THE SONGS OF GIACOMO PUCCINI: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF
HIS STYLE AND SELF-BORROWING

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THE SONGS OF GIACOMO PUCCINI: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF
HIS STYLE AND SELF-BORROWING

DISSERTATION

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

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas

August, 1997

The songs of Puccini provide another approach to understanding the composer's musical development. The objective of the study is twofold; first to provide a discussion of the musical style of Puccini's songs; and second, to show how Puccini utilized and integrated the preexistent material into the operas. The songs are grouped and characterized in three stylistic periods. In each period, Puccini was concerned with different issues in text setting. They anticipated or corresponded to the musical style of his operas, and this is evident by his use of the earlier songs in the later operas.

Three examples of such cases are examined. The details involved in the transformation of self-borrowing are illustrated in terms of recomposition, expansion of the vocal line and orchestration. Each case illustrates the textual and/or musical consideration by Puccini of the original source for the new dramatic context of the opera. The borrowed material, often incorporated with new themes and expressive orchestration, blooms as an effective dramatic piece of music in his operas.

In addition to the lecture recital, based on the dissertation and given on June 23, 1997, three other public recitals were performed. The first, on February 27, 1989, included works of Schubert, Brahms, Wolf, and Strauss. The second program, an operatic performance of *The Queen of Spades* by Tchaikovsky, was given on April 20,
1991. The third recital was performed on February 20, 1995, and included works by Handel, Mozart, Stravinsky, Schubert, Poulenc, and Turina.
Tape recordings of all performances submitted as dissertation requirements are on deposit in the University of North Texas Library.
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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
School of Music

presents

GRADUATE VOICE RECITAL

S00 HONG KIM, SOPRANO

Hwa Jung Lee, Piano

Ganymed
Heidenröslein
Die junge Nonne
Im Frühling
Rastlose Liebe

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Lieder und Gesänge von G. F. Daumer, Op. 57

Von wald bekränzter Höhe
Wenn du nur zuweilen lächelst
Es träumte mir, ich sei dir teuer
Ach, wende diesen Blick
Unbewegte laue Luft, tiefe Ruhé

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

INTERMISSION

Italienisches Liederbuch

Auch Kleine Dinge
Nein, junge Herr
Oh, dein Haus durchsichtig wie ein Glas
Du denkst, mit einem Fadchen
Wenn du, mein liebster, steigst zum Himmel auf
Ich hab in Penna einen Liebsten wohnen

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

Allerseelen
All mein Gedanken
Morgen
Wiegenlied
Zueignung

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

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

Monday, February 27, 1989
8:15 p.m.
Concert Hall
The UNT College of Music Opera Theater with the UNT Opera Orchestra
presents

Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky’s
The Queen of Spades
An Opera in Three Acts
Original Libretto by Modest Tchaikovsky
A New English Version by Dennis Wakeling

Director and Designer ................................................... Dennis Wakeling
Conductor ........................................................................ Anshel Brusilow
Assistant Director ............................................................ Dennis Thread
Co-Director of Opera Theater ......................................... Jeannine Crader
Chorus Master ............................................................... Steven Demorest
Costume Designer .......................................................... Barbara Cox
Lighting Designer ........................................................... William Boswell
Choreographer .............................................................. Kathleen Tenniswood
Production Stage Manager ............................................. Kim Caldwell-Bean

Cast
(in order of vocal appearance)

CHEKALINSKII, a gambler .............................................. Ken Hornsby
SURIN, a gambler .......................................................... Mark McCrory
COUNT TOMSKII, a young officer, a grandson ............ Timothy Tucker
of the Countess (Goldgalore in the Intermezzo)
GERMANN, a young officer ........................................... David Sundquist*
PRINCE YELETSKII, Lisa’s fiance ................................ Scott Hamblen
LISA, the granddaughter of the Countess ..................... Emily Pulley+
................................................................. Soo-Hong Kim++
THE COUNTESS ............................................................ Cloyce Beard Stradley
POLINA, Lisa’s friend, engaged to Tomskii ................. Rebecca James Campbell**
(Lovinglook in the Intermezzo)
THE GOVERNESS ........................................................ Diane Pulte
MASHA, the chambermaid ............................................. Sarah Turner
MASTER OF CEREMONIES ........................................... Jeff Picón

CHARACTERS IN THE INTERMEZZO

FLORINDA ..................................................................... Teresa Gomez
LOVINGLOOK ............................................................. Rebecca James Campbell
GOLDGALORE ............................................................. Timothy Tucker
CHAPLITSKII ................................................................ Jeff Picón
NARUMOV .................................................................... Christopher Lilley

*Faculty Artist
**Alumna Guest Artist
+Thursday Evening Performance
++Saturday and Sunday Evening Performances

There will be two ten-minute intermissions.
Recording and photographic equipment strictly forbidden.
A Graduate Recital

SOO HONG KIM, voice
assisted by
Stacy Kwak, piano • Andrew Naumann, trumpet
Madeline Adkins, violin • Jason Toumey, clarinet

Monday, February 20, 1995 6:30 pm  Concert Hall

G.F. Handel  
(1685-1759)

W. A. Mozart  
(1756-1791)

I. Stravinsky  
(1882-1971)

F. Schubert  
(1797-1828)

F. Poulenc  
(1899-1963)

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen, Opus 129

METAMORPHOSES
I. Reine des mouettes
II. C’est ainsi que tu es
III. Paganini

DEUX POEMES DE LOUIS ARAGON
I. C.
II. Fêtes Galantes
TRES SONETOS
I. Anhelos
II. ¡Vade reto!
III. A unos ojos

J. Turina
(1882-1949)

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
THE SONGS OF GIACOMO PUCCINI:
AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF HIS STYLE
AND SELF-BORROWING

A Te
Storiella d'amore
E l'uccellino
Terra e mare
Morire?

Salve Regina
"Preghiera" from LE VILLI, Act I
Sole e amore
"Dunque è proprio finito!" from LA BOHÈME, Act III

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

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and The Purposes

Puccini's pre-eminence as a theatrical composer is well displayed in his music and indicated by the fact that most of the literature written about him is focused on his operatic output. As Beethoven is represented by his symphonies and Schubert by his art songs, Puccini is known exclusively for his operas. The composer himself acknowledged this when he stated:

I have never written a Lied or a romance. I need the great window of the stage---There I am at ease... When traveling I cannot see a landscape or hear a word without thinking of a possible dramatic situation.\(^1\)

Indeed he enjoyed international success in his lifetime with his operas, and most of them are still in the standard repertoire of the major opera theaters around the world.

For this reason Puccini's non-operatic works have been considered as insignificant, and not worth any major attention except for their historical interest. However, his non-operatic works have their own value and provided important material for a better understanding of Puccini as a musician. Among these non-operatic compositions belong his seventeen songs for solo voice and keyboard accompaniment as well as the duet, "Vexilla Regis prodeunt" for tenor and bass with organ accompaniment.

From the aforementioned statement by Puccini, what he meant by “Lied or a romance” was the art song in general, not simply the languages he set to music. His songs however, like the arias in his operas, display Puccini’s personal way of composing music to reflect the meaning of the poetry. His compositional technique justifies an examination of the songs of Puccini as one would with art song. It is the primary purpose of this study to discover Puccini’s stylistic development in his songs rather than to evaluate their qualifications as art songs. Through the analysis of melody, harmony, form, and their relationship to the text as well as the treatment of the accompaniment in relation to the vocal line, we can characterize the way in which Puccini handles the intimate scale of the song with piano accompaniment.

The first chapter includes a discussion in several areas to lay the background for the study; the general outlook on Puccini and his non-operatic composition; the art song; and a survey of the Italian solo songs around Puccini’s time. Chapter II examines stylistic aspects of Puccini songs, grouped into three chronological periods. Since some of his songs within a given period share similar musical characteristics of the composer, the focus is on general stylistic features rather than an in-depth study of the individual songs. Only those which represent the most characteristic features of each period are discussed in detail.

Another stylistic consideration addressed in the second chapter is Puccini’s self-borrowing from the songs into his operas. In whole or in part, he reused the materials from many of his earlier songs in later operas. Three of these cases have been chosen to
illustrate the details involved in the transformation of self-borrowing, such as recomposition, expansion of the vocal line and orchestration.

The goal of the present research is twofold: first to provide a discussion of the musical style of Puccini’s songs; and second, to show how Puccini utilized and integrated pre-existent material into the new and larger structure of his operas, and possibly to discover his reasons for such relationships. This analytical study of his songs will provide the stylistic information about his musical thinking and a wider view of Puccini as a composer. It will bring about a greater appreciation of Puccini’s songs, a repertoire overlooked by both scholars and performers alike.

Puccini, The Opera Composer and His Non-operatic Works

Puccini wrote only twelve operas, most of which had tremendous success in his lifetime. This success appointed him as the true heir of Verdi in the lineage of Italian opera and gave him an international reputation throughout Europe and America. Most of his biographers describe him as a composer predestined for opera with an extraordinary eye for the theater. It was the twelve operas that brought him the kind of recognition he always dreamed of as a young composer.

The popularity of his operas at the time of composition and in the present has been explained from many different points of view. Some critics have received them with a highly admiring tone, while others considered the musico-dramatic innovations of Puccini as merely tear-jerking devices. Since there are more than several studies of his operas, the general stylistic overview will suffice for the purpose of the present research.
The operas of Puccini can be divided into three different stylistic periods: the early, the middle, and the late. The early period comprises his first two operas, *Le Villi* (1884) and *Edgar* (1889). Even though they are "minor, flawed" works, these are the operas that awakened Puccini's potential as a theatrical composer. Musically foreshadowing his future operas, they already illustrate his poignant lyrical melodic gift; Puccini, in later years, counts the two arias of Fidelia from *Edgar* as among his favorites. Having written the two operas, the composer was able to form his own concept of opera both musically and dramatically.

The middle period starts with his composition of the *Manon Lescaut* (1893). The infamous story about his working relationship with his librettists relates to this opera, which had as many as six people contributing to the shaping of the final libretto other than Puccini himself. With the huge success of the opera, he firmly established his place as a mature opera composer. With *La Bohème* (1896), Puccini's collaboration with Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, so called the "Holy Trinity," began, a relationship that continued in the other operas of this period: *La Tosca* (1899) and *Madama Butterfly* (1904). Exhibiting musical and dramatic coherence, Puccini showed his mastery in every aspect of opera: the musical description of the atmosphere, characters in the vein of verismo, the exoticism in *Madama Butterfly*, and his "sensuous warmth and melting radiance of the voice line."³

The operas from the last period are *La Fanciulla del West* (1910), *La Rondine*

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(1917), *Il Trittico* (1918), and *Turandot* (unfinished, premiered in 1926). Musically, they are different from the previous operas. As John L. DiGaetani and many others have pointed out, these later operas are Puccini's response to the criticism that he was doing the same kind of opera over and over again. The subtle, experimental harmony and the inspiring orchestral colors, recalling Debussy and Strauss, are something unheard of in his previous operas. They illustrate that Puccini was keenly aware of current musical styles, and that he placed artistic considerations above mere crowd-pleasing popularity. Although they lack the typical Puccinian lyrical phrases, there is abundant lyricism in the arias, which display the composer's increasing concern with musical characterization.

Unlike Verdi, who wrote most of his operas in the prevailing style of that period, Puccini lived at a time when Naturalism was a trend in the arts. Many of Puccini's musico-dramatic innovations can be illuminated by the naturalistic concept. During his active involvement in shaping the librettos, he was concerned not only with the dramatic organization, but also with the natural style of the lines rather than highly versified ones. Rejecting Gabriele D'Annunzio's proposal of two librettos because of their unrealistic, versified expression, Puccini remarked on the poet as follows:

*He lacks the true unadorned, simple human sense. Everything is always a paroxysm, an exaggeration expressed in ultra-expressive terms.*

In musical aspects, an aria generated from the dramatic situation became more meaningful to the development of the story instead of being a traditional static moment of emotional expression of a character. Rodolfo's "Che gelida manina" and Mimi's answer

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4 DiGaetani, p. 28.
to him, "Mi chiamano Mimì," from *La Bohème* are good examples of such case. The strict division between recitative and aria became loose and more flexible according to the dramatic situation. This stylistic flexibility also promotes the natural flow of the drama. In his choral scenes, Puccini employs ensembles not as background observers or commentators, but as participants in the action of a large group of individuals with the specific identities.

Puccini was a mediator between two eras in Italian music history. This is reflected in the style and forms of his operas. There was an increasing interest in instrumental music, aiming ultimately at the reformation of the Italian opera. The melody in traditional fashion is combined with the symphonic exuberance of the new era. Foreign operas by Meyerbeer and Wagner, for example, were performed more frequently and gained in popularity, while exerting new influence in Italy. Wagner's operatic techniques manifested themselves in Puccini through the continuity of drama and music by avoiding the final cadences as well as by the use of recurring motifs. Showing a great deal of interest in subtle orchestration, both Wagner and Puccini explored the symphonic approach to the opera.

Puccini chose subject matter with extreme care. It took him years to decide upon one and to create an opera libretto from a single subject. He was completely aware of his limits and wanted to work subjects that suited his taste and talent. Thus, the operas of Puccini, except the first two, always display a full understanding of the drama and the most effective musical realization of it. The following assessment of Grout on Puccini expresses the mastery of him as a theatrical composer;
Bill Nye remarked of Wagner’s music that it “is better than it sounds”; Puccini’s music, on the contrary, often sounds better than it is, owing to the perfect adjustment of means to ends. He had the prime requisite for an opera composer, an instinct for the theater; to that he added the Italian gift of knowing how to write effectively for singers, an unusually keen ear for new harmonic and instrumental colors, a receptive mind to musical progress, and a poetic imagination excelling in the evocation of dreamlike, fantastic moods.⁶

Alongside the influence of the musical current of the time, the rich heritage of Italian music provided the fundamental elements in shaping Puccini’s individual musical style in his operas and in his other musical compositions. It is interesting to observe that most of the instrumental works by Puccini were written before 1891, while he composed the non-operatic vocal compositions, though not large in number, throughout his entire career. By 1890, Puccini had composed and premiered his first two operas and started work on Manon Lescaut, with which he was to prove himself as an opera composer.

When his international career as a theatrical composer began with the success of that opera, Puccini abandoned any serious composition in non-vocal musical genres.

Except for Crisantemi and Tre minuetti for string quartet (1890), and a piano piece, Scossa elettrica (1899), the majority of instrumental works by Puccini are from his school years: two compositions entitled Preludio sinfonico, an Adagietto, and a Capriccio sinfonico for orchestra, three fugues, and a scherzo and a quartet for strings. There are also unpublished trio for two violins and piano, and a piano piece entitled Finale. These early works lead Michael Elphinstone to assert that Puccini was instrumentally oriented in the years before his first opera.⁷

⁶ Grout, p. 445.
⁷ For further treatment on this subject, see Michael Elphinstone, "Le Ville, Edgar, and the 'Symphonic Element,'" The Puccini Companion (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), p. 61-110.
As early as 1876, according to Gallini’s description, Puccini displayed the acute sense of orchestral colors seen in his first *Preludio sinfonico* in E minor.\(^8\) During the first two years at Milan conservatory, beginning in the fall of 1880 under Antonio Bazzini’s instruction, there is no evidence that Puccini was particularly interested in vocal composition. Bazzini was one of the first generation to promote instrumental music in Italy, and his influence on Puccini is unquestionable. When Bazzini was appointed as the dean of the school in 1882, Ponchielli, an established opera composer of the time, became Puccini’s new teacher. From that year, there are two surviving solo songs on Ghislanzoni’s poems, “Salve regina” and “Ad una morta.”\(^9\)

Even with Ponchielli as his instructor, Puccini wrote only one dramatic *scena ed aria*, “Mentia l’avviso.” Whether the argument of Elphinstone is persuasive or not, Puccini’s early education at the Milan conservatory heavily emphasized instrumental music. There is no doubt that Puccini’s early training and interest in instrumental music eventually provided him with a solid foundation for the skillful handling of orchestral writing in his later operas.

Besides the operas, another genre in which Puccini composed throughout his career was the song. For this reason, it is the only kind of non-operatic work by Puccini that exhibits the musical growth of the composer over the period of time. Puccini’s facility in opera made him a natural composer of songs, and it is in his songs that we see the composer at a more intimate level. In the operas, Puccini could take advantage of the

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\(^8\) Ibid. p. 63.  
\(^9\) It is not known whether Puccini completed “Ad una morta” in his lifetime. Presently, it only exists in its fragments.
extra-musical elements on stage; his solo songs reveal the true artistry of the composer in his treatment of the words and music.

As William Weaver has said, "anything written by a major composer is of interest, even a minor piece; it tells us something about him, about his life, and also his mind." The non-operatic works of Puccini are his minor works through which we can obtain a more comprehensive view of the composer. Though not all are masterpieces of song literature, they do have their own values of purely musical interest in relation to the poem.

The Art Song

A definition of "art song" is difficult for a variety of reasons. Some define it according to their own experiences in the field, while others have scholarly knowledge of the term through a historical study of its development. Both practical experience and academic information are invaluable resources in defining the art song. Still, the ambiguity exists in various musical styles of art songs, as well as in the multiple definitions that the term itself suggests in all of the major singing languages such as German, Italian, French and English.

As argued by many on the subject of art song, it is certain features emphasized in the art song that distinguish the genre from the other types of vocal composition, rather than some external devices or the mediums required for performance. To define the

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10 From the foreword in Kaye, The Unknown Puccini, vii.
11 By such authors as Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Barbara Meister, Hall, and Whitton. For the sources, see the Bibliography under their names.
genre, then, we must explore the characteristics that are important and unique to the art song.

The definition of art song in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* reads:

> A song intended for the concert repertory . . . art song traditionally is a setting of a text of high literary quality and . . . includes an accompaniment that is specified by the composer rather than improvised or arranged by or for the performer.12

In an art song, the music is an expression of the personal feeling of the composer who is inspired by a poem. James Hall in his book *The Art Song*, calls this unity of poem and music as the purpose of song in creating its “characteristic beauty” and explains it as follows:

> Song is a dual art and at its best there is a fusion of text and tone. Melody and the span of its phrases, harmony and the color of its chord, form and the shape of its being – all result from the text, which, prior to song, stood alone, but now in song finds a fuller meaning.13

A poem in its content as well as poetic devices such as rhyme, rhythmic meter and the formal structure influence the musical setting of it.

Considering the weight taken by a poem in art song, one question to be asked concerns the “quality” of the text. Evaluating the absolute quality of a poem as an object for a musical setting is a subjective decision. Not all of the settings of “high quality poetry” by different composers are now considered to be art songs. Rather, a good poem is the one that brings out the best of a composer when its inspiration agrees with his sensitivity, as Castelnuovo-Tedesco stated:

> the poem must have an “expressive core”; it should express a “state of soul,” whatever the musician’s preferences may cause the nature of that state to be; it

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should, in any case, be capable of awakening a “resonance” in the composer’s soul.\textsuperscript{14}

Two extreme cases of songs written to “not so high quality” poems can be found in the delightful songs by Bernstein of cookbook recipes and in Milhaud’s setting of a gardener’s price-list.\textsuperscript{15}

It is not to say that there is no preferred type of poetry set to the art song. As seen in the romantic poetry, which offered an ideal text to the composers of the period, the poetry should be expressive, evoking definite moods. It is even better if the words have a melodious quality of their own and flow rhythmically. However, the poem should also provide a certain “room” for the music, expressed in a “perfect, simple and direct, clear, and harmonious form, but without too many words.”\textsuperscript{16} It is the way a composer enhances and intensifies the textual expression in his musical setting that is meaningful in art song.

The poem should be treated seriously in its musical setting as the opposite of popular songs or folk songs. The music should not obscure the intelligibility of the poem, but it must contribute to the poem’s meaning through its direct appeal to the emotion of the listener. As Meister noted, the text and setting are “complementary; the music presents the emotional analogues in an abstract manner while the language makes the occasion specific for the emotion exposed.”\textsuperscript{17} It is not to translate the poem into music, but to create a new vehicle through which the poetic ideas can be communicated with the audience in the most expressive way.

\textsuperscript{14} Castelnuovo-Tedesco, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{15} “La Bonne Cuisine” by Bernstein and “Catalogue de fleurs” by Milhaud.
\textsuperscript{16} Castelnuovo-Tedesco, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{17} Barbara Meister, \textit{Art Song: The Marriage of Music and Poetry} (Durango: Hollowbrook Publishing, 1992), xvi
There are two broad interrelated elements of poetry that influence the musical setting: the external elements such as form and structure as well as the diction of the words, and the internal elements such as the general atmosphere and the meaning of the poem. Regarding the external elements, the music reflects the poetic meter and the stress of syllables. The metrical feet of poetry closely parallel the strong and weak beats of music, while the musical phrase is related to the grouping of the feet. The art song composer’s task in this matter is to integrate the textual and musical rhythms with imagination that deviates from the mechanical matching. The overall organization of a poem may also be reflected in the forms of the song, such as the strophic or through-composed form.

Where the internal elements of the poetry are concerned, the composer has almost unlimited opportunities to exhibit his unique, personal style. Utilizing the various musical elements such as melodic lines, harmonic idioms, note intervals as well as tonal relationships, a composer displays “his way of reading” a poem. He may emphasize more the general atmosphere rather than the details of the text. In a strophic song, for example, where the different verses are sung to the same music, a composer would try to find a tune that depicts the overall ideas or mood of the poem.

Conversely, every detail of the words can be reflected more specifically in the through-composed songs. Tone-painting is one example of such an attempt. The spinning wheel, the galloping horse, and the murmuring of brooks in Schubert songs, and the downward melodic line with detached repetition of the word “drop” in Purcell’s
“Music for a while” illustrate this technique. Even if not directly, a composer can portray the meaning of words and lines of a poem by more subtle musical means. It usually is the purpose of any critical study of a composer’s style to reveal his imagination of those expressions.

The importance of the accompaniment is the other key point in describing the characteristics of art songs. The accompaniment takes the role of an equal partner to the vocal melody. With the invention of the pianoforte in the early eighteenth century and its wide expressive range, the composer have the freedom to interpret the poem in the instrumental as well as in the vocal part. The style of the accompaniment has developed from a simple, almost monotonous harmonic support following the vocal line faithfully, to the more complicated harmonic and rhythmic patterns interacting with the vocal melody.

In tone-painting, the composer gave the piano accompaniment the task of providing an essential background picture for the scene. Moreover, the accompaniment often starts and finishes a song with independent musical material over which the vocal line recites the poetic words, as seen in some of the Lieder by Schumann. The accompaniment of art songs participates actively in interpreting the poem, so that the musical depiction clarifies and enhances the meaning of the poem. In art song, both the singer and the pianist are in the service of the overall message of the song, that is “the composer’s voice.”

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The characteristics of art song can be described in two major elements: putting the primary importance on the expression of text through its musical treatment, and the elevated role of the accompaniment. These are the criteria by which the songs of Puccini will be evaluated and examined.

The Italian Solo Songs around Puccini’s Time

Despite the various attempts to define the art song, it still provokes many arguments especially when the term is applied to the non-operatic Italian songs of the nineteenth century. Opera eclipsed all other forms of musical expression in Italy of that time, and the art song developed in countries other than Italy. While the German Lied took on a new lyrical development from the Berlin School in the mid-eighteenth century and finally reached the highest artistic level in Schubert’s songs, Italy was still preoccupied with opera. The operatic specialists had neither the time nor the need to write art songs. The shortage of good lyric poetry is also one of the reasons for the lack of Italian art song in the nineteenth century. As seen in the development of German Lieder, the art song requires a text of high literary worth since it is a simultaneous presentation of a poem and musical work.

The Italian favoritism of melody at the expense of all the other musical elements can be another convincing explanation for the lack of art songs. As Henry T. Finck said, it often results in “disregarding the implications of the words if they did not happen to fit the preconceived melodies.” The passionate Italian temperament prefers expressing the human emotions through beautiful melodic lines rather than reserved and
rationalized musical expression. Thus, Puccini spoke of himself as an Italian in the following statement:

I try to follow out my own feelings. My temperament is essentially dramatic... The real modern Italians express themselves. They couldn't follow out their ideas in elaborated polyphony, for that is not the way they think. They are emotional.\(^{21}\)

The primacy of melody also originates from the Italian language. The lyrical nature of the language seems to influence the Italian melody to follow lyrical curved lines. Even when the development of Italian art song reached it highest level in the twentieth century, the lyrical quality of melodies was still maintained. This is in contrast to Impressionistic recitative style or German Sprechstimme.

During this period of a lack of interest in the Italian art song, solo song activity was influenced stylistically by three types of songs: folk songs, Neapolitan songs and operatic arias. The songs by Luigi Battista (1806-1860), the only composer who was a prolific song writer in the first half of the nineteenth century, are written primarily in folk song style. With their amorous subject matter, they have simple rhythmic patterns repeated throughout a song, sometimes sequentially. The harmonic structure is based mainly on major triads with very few modulations. Melodically, they are simple and diatonic, moving within small intervals or scale steps.

Most of the important opera composers of the century also wrote a few romanze da camera, particularly Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868), Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848), Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835), Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901), and Ruggiero


Leoncavallo (1858-1919). They were written mainly for amateur singers to provide vocal entertainment in private salons. These songs display many characteristics of the operatic style with dominating vocal lines of flowing melodies. Some of them even have elaborated cadenzas and vocal embellishments. Many names were used by composers of the time to title their songs, such as “romanza,” “canto,” “lirica,” “melodia,” and “canzone,” and did not discriminate any stylistic differences.

Around the middle of the century with the nationalistic movement, the native folk song gained a great deal of interest in Italy. In the southern part of Italy around Naples, there was a larger body of folk and folk-like music than anywhere else in the country. Mainly dealing with sentimental love poems, these canzoni napoletane are not of the highest artistic quality. However, they gained such reputation that “Neapolitan” gave its name to the major body of popular songs as well as folk-like songs composed after that time. “Vieni sul mar” by an unknown composer, for instance, was originally a Venetian song, but today is categorized as a Neapolitan song, referring to its style rather than its place of origin.

The general characteristics of Neapolitan songs are the simplicity in subject matter, form, and the “beautiful melody with a certain primitive energy.” All vocally conceived, they have relatively uncomplicated, smoothly-flowing rhythmic schemes that easily falls into traditional two- or four-bar phrases. The melodies often outline the supporting harmonies that are constructed conservatively within major triads. The altered

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chords are usually limited to secondary dominants and the chords borrowed from the opposite modality. Written often in strophic form, they share many traits in common with folk songs, but in a more sophisticated way. The accompaniment functions as a supporter of the vocal line rather than an equal partner.

Among others, Francesco Paolo Tosti (1846-1916) is one of the most important song writers in the nineteenth century. Devoting himself solely to the genre of songs, he composed mostly in the Neapolitan style to gain public popularity without writing any operas. His music also reflects an influence of Italian operas and folk songs. With the songs from his later period, Tosti reached an artistic level higher than most of the other composers of romanza da camera. The popularity of his songs is seen in the number that were included in the concert repertoire of the well-known opera stars of the period.

Other composers known for their canzoni napolitane are Eduardo Di Capua (1865-1917), the composer of “O sole mio”; Luigi Denza (1846-1922), who wrote “Funiculi, funicula”; Teodoro Cottrau (1827-1879), the composer of “Santa Lucia.” There were also a number of lesser-known song composers, many of whom were teachers of singing. It is thought that these singer/composers were the ones who first realized the need for a better quality of song literature by the end of the nineteenth century.

In the latter part of the century, a new musical awareness was initiated by mainly non-operatic musicians. These Italians were mostly instrumentalists who studied in other countries such as Germany, Austria, and France. They strove to liberate the state of Italian music from its operatic supremacy. They promoted concerts consisting of
symphonies and quartets written by such classical composers as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. These early reformers include Antonio Bazzini (1818-1897), the first composition teacher of Puccini at Milan conservatory; Giovanni Sgambati (1841-1914), who wrote more than forty songs as well as other Wagnerian style instrumental works; Giuseppe Martucci (1856-1909), whose songs are valued for the high artistic level achieved as early as 1886; and Ferrucio Busoni (1866-1924), the most international figure who laid the foundation for the future reformation of musical life in Italy.

Italian songs reach a higher level of artistic worth in the next generation of composers, beginning about 1910. The songs by the composers of the generazione ottanta,² so called because they were born in 1880s, display all the traits of genuine art songs. They often use texts either written by the composer himself or chosen from ancient Greek, the Bible, or oriental sources, as well as from contemporary writers. Stylistically utilizing contemporary musical idioms, the musical setting of the text shows more careful attention not only to the inflection but also to the meaning of the text. The accompaniment begins to play an equal role of interpreting the poem as does the vocal melody. The level of artistry to which the German Lied composers rose in the nineteenth century, is found for the first time in the songs by Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936), Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880-1968), Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973), Alfredo Casella (1883-1947), Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968), and many others.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF PUCCINI'S SONGS

Stylistic Overview of the Songs

Puccini composed seventeen solo songs and a duet for tenor and bass. Only the thirteen surviving solo songs and the duet are published in the edition of *Puccini songs* and also in *The Unknown Puccini* by Michael Kaye. These are the first authoritative historical studies on Puccini songs. Regarding the other four songs, three are presently lost, and the "Ad una morta," which exists only in fragments, was completed in Puccini's style by Kaye at the request of Placido Domingo for a recording.

The solo songs of Puccini are generally considered to be the minor works of a major operatic composer. The songs that were used as the thematic material in his later operatic output earned a little more attraction mainly because of their transformation into a dramatic context. However, these "minor works" are means to better understand the composer as well as a valuable resource for vocal repertoire. The songs display Puccini's growth as a composer and provide a wider view of the composer's musical world.

Puccini songs can be grouped into three chronological and stylistic periods. The early period from 1875 to 1883, represents Puccini's student years in Lucca and Milan. After his graduation in July 1883 from the Milan conservatory, he waited five years
before writing another song. The second period, from 1888 to 1899, corresponds approximately with the most prolific middle period of his operatic career. The songs from 1902 to 1919, represents the last period and show another leap in Puccini’s artistry.

This chapter will observe Puccini’s major stylistic changes through each period by examining various musical elements of the songs, such as form, harmony, melodic language, and the poetic expression. The scope of the present research includes only the thirteen solo songs that are available for performance. “Ad una morta” in its incomplete form and the duet, “Vexilla Regis prodeunt,” however, will be referred to whenever it is appropriate. To avoid duplication of information, the historical aspect of each song will be limited to minimal discussion. Since the songs share some common musical idioms used by Puccini throughout the different periods, the focus will center on the characteristics of each period.

The First Period: 1875 - 1883

During this first period, Puccini composed seven solo songs with keyboard accompaniment, three of which are either lost or unavailable for a performance. The only duet, “Vexilla Regis prodeunt,” written in around 1878 also belongs to this early period. These songs are written during Puccini’s school years in his native town Lucca and in Milan. The surviving four solo songs are chronologically “A te,” “Salve Regina” (a song of praise to Virgin Mary), “Mentia l’avviso” (a dramatic setting in the traditional recitative and aria style), and “Storiella d’amore” (Puccini’s first published composition).

24 For the detailed historical information, see M. Kay’s The Unknown Puccini.
As a whole, these songs give an impression of Puccini as a young composer who is striving to find his own style, but whose search has not concluded. Even within this period, Puccini's progressive development is evident. When the songs from the Milan years are compared with those from the Lucca years, it is noticeable that his musical language is improved and personalized; this is apparent in the transition from the Neapolitan style of "A te" to "Salve Regina." The latter song expresses the religious atmosphere of the text in its idiomatic organ accompaniment and displays Puccini's personal style in its long lyric vocal line.

In "Storiella d'amore," the composer hints at his operatic imagination. The poem is Ghislanzoni's account of the illicit love between Paolo da Verrucchio and Francesca da Rimini. In the first stanza of the poem, written in classical endecasillabi (eleven syllables), there are direct quotations from the Dante's Divine Comedy. It is obvious that Puccini found the possibility of a dramatic situation for musical interpretation in this poem. With the abundance of performing instructions, Puccini infuses characteristics of his personal style into the melody and harmony and also in the accompaniment.

The formal structures of these early songs illustrate Puccini's growth as a composer. The two compositions from the Lucca years have a three-part form: A A B for "A te" and A B A for "Vexilla Regis prodeunt." In both, part B is written in contrasting tempo, meter and tonality. It is so completely separated from the previous section that Puccini had to put either a coda or a full repetition of the A section at the end of the songs.

25 The first and the third lines of the initial stanza are from the Canto V of the Inferno from the Divine Comedy. In Ghislanzoni's poem, it is Paolo who speaks, whereas it is Francesca in the Divine Comedy.
to achieve a sense of balance and unity. In his songs from Milan years, he more subtly
treats the contrasting section so that the unity of a whole song is not disturbed. For
instance, "Salve Regina" has a formal division of A B in thematic contrast only; the same
meter and tonality of F Major are used throughout. Instead of a complete separation
between the sections, in "Storiella d'amore," each section is linked by way of a transition.

The structural organization in "Storiella d'amore" exhibits Puccini's concern with
the formal balance of music more than the poetic interest. The music is cast in a three
part form of A B A'. The A' is a repetition of part A expanded by an insertion of an extra
eight measures. Representing the melodic phrase of four measures with the lower case of
alphabet, the following diagram explains the difference between the two parts.

\[
\begin{align*}
A: & \quad a \quad b \quad c \\
A': & \quad a \quad x \quad b \quad c
\end{align*}
\]

The inserted "x" section does not seem to make much sense at first glance.
However, a closer examination of the song reveals the intention of the composer. This
new section of eight measures makes a formal balance with part B which happens to be
eight measures of length. The over-all structure of the song is shown in the diagram that
follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>poem form</th>
<th>1st stanza</th>
<th>refrain</th>
<th>2nd stanza</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>themes</td>
<td>A (I)</td>
<td>B (V)</td>
<td>A' (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of measures</td>
<td>4 4 4 8</td>
<td>4 4 8 4</td>
<td>4 4 4 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>measures</td>
<td>20 in total</td>
<td></td>
<td>20 in total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It seems that the formal balance in structure as well as in length was one of the
principal concerns of Puccini at this time. Most of the other songs from this period also
achieve the balance between the various sections by giving them equal (or very close to equal) length. The repetition of words or phrases of the text is unavoidable in the extra music employed for formal balance. In this particular song, the internal structure of three parts can be understood as two equal external divisions reflecting the stanzas of the poem. This is supported by the fact that Puccini has set the refrain of “Noi leggevamo insieme, Ah! Ah! (We were reading together, ah!)”\textsuperscript{26} as a transitional phrase to the second stanza.

The “x” section of the part A' also suggests the dramatic meaning through which Puccini shows his sensitivity to the development of the story. The text of this section reads: “Eco alla voce mia/ Eco faceano i suoi sospir” (Echoing my voice/ Her sighs were echoing my voice), a poetic reference of the Greek myth of the “Echo and Narcissus.” Up to this point, the poem explains the situation rather objectively: “we were sitting together reading a sad love story.” It is in these two lines however, that the narrator expresses a personal feeling for the first time, and the story changes to a different direction: they fall in love with each other.

Puccini brings out this dramatic turning point through his music very effectively. He restates the beginning of part A as if he were going to complete the regular A B A form. However, after the statement of first phrase, he makes a transition to introduce new musical material in a slower tempo, \textit{Lento}, with an unstable swinging harmonic background focused on F# Major. With the declamatory-like vocal melody in a descending line, the “x” section gives an operatic impression that draws the attention to

\textsuperscript{26} This and other English translations of Puccini' songs are by M. Kaye.
the psychological change of the narrator and his lover (Ex.1). Following this section, functioning as a kind of a false recapitulation, the song is closed by completing the rest of part A', repeating the second stanza of the poem. Puccini gives his personal touch to a song, which would have been otherwise an ordinary song in a popular Neapolitan style with the regular four-measure phrase over a distinctly syncopated accompaniment.

Ex. 1) “Storiella d’amore” measures 44-48

Puccini expresses the poetic content of the text through various musical devices. Although the music is dominated by melody, the general atmosphere as well as the more direct reflection of the text to a certain degree can be found in these early songs. For example, in measures 32-35 of “A Te,” the chromatic diminished-seventh chordal progression as well as the unresolved suspension describes the uneasiness of mind of the poet who is “so far away from his beloved” (Ex. 2). 27 In the middle section of “Vexilla Regis prodeunt,” from measure 30 through 62, which starts in G Minor (the parallel key of the original G major) as the text refers to the suffering of Jesus on the cross, the

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27 The word reads: “Da te cosi lontano/ io soffro, io soffro assai” (When I am so far away from you, I suffer, I suffer so much).
constant shift between major and minor mode according to the content of the text also illustrates such instances.

Ex. 2) “A Te” measures 32-35

There is no doubt that Puccini took a full advantage of the dramatic text of “Mentia l’avviso” for the musical expression, especially in the recitatives. This piece is not the type one would expect from Puccini’s mature style. Being the traditional recitative and aria proper, it is written in the musical style prevailing of the time. The lyric melody of the aria proper, which is better known as the theme for “Donna non vidi mai” from Manon Lescaut, makes nice contrast with the dramatic recitative. The nature of the music, however, does not seem to convey the distressed mind of the protagonist of the text at any level. The lyric quality of the melody, disregarding the content of the poem, reminds one of his weaknesses of musical characterization in his mature operas.

It is the harmonic language Puccini uses the most to reflect the meaning of the text in the aforementioned examples. He uses no innovative harmonic idioms, but the harmonies that are characteristic of the romantic period. In “A te,” the D Major tonality
is established through the long piano introduction. However, the tonal focus already becomes unstable when the vocal melody comes in, suggesting F# Minor. The whole effect of this creates a sense of longing and movement, which is the general mood of the poem as well as its romantic spirit.

Simple in a sense, Puccini’s predilection in harmony is foreshadowed in this early period. He uses many non-harmonic tones such as appoggiaturas and suspensions, sometimes unresolved. The tonal progression to third-related key is rather abrupt, while the progression to the dominant (and subdominant) key is preceded by a proper cadence or a transitional phrase. In “A te” for instance, the tonal focus shifts from D Major–F# Minor–A Major for the first half, whereas the second half passes through G Major–B Major and back to D Major, the tonic of the piece. The two large parts of the song (measures 1-64 and measures 65-100) in the subdominant relationship from D Major to G Major are separated by the perfect cadence as well as by the meter change. In the recitative of “Mentia l’avviso,” the tonality fluctuates between the upper and the lower third of the original Db Major, respectively in F Minor and Bb Major, displaying the third relationship without any preparation for the new tonality.

It is the beauty of his melodic line for which Puccini is remembered. There have been several attempts to explain what the “Puccinian melody” is in terms of involved techniques and intervals. However, there is a certain characteristic that cannot be explained in purely technical terms because it is the instinctive and intuitive response to the text that comes from who Puccini is. Being an Italian, Puccini surely knew how to write a melody that was not only an expression of his own emotion, but also a tool to
evoke the kind of emotion he intended from the listener. The Puccinian melody starts to be shaped already in this early period even if not in its full strength.

The first song, “A Te,” exhibits the influence of the Neapolitan song by its amorous subject matter, the fervent melodic line reiterating on a single note over chordal accompaniment, and the ornamented notes in the vocal line. Puccini uses this type of ornamentation of the vocal line more often in his early operas than in his mature style operas (Ex. 3-a, b, c). The popular style is reinforced by the rhythmic patterns which dominate throughout the song. The use of rhythmic pattern is one of the prevailing tendencies through out this early period.

Ex. 3) Vocal ornamentation

a) “A Te” measures 34-35

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\text{\textbf{Ex. 3-a: Vocal ornamentation}}
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b) Anna’s aria “Se come voi piccina,” Act I from Le Villi

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\text{\textbf{Ex. 3-b: Anna's aria}}
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c) Fidelia’s aria “O fior del giorno,” Act I from Edgar

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\text{\textbf{Ex. 3-c: Fidelia's aria}}
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The melodic line of "Salve Regina" becomes more characteristic of Puccini than the previous songs in terms of the note progression and the sequential use of a phrase. Especially the four sixteenth notes of the repeated rhythmic pattern foreshadow the style associated with the later Puccini. The syllabic setting of the sixteenth notes, the last of which skips to the interval of the fourth or the fifth, makes accurate rhythmic rendition almost impossible and gives the impression of "perpetual stopping and starting" (Ex. 4).  

Ex. 4) "Salve Regina" measures 17-20

\[\text{Sei la del mar di... Sei la del mar... dell'immoral fulgor...}\]

The text setting of this period in general displays the weakness of the young Puccini as a songwriter. As discussed in the Chapter I, there was such an emphasis on the melody in the Nineteenth century Italian songs that the implication of the text was often neglected. In most of Puccini’s songs from this period, it seems that the composer assigned the syllables of the text to the preconceived melody without much consideration of the poem. Even though there is certain progressive improvement in this matter throughout the songs, the musical accent does not always carry the textual accent in the most proper way. There are also many repetitions of the words and phrases for musical balance rather than for expressive purpose.

\[\text{28For further discussion on this melodic style of Puccini, see Mosco Carner, } \textit{Puccini: A Critical Biography}\]


All songs from this period except "A te," have long prelude and postlude using the thematic material from the vocal melody. The prelude plays the traditional role of setting the mood and tonality, and the postlude gives a unity to the songs by echoing the same or similar theme as the prelude. The accompaniment is basically a harmonic supporter to the vocal melody. Even if not as an equal interpreter of the poem with the voice, the piano part exhibits some of sharing the melodic interest with the vocal line (Ex. 5).

Ex. 5) "Salve Regina" measures 21-25

The songs from this early period foreshadow the mature Puccini in many ways, even though there are a few things yet to be learned. In their formal structures, Puccini emphasizes the musical balance between the parts by giving them comparable length and weight. While the songs from this period are influenced by the popular style of Neapolitan songs, those from his Milan years already show Puccini’s personal characteristics in many ways. The detailed performing instructions which exist in abundance in his mature operatic works can be found in the last one of the early songs, “Storiella d’amore.” The song also has many musical idioms of Puccini that are persistent
for the rest of his creative life: the syncopated chordal accompaniment on the right hand with the left hand doubling the vocal line, and the dramatic interpretation of the text in a non-operatic song.

The Second Period: 1888 - 1896

Puccini composed his first opera *Le Villi* in 1884. The favorable reception of the opera led him to association with the Ricordi publishing company and a commission from them for another opera, *Edgar*. By the year of 1888, Puccini became a fairly well established young musician who demonstrated his ability as a dramatic composer in his first two operas. Through the two early operas, he gained more experiences and understanding with vocal writing, in which the musical interpretation of the text is the key element of the compositional procedure. The solo songs from this period also illustrate such evolution of Puccini in their stylistic aspects.

Five songs were written during the second period, one of which, the “Solfeggi,” is thought to be lost. They are mostly occasional compositions written for certain friends of the composer. “E l’uccellino,” is a lullaby dedicated to the child of Guglielmo Lippi, one of Puccini’s Lucca friends who died shortly before the baby was born; “Avanti Urania!” is a ceremonial song written for the launching of the boat purchased by his hunting comrade, Marchese Carlo Ginori-Lisci. The lost “Solfeggi,” a set of vocal exercise is supposed to have been written for a private occasion rather than for pedagogical purposes. The two other songs, “Sole e amore” and “Inno a Diana,” first appeared in magazines as musical supplements: the first for the *Paganini* and the latter for *Sant’Uberto*, a magazine named after the patron saint of hunters.
Each song from this period is characterized by the occasion for which it was written, as well as a certain progressive development in style. Doubtless the tremendous success of his operas during this most prolific period, limited the time and energy of the composer might have had for writing songs. Nevertheless, the personal occasions enabled him to write a handful of solo songs. Within this period, however, the earliest song, “Sole e amore,” displays as much individuality as “E l’uccellino,” the last song written of the group.

In general, the songs of this period are written in two- or three-part forms, and the formal structures coincide with the layout of the poem. They illustrate Puccini’s concern for the poetic interpretation rather than the formal balance of the music. As a result, there are few repetitions of words or phrases, and the poem is set to music that is faithful to the original form of the text. The only exception to this is the “Inno a Diana,” which is in rondo form of A B A C A. Each stanza of the poem is set to its corresponding part of the music. The first repetition of A, however, is a musical section the composer inserted to preserve the rondo form. He repeats both the words and music of the second half of the original part A. The choice of form in this particular song is suitable for the hymn-like nature of the song.

Puccini exhibits a more sophisticated melody in the songs of this period. The fluid style that characterizes Puccini’s music is skillfully illustrated especially in the “Sole e amore” and the “E l’uccellino.” In the first song, the piano introduction of two measures sets the rhythmic division of compound duple meter rather than the triple meter
suggested by time signature of \( \frac{3}{4} \). The duple division is supported by the harmonic change from the tonic to the super tonic on beat two of the first measure (Ex. 6).

Ex. 6) “Sole e amore” measures 1-2

While the accompaniment of the song continues its same duple division, the rhythm of the vocal line centers around a triple division. This rhythmic conflict between the accompaniment and the voice, two against three, creates a hemiola effect. The syncopated start of the vocal melody as well as the hemiola weakens the overall metric pulse of the initial phrase of the song, thus displaying a more sophisticated taste of the composer (Ex. 7).

Ex. 7) “Sole e amore” measures 3-5
The melodic phrases, especially in the first half of the song, display an irregular grouping of measures rather than the traditional square type of two-bar phrases. The vocal phrases are interspersed by piano accompaniment, which provides a sense of space and slows the pace for the first section of the song.

The musical fluidity is enhanced by the fact that melodic cadences do not always coincide with those of the accompaniment. For instance, in measure ten, the voice concludes a musical phrase, while the accompaniment continues its activity preparing for the next musical phrase (Ex. 8). Puccini emphasizes this by using an unusual rhythmic pattern for the last two syllables of the phrase. Since the metric accent of the syllables are the strong-weak combination of the trochee, the normal rhythmic articulation would be a long-short pattern. The composer, however, uses the rhythmic pattern of short-long instead, leaving the voice to hold one note while the piano carries out the musical interest.

Ex. 8) “Sole e amore” measures 9-13

The effect is more clearly understood when it is compared with the second half of the song where he uses the long-short rhythmic pattern for the same type of phrase endings. The second half of the song is organized more densely with regular phrases in
groups of two measures. It starts with a faster pace than the first half, eventually reaching the climax of the song.

Most of those techniques are employed in “E l’uccellino,” which shares the similarity with the earlier “Sole e amore” in the relationship between the vocal melody and the accompaniment. The piano part in both of the songs plays an important role in interpreting the poem. Both songs have two distinct layers of musical activity: one in the vocal line and the other in the now more independent accompaniment. They interact with each other, as we have seen earlier, sharing the musical interest. In measures 28-29 of “Sole e amore,” the piano part alone carries the closing melody for the phrase (Ex. 9).

Ex. 9 “Sole e amore” measures 27-29

In these particular songs, “Sole e amore” and “E l’uccellino,” there are some indication of tone-painting. The figure in the accompaniment in measures 7-8 and 14-21 of “Sole e amore” imitates the violin techniques. The first resembles double stopping, which can only be articulated by arpeggiation on the violin. The second example sounds like the open fifth of the string tuning (Ex. 10-a,b) These violin references are Puccini’s
way of illustrating the association with Paganini, the magazine in which the song was published. In the introduction of “E l’uccellino,” the piano mimics the bird of the poem in acciaccatura and in hopping staccatos (Ex. 11). With all the formal and musical details, the shorter prelude and postlude illustrate again that in this period, Puccini was more concerned with how the text was represented in music.

Ex. 10) “Sole e amore”

a) measures 7-8

b) measures 14-15

Ex. 11) “E l’uccellino” measures 1-2

The harmonic language of this period is conventional and relatively simple. The occasional use of the ninth chord and the shift between major and minor modes add sophistication in harmonic coloring. In measures 22-25 of “Avanti Urania!,” the text reads: “Simile al mio signor/ Mite d’aspetto quanto e forte in cuor” (Like my owner/ As mild in appearance as he is strong at heart). The tonal change from the previous D Major
to A Minor with expressive marks such as *meno* and *dolce* depicts the affection toward the “owner of the ship,” Puccini’s patron and friend.

The songs from the middle period come closer to the concept of art song in many ways. The melodic setting of the text is greatly improved as the musical accent generally coincides with the poetic accent. The music reflects the “prosody” of the poetry without losing its own interest. Simple and less elaborate in style, the music enhances the textual expression. The formal structure of the music is faithful to that of the poem, avoiding excessive repetition of the words and phrases for musical balance. Dictated by the occasions for which they were written, “Avanti Urania!” and “Inno a Diana” are highly ceremonial in nature, while the others, “Sole e amore” and “E l’uccellino,” display more of Puccini’s personal style. Specifically in the latter two, the piano accompaniment plays a decisive role in interpreting the poetry while creating a more fluid musical style. The accompaniment describes not only the general atmosphere, but also a detailed textual content through the tone-painting.

The Third Period: 1902-1919

Beginning at the turn of the century, Puccini’s compositional style underwent major changes in many aspects. This was apparent in both his operas and songs. The songs from this last period were composed either upon commission or invitation. In 1902, Edoardo de Fonseca invited Puccini to compose music for *Novissima*, an annual publication on arts and literature founded in the previous year. The second issue of the publication was devoted to a theme, “The Sea.” Upon Fonseca’s invitation, Puccini
composed the song “Terra e mare.”

In 1904 Puccini composed another song, “Canto d’anime,” for the Gramophone Recording Company while he was supervising the premiere production of *Madama Butterfly*. Listening the song, there are several passages that resemble the opera in its melodic and harmonic language. According to a letter to Luigi Illica, the poet of the text, Puccini originally planned this piece for tenor, having Caruso in his mind. “Canto d’anime,” however, was finally recorded by the dramatic soprano Ida Giacomelli in 1907.

The song “Morire?,” was Puccini’s contribution to an album of music dedicated to Queen Elena di Savoia around 1917. The album was sold to benefit the Italian Red Cross as an relief effort after World War I. The poetry was written by Giuseppe Adami in the manner of monologue of the living to the dead. Kaye described the song as “one of Puccini’s most unusual compositions” in its harmony underscoring the text.

Two other songs were composed in Puccini’s last period, “Casa mia” and “Inno a Roma.” These songs do not play an important role in Puccini’s musical style; the text as well as the musical setting do not show the composer’s serious consideration. “Casa mia” was composed for a magazine, *La casa*, in which one of Puccini’s villas was advertised for sale. “Inno a Roma” was originally conceived as a congregational song for the celebration of the birthday of the Rome. Puccini was very reluctant to write the song, and he called it “a real piece of trash.” The poem exhibits a spirit of fascism in

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30 The music at the words “Nelle notti del cuore un ideale” (mm. 12-13) and “Inneggia solitario l’usignolo” (mm. 16-18) is especially evocative of *Madama Butterfly*.
31 Kaye, *The Unknown Puccini*, p.120.
exalting the glory of Rome which caused this song to be associated with Mussolini when he came to power.

The poem “Terra e mare,” was written by Enrico Panzacchi, a leading Bolognese critic. The poem evokes an impressionistic atmosphere, and its artistic quality is well reflected in Puccini’s musical treatment of the text. The first phrase (mm.1-4) reflects the image of wind-blowing in the poem in its melodic figure as well as in its expressive mark of messa di voce. The underlying harmony with its modal coloring (F phrygian) and the parallel chordal progressions is suggestive of the remoteness, which is the general atmosphere of the poem, (Ex. 12).

Ex. 12) “Terra e mare” measures 1-3

The piano accompaniment supports the poetic expression also by carrying a significant melodic interest as in measures 10-12 (Ex.13). In measures 18-19, it is the piano accompaniment that ends the second section of the song with a melodic phrase derived from modified sequence (Ex.14). The same melodic contour is used at the end of the piece. It is augmented rhythmically and transposed to F Major, the parallel key of the home key, F Minor. These make the piece musically more coherent.
Ex. 13) “Terra e mare” measures 10-12

Ex. 14) “Terra e mare” measures 14-19

There are two versions of “Terra e mare”: the one according to Puccini’s autograph, and the first published version. Their difference can be noted in measures
20-22. In the autograph, the vocal line covers a wider range that expresses the content of the text: "il vento piu forte tempesta (the wind rages stronger)" (Ex. 15). In the latter version, the melody is identical to the beginning of the song, giving a more reserved expression of the text.

Ex. 15) "Terra e mare (autograph version)" measures 20-21

In autumn of 1903, while Puccini was in Paris supervising the production of *La Tosca*, at the Opera Comique, he had a chance to hear *Pelleas et Melisande* and met Debussy. In his letter to Ricordi later, he expressed his fondness for Debussy's new harmonies and transparent orchestration. This influence is reflected in his operas and songs of the last period. In "Canto d'anime" there is an extensive use of pedal point at the beginning part of the song. This "dissonant arpeggiation" is associated with the post-tertian functional harmony of Debussy. The resulting non-functional chords in parallel movement illustrate the impressionistic association.

In addition to the harmonic implication, the influence of impressionism is further supported by the accompaniment in measures 6-7. The treble part of the piano plays a

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33 Mosco Carner, p. 159.
melodic line built on the intervals of tritone and octave in measure 6; this melodic line progresses to a chord that includes the note "G," a non-harmonic tone of the added sixth in measure 7. This is very unusual for Puccini because generally in his songs, the melody of the accompaniment doubles the vocal line or plays a counter melody of its own. In these measures, however, the melodic line is rather fragmental, emphasizing the note intervals arouse the feeling of Impressionism (Ex. 16).

Ex. 16) "Canto d'anime" measures 6-7

A further influence of impressionism is seen in "Morire?." From the very beginning of the song, the composer scored his music in such a way that the perfect consonance (5th, 8ve) were emphasized. The hollow sonorities of these intervals are an impressionistic device (Ex. 17). In measures 38-44, the parallel chordal progression built on the intervals of the fifth and the octave can be considered as another impressionistic idiom. There is also a touch of tritone harmony in the bass part of this passage (Ex. 18).
Ex. 17) “Morire?” measures 1-5

The musical setting of the text in measure 21-27 of the song displays another unusual practice of the composer. Puccini uses quintuplet rhythmic division on the words “E la semplicità” against the duple division of the accompaniment. And in measures 24-27, he sets each syllable of the words to repeated eighth notes, reiterated mostly on a single note, F#. This stands out more because of the trochaic rhythm that prevails in the previous section, reflecting more accurately the textual accent. This section as a whole creates a rather relaxed rhythmic flow without emphasizing any textual inflection. This is
more associated with the vocal articulation of French than Italian (Ex. 19).

Ex. 19) “Morire?” measures 21-27

Most of the melodic lines of these late songs are typically Italian, i.e. lyric and diatonic. In “Canto d'anime,” Puccini placed musical concern above poetic interest, giving the impression of pre-conceived melody. On the contrary, the poetic text receives more emphasis in “Morire?”: the last section (measures 45-50) is sung in quasi recitative without accompaniment (Ex. 20). Still in use in the songs of this period, is Puccini’s characteristic accompaniment in syncopated rhythm.

It is the general atmosphere rather than the details of poetry that Puccini portrays in the music of the last period. There are abundant illustrations of impressionistic influence in many aspects. The accompaniment plays an important role in expressing
the text in two ways: sharing the main melodic interest with vocal line and creating the
general mood of the poem through various harmonic interpretation. The songs of the last
period are characterized by the typical Italian melodic shape supported by the harmonic
sonority associated with Impressionism. The resulting music is highly sophisticated,
displaying Puccini’s awareness of the new musical trends of his time.

Ex. 20) “Morire?” measures 45-53
The Self-borrowing of Puccini

Borrowing materials from previously written music (either by the composer himself or by others) is a compositional practice used from the Middle ages to the twentieth century. Composers such as Bach, Mozart, Berlioz, Rossini, and Ives, incorporated this practice into the creation of new music. Sometimes, it is openly acknowledged by the composers, while at other times no mention is made.

Describing the procedure as a "labor-saving device," Puccini borrowed musical material from his own compositions to create a new one, especially in his operas. It seems that Puccini did not want this practice to be publicly known. First of all, he did not approve of publishing the Capriccio Sinfonico in his lifetime, presumably because from there he borrowed several musical ideas for Le Villi, Edgar, and La Bohème. Secondly, he rarely acknowledged his self-borrowing, even in his private letters, though it was an integral part of his compositional practice at least up to the time of La Tosca.

Almost every major biographer of the composer mentions in passing this self-borrowing aspect in Puccini's creative life. Most, however, point out only where he used the borrowed material and the surface changes such as key and meter. Michael Elphinstone also talks about Puccini's self-borrowing in his article and characterizes the procedure as follows:

The composer always sought to use themes whose character accorded with the general atmosphere of the opera in question (hence his eventual employment of authentic Japanese, American, and Chinese melodies in Madama Butterfly, La fanciulla del west, and Turandot, respectively), most

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of his self-borrowings were thus taken from "descriptive instrumental pieces." He also adds that the self-borrowing from vocal works shows little reference to their original text or dramatic context. Though Elphinstone effectively describes the general tendencies in a few sentences, his assessment regarding Puccini’s self-borrowing from vocal works, is not always accurate.

Most of what he overlooks centers around Puccini’s intent to portray in his songs the mood or the atmosphere of the text. Puccini, as already observed previously in this chapter, did not concern himself with the details of the text as did most of the preeminent art song composers. He rarely creates a pictorial reflection of the poetry in his musical setting. The beautiful melodic line was of the primary importance to him, and the music depicts the essential mood of the poem directly, or sometimes, ironically. The resulting music, therefore, is flexible enough to be “recycled” for other musical contexts within a similar emotional atmosphere.

In this section of chapter II, the domain of self-borrowing of Puccini, particularly from his solo songs into the operas, will be explored. We will see how Puccini utilized the pre-existing material in the dramatic context and uncover the possible relationships between the original music and the new creations. A general survey of the self-borrowing by the composer, either from his instrumental or the vocal music, is not included in the present research. For this study of the composer’s methodology, three

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cases of self-borrowing from the vocal music will be examined in detail: “Salve Regina” as used in the finale of Act I from Le Villi, the second Lento theme of “Mentìa l’avviso” in Act I of Manon Lescaut, and “Sole e amore” in the finale of Act III of La Bohème. These examples represent the most extensive and interesting aspects of Puccini’s self-borrowing from his songs.

In April 1883, the publishing house of Edoardo Sonzogno announced a competition for a one-act opera to discover new talent in Italy. For Puccini, who was about to graduate from the Milan conservatory, it would have been an ideal way to start his career as an opera composer. Without much confidence, he entered the competition with Le Willis.37 His attitude was appropriate, for he did not even receive honorable mention. However, largely through his connections with Scapigliatura,38 Puccini was invited to a gathering of Milan’s social and artistic elite at the salon of Marco Sala. After a few excerpts from the opera were played, it was decided to raise funds to help stage the work. This was realized on May 31, 1884 at Teatro Dal Verme with a huge success. On the advice of Giulio Ricordi, Puccini revised the opera from one act into two acts, making it acceptable for larger theaters, and renamed it in Italian, Le Villi.

The libretto, written by Ferdinando Fontana, was based on the Vily legend. Recent study reveals that Fontana derived his plot from Les Wilis by Alphonse Karr, a

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37 In the letter written to his mother in July 1883, he states; “But the whole affair (participating in Sonzogno competition), dear Mother, is very uncertain. Just think, the competition is Italian, not restricted and local as I believed, then the time is short.” (Gara 6)

38 A group of artists banded together to promote new ideas in arts, most of which originated from other parts of Europe such as Germany and France. Their increasing interest in German romanticism, especially by Weber and Wagner, influenced Italian operas of the time.
little known French writer. The story concerns the ghosts of young women who died as the result of desertion by their lovers. At night, they ambush the faithless ones to engage them in a dance to the death.

In this opera Puccini borrowed several of his previous compositions written for instruments as well as for voice. In the No. 5, “Preghiera” of the first act, the composer used one of his earlier songs, “Salve Regina.” It is a song of devotional praise to the Virgin Mary for voice and organ accompaniment. Puccini expanded the thirty-five measures of the solo song into 143 measures, a scene consisting of a trio with choral participation in Le Villi. In this scene, Roberto, the betrothed of Anna, is about to leave for a journey to Mainz where he is to claim a large inheritance from his aunt. He asks Gugliemo, Anna’s father, for a prayer of blessing on his journey. Considering the speed at which he composed the opera, borrowing a song in a similar religious vein from his early years would certainly have facilitated Puccini’s work.

The orchestral introduction to the “Preghiera” is thematically the same as the organ introduction of “Salve Regina,” with diminished rhythmic values. In Allegro tempo, the light staccato of the string parts produces a sound totally different from the somber organ introduction of the original song. This rather playful music sets the mood for the following chorus scene in which the mountaineers urge Roberto to leave before sunset. This choral music also displays motivic manipulation from the introduction (Ex.21-a, b, c).

40 Puccini sent the score to the Sonzogno commission at the last possible moment, on December 31, and the illegible hand writing is thought to be a part of the reasons for the failure in the competition.
Ex. 21) “Preghiera,” Act I from *Le Villi*

a) Introduction, measures 1-3

![Musical notation for Introduction](image)

b) Chorus, measures 21-25 from (22)

![Musical notation for Chorus](image)

c) Chorus, measures 4-5 from (23)

![Musical notation for Chorus](image)

The main body of the trio is in three parts, A B A’. The first part of the trio (from rehearsal number 24) is identical with “Salve Regina” in its melody and harmony, and is in two sections. The first section is Gugliemo’s solo and is followed by the second section in which he is joined by Anna and Roberto. In the latter section, each of the three characters draws his or her melody from the harmonization in the accompaniment of “Salve Regina.” Gugliemo’s solo lines are accompanied only by the wind instruments, thus creating the reverent sonority in imitation of the original organ accompaniment.

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41 All musical citations are from the Ricordi edition of *Le Villi* published in 1944.
Puccini incorporates two musical sections from the prelude of the opera into the middle part of the trio (measure 21 of the rehearsal number 24 to the end of rehearsal number 25). After the transition, which modulates from Eb Major to Bb Major and uses the first new theme (Ex.22-a), the chorus introduces another theme with the soloists singing the counter melodies in unison (Ex. 22-b). This middle part becomes more exciting as it adds the chorus parts and fuller orchestral texture, coming to a close on the dominant of Eb.

Ex. 22) “Preghiera,” Act I from Le Villi

a) Measures 21-25 from (24)

b) Measures 4-5 from (25)

The final part of the trio is the climax of the whole piece. The theme from the part A is first sung in unison by chorus and Gugliemo. It is also supported by brass and lower strings, making the total effect of the sonority overwhelmingly dramatic. The main melodic line, later taken over by the two high voices of Anna and Roberto, is modified and proceeds to the coda.
In this instance of self-borrowing, Puccini expands the voice part of the original solo song into a trio texture of soprano, tenor, and baritone, and casts them in several different ways. For example, when the baritone (Gugliemo) carries the main thematic line, the two high voices sing the counter melody, mostly in unison. At other times, the two higher voices move in similar contour while the baritone has a somewhat independent line.

Concerning the use of thematic material from the prelude in the middle section of the trio, there is little to suggest which was composed first. However, it is more than likely that Puccini composed the trio scene in advance of the prelude, since the prelude is written in the traditional manner of including the themes from other parts of the opera. According to Puccini’s letter regarding the composition of La Tosca, he composed the prelude last; this might be an indication of his compositional habits.\(^4^2\)

Without separate material of its own, the orchestra of the “Preghiera” always supports the vocal lines. In the middle and the last part of the trio, Puccini enhances the dramatic effects using the orchestral colors: brasses, cellos and basses double the main themes while the percussion enters on the climactic high notes. The “Preghiera” of Le Villi illustrates how Puccini’s theatrical genius can make a simple solo song bloom into a effectively dramatic piece of music.

In Manon Lescaut, Puccini used pre-existing material to compose one of the most loved tenor arias of all time, “Donna non vidi mai.” The main theme of this aria is from “Mentìa l’avviso,” the dramatic setting of the traditional scena ed aria that he had

\(^4^2\)In the letter quoted in Mosco Carner, p. 111.
composed in 1883. Puccini took melodies from the aria of the earlier composition and used them as a theme symbolizing Des Grieux's fascination with Manon in the later opera. The nature of the theme is so lyrical and sentimental that it sounds more appropriate to the new amorous text in Manon than the text of the original source.\footnote{For the information on text of “Mentia l’avviso,” see Kaye, The Unknown Puccini, p. 35-36.}

It is in the previous duet section of the opera, "Cortese damigella" between Manon and Des Grieux, that the theme is heard for the first time. The aria “Donna non vidi mai” is actually a refined solo version of the first lyric part of the duet (from rehearsal number 27 to eight measures before the 28).\footnote{The Ricordi edition of Manon Lescaut, 1944.} During this first part of the duet, the orchestra plays Des Grieux’s theme in G Major, while at times he joins in with the same melody (Ex. 23). Puccini introduces a new theme to Manon’s words, “Manon Lescaut mi chiamo” (Ex. 24). The first part of the duet is constructed based on these two themes and an additional theme for a transition (Ex. 25), and can be represented as a b a c b.\footnote{Each of the lower case letters represents the theme: “a” for symbolizing Des Grieux’s fascination with Manon, “b” for Manon’s theme, and “c” for a transitional theme.} The themes are used with the same dramatic connotation throughout the opera.

In the Des Grieux’s aria (from rehearsal number 33 to 36), Puccini repeats the musical organization of the first part of the duet, keeping the same order of the thematic appearances. The borrowed theme is now transposed to Bb Major for vocal brilliance, but the harmonic progressions remain the same. He elaborates the last section of “b” to make the climax of the aria. The theme is first heard in the accompaniment, then sung by the voice in the higher tonality of Eb Major, repeated sequentially once more in Bb, and is followed by a coda. While in the duet, Puccini uses a simple accompaniment in his
typical syncopated rhythms, the aria has a more swiftly flowing accompaniment mostly in sixteenth notes and sextuplets.

Ex. 23) “Cortese damigella,” Act I from *Manon Lescaux*

Measures 1-2, 11-15 from (27)

Ex. 24) Manon’s theme
Ex. 25) “Cortese Damigella,” Act I from *Manon Lescaux*

Measures 18-21 from (27)

The first statement of Des Grieux’s theme in the duet is played by first violins; the other strings harmonize this melody. Manon’s answer is supported by the winds (except flute), providing the color contrast between the two characters. Puccini expands the orchestration to a fuller sonority for the second statement of Des Grieux’s theme. This contrasts with the intimacy of the first statement. In the aria, the orchestra has a lighter texture, relying principally on the violins and violas with the lower strings playing pizzicato. The rapid movement of the harp in arpeggio adds translucence to the orchestral color. At the climax of the aria the orchestra supports the voice by playing Manon’s theme mostly in unison or octaves, adding the brass section in the coda.

Puccini created a crucial scene to the entire drama of the opera using the preexistent material. The theme borrowed from "Mentia l'avviso" is used to symbolize the main subject of the scene: Des Grieux's fascination with Manon. The borrowed theme remains the same throughout the duet and the aria while Puccini handles the Manon’s theme in several different ways in its melody and harmony.
Ten years after the premiere of *La Bohème* (1896), Puccini acknowledged his act of self-borrowing when he gave the autograph draft of “Sole e amore (mattinata)” to Tosti as a gift for his sixtieth birthday. He referred to the song as the “first embryo of *Bohème*” in his inscription on the music. “Sole e amore” was the basis for the concluding quartet in Act III of the opera. Regarding the dramatic context of the quartet, Mimì and Rodolfo, who wanted at first to bid farewell to each other, decide to stay together until the spring time; it is the other couple (Musetta and Marcello) who actually separate during this quartet.

“Sole e amore” is subtitled as “mattinata.” “Mattinata” and “serenata” are two sides of the same coin; both being love songs, the “mattinata” is for morning while the “serenata” is for evening. This gives an insight for borrowing of the song into the quartet scene. The first line of the text sung by Mimì reads, “Addio dolce svegliare alla mattina! (Good by, sweet awakening in the morning!)” It seems that this “sweet awakening in the morning” gave Puccini a musical allusion of the “Sole e amore,” thus creating the irony of singing farewell on the tune of the love song which Rodolfo might have used to sing to Mimì.

The song provides another possible and more practical justification for the self-borrowing. In “Sole e amore,” there are two allegorical characters besides the poet himself: “sun” and “love.” The characters give to the composer a venue for expansion of the vocal part from a solo song into an ensemble. In the song, a dialogue between “sun” and “love” occurs in alternating phrases. This coincides with how Puccini assigns the musical lines in the operatic version. The first part of the finale starts as a duet between
Rodolfo and Mimì. Though with different text, Puccini displays a certain consistency by giving the musical lines associated with “sun” from the original song to Mimì, and the lines of “love” to Rodolfo. This is more than coincidence, especially when one recalls Mimì’s words in her first act aria: “ma quando vien lo sgelo, il primo sole è mio; il primo bacio dell’aprile è mio! Il primo sole è mio!” For Rodolfo, Mimì was a symbol of “sogni d’amor (dreams of love).” He is portrayed throughout the opera as a romantic lover who does not want to bear the hardship of Mimì’s illness.

The finale “Addio dolce svegliare” is in the same key as the original song (Gb major), but in the slower tempo of Andante con moto. Formally it is cast in two parts with a coda. Each part is a whole presentation of the original song. The first part is a duet between Rodolfo and Mimì; in the second part, Musetta and Marcello join in to complete the quartet texture. Mimì and Rodolfo begin the duet alternating the melodies from the original song. At the climax of the duet (from “soli d’inverno,” rehearsal number 31), however, the two characters sing the same text and music in unison. This unison refers dramatically speaking to their agreement to postpone separating until the spring when “there is the sun for a companion.”

In the second part of the finale Puccini displays his genius as a theatrical composer. During the formation of the libretto for La Bohème, Puccini insisted that his

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46 “But when the thaw comes, the first sunshine is mine; April’s first kiss is mine! The first sunshine is mine!”
47 In the last part of Rodolfo’s aria of the first act indicates such connotation as well as in his lines just before the finale of the third act: “So, it’s all over!... Farewell, dreams of love!”
48 From the Ricordi edition of La Bohème, 1944
49 The Italian text reads; “Mentre a primavera c’è compagno il sol!” In the previous lines of the duet, Mimì recalls negative experiences of their relationship while Rodolfo tries to remind her of the positive aspects of it.
librettists use both the comic and melancholy aspects of the novel *Scènes de la vie de Bohème*.

Throughout the opera (except in the second act where the comic aspect alone is portrayed), the composer includes both elements side by side. Even in Act III, where the situation gets noticeably intensified because of Mimi’s tuberculosis, the final quartet offers comic elements through Marcello and Musetta’s bickering.

The second part of the finale is a quartet for the two pairs of lovers: Mimi and Rodolfo, Musetta and Marcello. The contrasting nature of the relationships of these two couples (already well portrayed in Act II) is most effectively reflected in the music of this quartet. The melodious, flowing vocal lines for Mimi and Rodolfo are directly borrowed from the vocal lines of “Sole e amore.” On the other hand, the other couple’s melodies are fragmented and derived from the accompaniment part of the original song. They are characterized by syllabic settings in mostly sixteenth notes depicting the quarrel between Musetta and Marcello (Ex. 26). These two types of music of contrasting nature proceed together, sometimes interspersed and sometimes overlapped. The two related plots of the drama are thus represented by the different musical characterizations in this quartet.

To expand a solo song into an ensemble of four characters, Puccini created additional musical lines, keeping them within the character of the original song. For instance, the last vocal phrase of each part comes from the bass melody of the accompaniment in “Sole e amore.” In the operatic version, this melodic phrase becomes the climax and is sung in unison (Ex. 27-a, b). Most of the other counter melodies are also within the characteristics of the original song. The finale ends with a coda returning

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50 See DiGaetani, p. 83.
Ex. 26) “Addio dolce svegliare,” Act III from La Bohême,

Measures 9-11 from (31)

Ex. 27) Vocal expansion

a) “Sole e amore” measures 28-29

b) “Addio dolce svegliare,” La Bohème, measures 6-8 from (33)
to the duet texture of Mimi and Rodolfo. Musically, this rather long coda is an abridged version of the whole “Sole e amore” and balances the first part of the finale.

The orchestral accompaniment is light and transparent, mostly supporting or doubling the vocal melody. In the section where the climax begins, the composer changes the orchestration to a fuller sonority by adding horns and basses and expands the overall tessitura of all the instruments. The orchestral postlude concludes both the final quartet and the third act with the musical figure with which the act began.

The ensemble finale of Act III from La Bohème exhibits Puccini’s superb ability in his musical treatment of the dramatic situation. The composer delineates the two different plot lines through the contrasting nature of music and provides the unity by presenting them within the coherent organization of a quartet. The original song “Sole e amore” provides the basis for overall structure of the finale and also the source from which the voice parts derived their melodic lines.

From these observations of self-borrowing from his vocal music, we see that Puccini is not only concerned with the general atmosphere of the music, but also with the textual content of the original song. This is also illustrated in his use of the song “Morire?” as Ruggero’s entrance aria in the second version of La Rondine in 1919. In its operatic form, Puccini transposed the song one-half tone lower with the new text by Giuseppe Adami, the poet of the original song as well. Except for the minor musical adjustment to the new text in the last part of the song, the original was used unchanged.

Ruggero’s romanza was inserted as an answer to the question asked by Rambaldo:

51 In the first and third versions of La Rondine, this aria does not appear.
“Ed è la prima volta che venite a Parigi? (Is this the very first time that you’ve visited Paris?)” The new text for the operatic version describes Ruggero’s first impression of Paris. As we have observed previously, the impressionistic musical style of the original song suitably evokes the French atmosphere of the new text, as well as the entire musical style of *La Rondine*. Puccini used the borrowed material for Ruggero’s aria with only necessary, minor changes in text and music for the new dramatic context. Thus, the texts of the two versions share so many identical words.\(^{52}\) This and the other aforementioned examples of self-borrowing exhibit Puccini’s consideration for the appropriateness of the preexisting material, both musically and textually, for the new operatic situations.

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\(^{52}\) The Italian text of Ruggero’s aria is in Kaye’s *Unknown Puccini*, p. 196.
CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Puccini’s affinity for vocal music started as a church organist in Lucca. Indeed, his exploitation of the human voice is evident in the few religious choral works from that period. As a distinguished opera composer, Puccini is considered to be Verdi’s genuine heir in the history of Italian opera. Puccini’s unique musical innovation is characterized by intertwining the rich tradition of Italian music with the new musical trends of his time. The three stylistic periods of his operas display the development of the composer in every aspect. His growth, not only as a dramatist but also as a musician, can be observed throughout his operatic career.

The songs of Puccini provide another approach to understanding the composer’s musical style. Unlike the instrumental works primarily formed during his school years, song is the only non-operatic genre in which Puccini composed throughout his career. His expertise in opera facilitated the writing of songs in which we can observe a more intimate level of musical treatment of the text. As the minor works of a major composer, the songs of Puccini did not receive enough attention from performers and scholars until Michael Kaye’s publication of the Unknown Puccini. Though not thoroughly exploring the genre of the art song, Puccini’s songs have intrinsic value and beauty as they exhibit his personal way of reading the poem.
Puccini's songs can be grouped into three periods. The songs from the early period show an influence of the popular Neapolitan style: emphasis on formal balance above the textual expression and the use of repeated rhythmic patterns. Though some of these early songs foreshadow the mature Puccini in the treatment of harmony and melody, inconsistencies are found in text setting. This requires more careful attention from a performer in conveying the meaning of the words. The operatic Puccini is already evident in the dramatic interpretation of "Storiella d'amore," the most charming song from the early period.

The second period of the songs corresponds approximately with the middle period of Puccini's operatic output. Most of the songs from this period are characterized by the occasions for which they were written. Having obtained more experience in writing for the voice, Puccini makes his music more economical and sophisticated in expressing the text. The accompaniment now plays a more important role in interpreting the poetry. While the piano shares the main melodic interest, there is some indication of tone-painting. The music in general enhances the textual expression without losing its own beauty. The songs from the middle period come closer to the concept of art song as they reflect a more detailed portrayal of the text as well as a more elevated role in the accompaniment.

The songs from the third period display an impressionistic influence in harmony, and, on occasion, in the melodic treatment of the text. The extensive use of pedal point, parallel chordal progressions (emphasizing the fifths and the octaves), the use of tritone
imply this association with Impressionism. Still keeping the Italian beauty of melody, foreign harmonic sonorities display Puccini’s awareness of the musical trends of his time.

The songs of Puccini illustrate his developmental progress through the three stylistic periods. In each period, Puccini was concerned with different issues in text setting. Through understanding the nature of Italian songs, and not viewed through the Teutonic prejudice of the art song, we see the worth of Puccini’s songs as concert repertoire. “Storiella d’amore” from the early period, “Sole e amore” and “E l’uccellino” from the middle, and “Terra e mare” from the last period, have a certain charm and deserve to be included in a recital repertoire. The songs of Puccini anticipate or correspond to the musical styles of his operas. This is evidenced by his use of the earlier songs in the later operas.

Self-borrowing was an integral part of Puccini’s compositional process. Three cases of extensive self-borrowing have been studied in detail. Through these we have observed that Puccini borrowed for rather specific reasons. Each illustrates the textual and/or musical consideration by Puccini of the original source for the new dramatic context of the opera. The result of the present research on self-borrowing does not agree with the comments made by Elphinstone. Not just a matter of convenience, Puccini utilized the pre-existing material he considered appropriate and worthy of a wider hearing through its recomposition in his operas. The borrowed material, often incorporated with new themes and expressive orchestration, blooms as an effective dramatic piece of music in his operas.
The scope of this project has focused on the stylistic survey of Puccini's songs and the self-borrowing of his songs in the operas. It has attempted to bring about better understanding of Puccini as a composer and to increase the appreciation of his songs. Further investigation can be made on self-borrowing from his instrumental works as there are numerous examples of his turning to them as a musical source. By doing so, one may find the same (or contrasting) concerns as was found in the self-borrowing from his vocal music.
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