioso and in the passagework in the Toccata.

Example 7. Usage of the intervals of a fourth and second. 

\[\text{Example 7. Usage of the intervals of a fourth and second.}\] 

\[\text{Example a.}\] 

\[\text{Example b.}\] 

\[\text{Example c.}\]
In this work, Casella makes extensive use of thematic transformation. The motive opening the central part of the Sinfonia (Example 8a) returns several times in augmentation and with rhythmic differences to create new thematic material. This motive is shortened by two notes in measures 65-67 (Example 8b) and later introduces the Phrygian supertonic (i.e., lowered second scale degree), frequently used by Casella, in measures 127-129 and 141-143 (Example 8c). The sixteenth-note figure (\[\text{\texttt{\textbackslash m}}\text{\texttt{\textbackslash n}}}\]) which ends the original
motive also appears later in the Toccata, first as part of the *sotto voce* accompaniment in measure 1 (Example 8d), this time employing again the lowered second scale degree as an alternation. In subsequent appearances the sixteenth-note figure is both inverted and augmented (Examples 8e and 8f). With the addition of one ascending note, this figure becomes the second theme of the Toccata (Example 8g).

Example 8. Transformations of motive originating in measures 27-28 of *Sinfonia*.

\[ \text{Example 8. Transformations of motive originating in measures 27-28 of Sinfonia.} \]

\[ \text{a} \]

\[ \text{b} \]

\[ \text{c} \]

\[ \text{d} \]
Like the Sinfonia, the *Arioso* follows a large three-part plan with several internal divisions. The central B section is marked by a sudden shift of key from C minor to B major, as well as a more lyrical style.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>measures</th>
<th>tonal regions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro.  (1-8)</td>
<td>vii -- b\textit{vii}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a  (9-18)</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b  (19-30)</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a' (31-38)</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b' (39-52)</td>
<td>i  vi  b\textit{vi}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The **Arioso** is an intensely contrapuntal movement. A seven-bar fugal passage introduces the first bar of the main theme, imitated at the major seventh in stretto, with successive entries on A♭, G, F#, and F♭, thus forming a chromatic descending pattern. This pattern is continued with the appearance of the main theme on E, at measure 11.


The main theme of the A section appears with varied accompaniments—at measure 31, it is imitated in stretto at the
minor sixth over a pedal point, with accompanying triplets (Example 11).

Example 11. **Arioso**, measures 31-33.

At the coda, the same theme is stated in canon at the octave for seven measures, with a notable emphasis on quartal sonorities, as well as triads with the addition of a fourth or second (Example 12).

Example 12. **Arioso**, measures 141-147.
In addition, there are many short imitative passages throughout the movement, including frequent use of melodic inversion (measures 40-41, 63-64).

Thematic material in the Arioso is derived almost entirely from two melodic ideas—the interval of a fifth followed by that of a second, seen earlier in the Sinfonia, and a motive formed by three stepwise ascending or descending pitches, possibly taken from the sixteenth-note figure in the Sinfonia (Example 8a). Both of these ideas appear first in the introduction of the Arioso (Example 10), after which they are continually inverted and manipulated, to the extent that almost all of the melodic intervals in the movement are comprised of a second or a fifth (or their inversions). In the few cases when thirds and sixths are used, they generally serve to link other melodic elements (measures 17, 21-22) or as intervals at which sequential patterns are repeated (measures 36-37, 133-136).
Casella achieves the effect of a Baroque "walking bass" at several points in the constant eighth-note motion of the left hand (Example 13).

Example 13. _Arioso_, measures 88-90.

This theme also utilizes the Phyrgian mode (i.e., with a lowered second scale step), found earlier in the _Sinfonia_. In both the _Arioso_ and _Toccata_ there is frequent juxtaposition of the lowered and the natural second scale degrees, seen first near the beginning of the _Arioso_ (Example 7a). Casella often uses the natural when the melody ascends, and the lowered version in a descending line. The device appears prominently at the end of the movement, when the portion of the main theme moving from F sharp to F natural is repeated in the bass. Subsequently it moves from F sharp to E, with the F natural becoming part of a quartal right-hand chord (Example 14).
Dissonance is especially pronounced in the Arioso because of the movement's slow chordal character. Long pedal points are numerous, usually in the more chromatic passages. Toward the end, as the bitonal and simultaneous major-minor effects become more intense, the pedal point on the dominant B moves toward a resolution (Example 15).

The Toccata might be considered a modern adaptation of sonata-allegro form (Example 16).
Example 16. Formal outline of **Toccata**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>measures</th>
<th>tonal regions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro. (1-21)</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exposition:**

- 1st thematic group (22-46) i vii v N I
- 2nd thematic group (47-60) #iv II

**Development:**

- modulatory (61-77) ii bvii vii iv N vi
- new theme (78-91) bVI
- trans. (92-95) v

**Recapitulation:**

- 1st thematic group (96-110) i
- trans. (111-135) N III biii #IV VI #iv N
- 2nd thematic group (136-148) i
- trans. (149-152) biii
- reprise of 2nd group (153-177) vi IV VI

**Coda** (178-211) VI I VI

After a 21-bar introduction centered around the dominant B-flat, the tonic of E-flat minor arrives with the first theme. For the second thematic group, Casella moves a tritone away, to A minor. The development begins with a modulatory section of sequential passages, similar to those found in the transitions of the *Sinfonia*, rapidly passing through several keys. Toward the end of the development, a
new theme appears, in the $b\text{VI}$ key of B major (measure 78). Although this theme is heard only briefly here, it later returns in the coda. Most of the true developmental quality in this movement is found in the recapitulation, where the material from the exposition is expanded and elaborated. When the second thematic group returns in the tonic (E-flat minor), it appears in canon at the octave in stretto, then immediately in diminution (Example 17).

Example 17. **Toccata**, measures 143-145.

![Example 17](image)

A feature common to several composers who adopted neo-classic ideals is the employment of pandiatonic writing. Often considered a reaction against the extreme chromaticism of the nineteenth century, this practice is based upon the equal treatment of each note in the diatonic scale, producing a C major quality, though without the traditional harmonic functions. Casella utilizes pandiatonicism in the outer movements of this work, especially toward the end of the **Toccata**, in the final return of the second theme (measure 165). This is the first time the theme occurs in major, in
block chords accompanied by white-key runs and arpeggios. Tonal interest is increased by the addition of ninths and elevenths to the harmony. This style returns at the end of the coda, with the re-appearance of the third theme, heard earlier in the development, but now in C major, marked triple forte (measure 195). From this point on, C major is increasingly asserted as a tonal center, particularly in the emphatic stepwise (ABC-EDC) motion of the closing measures (Example 18).

Example 18. Toccata, measures 209-211.

(In the bass line of measures 209-210 can be seen again the first three notes of the main theme from the Arioso.)

Cadential treatment throughout the work illustrates a primarily linear approach, with a prevalence of contrary motion, usually by half steps (Example 19).

This type of cadence serves to emphasize the sudden shifts of key from one section to the next. The chord preceding the tonic, above, resembles a modified augmented sixth chord, functioning as a dominant. The notes are spaced so that they span the intervals of a fourth and fifth in each hand. When Casella employs a half cadence, the dominant chord is preceded by a whole step rather than a half step, and consists of only the root and fifth of the chord, causing the mode to be indeterminate. This type of cadence is found frequently in the works of several composers of the period. Béla Bartók, in the third movement of his Piano *Sonata* (1926), employs open fifths in a cluster arrangement, also in contrary motion (measures 221-222). C and D are doubled in the left hand against C and A in the right hand, resolving to a chord containing E, A, and B, with A replacing the third of the chord. With the addition of the fourth and the doubling of B, a quartal sonority is produced. Casella,
in this work, avoids quartal chords at cadence points. In the *Toccata*, Op. 11, by Serge Prokofiev (1912), similar chromatic linear cadences are frequent, although they are usually comprised of major or minor seventh chords rather than triads.

The *Toccata* has several elements in common with Casella's independent *Toccata*, Op. 6, written thirty-two years earlier in 1904. In the middle section of this early work can be seen the outline of the second theme in the later *Toccata*, employing the stepwise interval of a fourth, first ascending and then descending (Example 20).


The earlier *Toccata* is perhaps even more relentless in its usage of the fourth, both melodically and harmonically. In several cases, the root movement is by a tritone (measures 86-92, 136-137). Here, linear cadences are also prominent, with sudden key shifts by half step. Although the earlier work moves in continuous *moto perpetuo* sixteenth notes, while the later *Toccata* has occasional chordal passages,
the two works share certain pianistic features, especially the rapid alternation of hands and numerous octave displacements.

Compared with some of Casella's earlier works, the Sinfonia, Arioso and Toccata reflects the composer's years of experimentation with diverse compositional styles. The sequence of keys in the earlier Op. 6 Toccata is predominantly by major and minor thirds, illustrative of an approach more characteristic of the nineteenth century, while in the Sinfonia, Arioso and Toccata, the key sequence tends to progress by seconds and fourths. In the early Toccata, the influence of Debussy is evident in the pentatonic first theme and figuration similar to that in Debussy's Toccata from Pour le Piano, written three years earlier, and also in C-sharp minor. While rather traditional in many respects, the early Toccata of Casella shows indications of some forward-looking developments in its use of changing meters, occasional tritone root movement, and its closing polychordal effects.

Casella's Piano Sonatina, written in 1916, represents many traits of his second style period, a time when he came under Schoenberg's influence. Although the work does not follow a strict twelve-tone plan, its extensive chromaticism borders on atonality. Like Casella's other works of the period, the Sonatina employs no key signatures. Here, his use of the tritone, major seventh, and diminished octave
becomes more frequent, foreshadowing his works written after 1920. The Sonatina, however, merely hints at the thematic unity that later permeates the Sinfonia, Arioso and Toccata--the second theme of the Sonatina's first movement returns briefly in the third movement. In contrast to the later work, the many rapid changes of mood in the Sonatina create a fragmented effect, which is alternated with passages in unmeasured improvisatory style. Meter changes are numerous in this second period, decreasing sharply in Casella's later works. Also prominent in the Sonatina is a harmonic density generally greater than in the later period. There are many chords consisting of eight notes or more, some of which span an eleventh or twelfth. The cadence closing the first movement incorporates all the notes of the chromatic scale, held by the pedal.

Casella, in his third period of composition, has much in common with Paul Hindemith during the same time. Both composers had experimented earlier with some of the current stylistic trends, and evolved into a neo-Baroque style in which harmony is often the result of dissonant contrapuntal lines. (This style is termed "polymelodic" by Casella. 21) Like Casella, Hindemith favored traditional forms such as the

concerto grosso, passacaglia, and fugue, and believed that tonal color should be incidental to form and texture. Also common to both composers is the free usage of the twelve tones around a tonal center, a predilection for the intervals of a fourth and fifth, references to modality, and the simultaneous use of major and minor. The three piano sonatas by Hindemith, all written in 1936, the same year as Casella's triptych, recall certain Baroque qualities in the long spun-out melodic lines and the unity of character within a given movement.

Casella's triptych reflects certain Baroque and some specifically Italian characteristics—the titles themselves originated in the Italian Baroque. The early type of sinfonia or overture found in seventeenth-century opera is evoked in the slow dotted introduction to the Sinfonia, typically ending on the dominant. The many sections and frequent cadence points in the Sinfonia suggest early Baroque mannerism, while there is also a consistent drive toward the cadence point and a sequential working-out of themes, found more often in the later Baroque. The Arioso, despite considerable contrapuntal interest, recalls its origins in expressive recitative with lyrical accompanied melodic lines, pedal points, and "walking bass." Casella's Toccata embodies the spirit of the late Italian Baroque toccata in its almost constant rapid figuration, numerous modulatory passages, and motor-like rhythm.
Georges Jean-Aubry believes that "it is not so much grace as force of expression" that is the chief element in Casella's works. His music is "inflexible, tense, sobre, of a sobriety that is often disconcerting." In his mature style, represented by the Sinfonia, Arioso and Toccata, Casella refined and synthesized various features from earlier compositions. Some of the virtuosity and lyricism found in the early period remain, while the later atonal leanings have been replaced by a commitment to tonality. In this work, dissonant harmonic clashes and driving rhythms seen before are combined with an increased emphasis on thematic integration and linear clarity, producing an intensity which surpasses that of many other neo-classic works.

In acknowledging the importance of new experiments and developments in composition, Casella concludes that art must reach "anew, through the idiom of its own time, those eternal and immutable values which are common to all eras and whose continuity makes up the history of art itself." He envisioned ultimately a broader concept of classicism than was understood in the 1920's, a timelessly valid restoration of the classic "sense" in the arts. With his many significant

23. Ibid., 42.
contributions as a composer and as a promoter of new music, Casella exerted a notable influence upon Italian musical thought for many years.
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