

I.

*Lento-grave-funebre* *ben declamato*

*What think you I take my pen in hand to record? the*

*mf pesante*

*subito mosso (quasi il doppio)*

*little-ship, perfect-model'd ma-jestic, that I saw pass the*

*mf. luminoso*

# What Think You I Take My Pen in Hand to Record?

Settings of Whitman and Shakespeare | Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Track Listings and Timings .....	2
Notes About the Project .....	4
Performer Biographies .....	6
Whitman and Shakespeare Song Texts .....	8
<i>Suspended Between Two Continents</i> .....	26
by James Westby	
<i>Florence and Further Horizons: Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Art Songs</i> .....	34
by Mila De Santis	
<i>The Music of a Spiritual and Transparent Language:</i> .....	44
<i>The Leaves of Grass Song Cycle and the Shakespeare Sonnets</i>	
by Aloma Bardi	
<i>Whitman, Fascist Ambiguity, and Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Covert Critique</i> .....	51
by John Champagne	
Photographic Credits .....	62
Special Thanks and Technical Credits .....	64

**LEAVES OF GRASS. A SONG CYCLE FOR VOICE AND PIANO.  
POEMS BY WALT WHITMAN, OPUS 89B**

1	What Think You I Take My Pen in Hand? .....	3:04
2	I Dream'd in a Dream .....	1:13
3	Sometimes with One I Love .....	2:29
4	We Two Boys Together Clinging .....	1:10
5	Are You the New Person Drawn Toward Me? .....	2:50
6	When I Peruse the Conquer'd Fame .....	1:47
7	A Glimpse .....	1:38
8	This Moment, Yearning and Thoughtful .....	2:43
9	Trickle Drops .....	2:11
10	The Base of All Metaphysics .....	4:35

**SHAKESPEARE SONNETS, OPUS 125 (SELECTED SONGS)**

11	XVIII. Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? .....	2:42
12	XXXI. Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts .....	2:12
13	CIV. To me, fair friend, you never can be old .....	2:43
14	XXXII. If thou survive my well-contented day .....	3:09
15	LIII. What is your substance whereof are you made .....	2:46
16	LVII. Being your slave what should I do but tend .....	2:59
17	LXXIII. That time of year thou may'st in me behold .....	2:18
18	XCVII. How like the winter hath my absence been .....	2:49
19	XCVIII. From you have I been absent in the spring .....	2:01
20	CII. My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming .....	2:40
21	VI. When in the chronicles of wasted time .....	2:18
22	CIX. O never say that I was false of heart .....	2:57
23	CXXVIII. How oft, when thou my music, music play'st .....	2:20
24	XXVII. Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed .....	3:09
25	XL. Take all my loves .....	3:24
26	LXXI. No longer mourn for me when I am dead .....	3:06
27	XLVII. Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is too .....	2:32

## NOTES ABOUT THE PROJECT

This CD is the culmination of 15 years of research, presentations, and performances of the music of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. My pianist and collaborator, Howard Lubin, first made me aware of the composer's opus 24 Shakespeare song settings while researching repertoire for song recitals in Europe. I was so impressed by their superb craftsmanship, invention, and accessibility that, upon returning to the States as a young voice professor, I immediately set out to locate more of the composer's songs as potential assignments for my students. On a research visit to the UCLA Music Library, home of one of the composer's earliest archives, I was thrilled to find not only the unpublished opus 125 Shakespeare Sonnets, but also a song cycle to texts from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

At the outset of my research, I corresponded with Castelnuovo-Tedesco's son, Lorenzo, an accomplished artist and architect living in California, as well as Nick Rossi, a close friend of the composer and one of his first archivists. I have been subsequently assisted in my work by a number of specialists and scholars: James Westby, the Castelnuovo-Tedesco family's official historian and author of *Grove Music's* article on the composer; Aloma Bardi, founder and president of the International Center for American Music, whose continued research has contributed significantly to our understanding of the composer and his unpublished manuscripts; Mila De Santis, Professor of Musicology and Music History at the University of Florence and editor of *La penna perduta*, a collection of the composer's writings; and John Champagne, Professor of English at Penn State Erie and author of *Aesthetic Modernism and Masculinity in Fascist Italy*. All have graciously agreed to contribute essays to this CD booklet.

Throughout my work I have thus enjoyed the support and encouragement of some of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's most noted experts and enthusiasts, including members of his family. Yet the greatest impetus to my continued interest has always been the songs themselves.

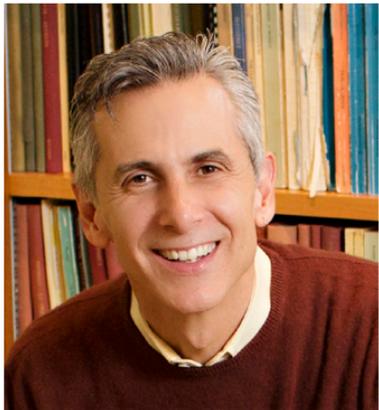
Castelnuovo-Tedesco's refined musical and poetic sensibilities are ideally suited to the Whitman and Shakespeare texts. The intimacy and beauty of the Whitman cycle, as well as the dramatic and emotional richness of the Shakespeare settings are, after all this time, still very close to my heart. Perhaps most striking is how vividly the abundant humanity evident in the writings of these two authors is reflected in the music and life of this remarkable composer. I believe both works constitute an important contribution to the English-language song literature and, along with Castelnuovo-Tedesco's story, deserve to be better known.



SALVATORE CHAMPAGNE

Front Cover: Castelnuovo-Tedesco; Florence, early 1930s.

Inside Covers: Castelnuovo-Tedesco *Leaves of Grass*; page 1 of manuscript score.



**SALVATORE CHAMPAGNE** has appeared in opera houses and concert halls throughout the United States and Europe. His career began in 1988 when he was chosen to be the tenor soloist in a European tour of Leonard Bernstein's *Songfest*, conducted by the composer. Immediately thereafter, he joined the ensemble of the Badisches Staatstheater in Karlsruhe, Germany, appearing in a wide range of leading lyric tenor roles. For the next 10 years, he was engaged as guest artist in many of Europe's finest opera houses, among them the Opernhaus Zürich, Opéra du Rhin, Teatro Bellini, and the Bayerische Staatsoper.

In addition to his opera performances, Champagne has appeared in recital and concert with such performing organizations as the London Philharmonia, Cologne Philharmonic, and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. His singing has been recognized with numerous awards, including prizes at the Mirjam Helin International Singing Competition and the International Singing Competition s'-Hertogenbosch, as well as grants from MUSICA, the Sullivan Foundation, and the National Institute for Musical Theater.

In 2004, at the suggestion of his teacher and mentor, Richard Miller, Champagne joined the voice faculty of his alma mater, Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He is now a sought-after teacher and gives lectures and master classes throughout the United States. Champagne's students have won numerous prestigious competitions, including the Metropolitan Opera Council auditions, and appear regularly with premier performing organizations throughout the United States and abroad.



Pianist **HOWARD LUBIN** graduated from Oberlin College and Conservatory and the Juilliard School, earning degrees in German literature and piano performance. By the age of 17 he had won three awards for composition from BMI and went on to win numerous prizes as a pianist, making his debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony at age 23. Lubin taught at the Juilliard School, serving as vocal coach and member of the lyric diction faculty. As a faculty member of the American Opera Center and pianist for the Metropolitan Opera's Young Artists Development Program, he helped train some of America's most accomplished singers.

In Europe, Lubin was engaged as head of the music staff at the Cologne Opera and worked as assistant to James Conlon, Philippe Auguin, and Rico Saccani. He also served as guest vocal coach for the Bregenz and Spoleto festivals. After his return to the U.S., he held teaching positions at the University of Oklahoma and Oberlin Conservatory.

Lubin has collaborated with top prizewinners at international music competitions and appeared extensively in chamber music and song recitals. Of his solo performances, *The Washington Post* wrote, "...an overwhelming performance of Liszt's herculean B minor Sonata...Few major artists now before the public could handle the work with such technical and stylistic command."

## LEAVES OF GRASS

(Walt Whitman)

I.

What think you I take my pen in hand to record?  
The battle-ship, perfect-model'd, majestic, that I saw pass the offing to-day under full sail?  
The splendors of the past day? or the splendor of the night that envelops me?  
Or the vaunted glory and growth of the great city spread around me?—no;  
But I record of two simple men I saw to-day on the pier in the midst of the crowd, parting  
    the parting of dear friends,  
The one to remain hung on the other's neck and passionately kiss'd him  
While the one to depart tightly prest the one to remain in his arms.

II.

I dream'd in a dream I saw a city invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth,  
I dream'd that was the new city of Friends,  
Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust love, it led the rest,  
It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that city,  
And in all their looks and words.

III.

Sometimes with one I love I fill myself with rage for fear I effuse unreturn'd love,  
But now I think there is no unreturn'd love, the pay is certain one way or another,  
(I loved a certain person ardently and my love was not return'd,  
Yet out of that I have written these songs.)

IV.

We two boys together clinging,  
One the other never leaving,  
Up and down the roads going, North and South excursions making,  
Power enjoying, elbows stretching, fingers clutching,  
Arm'd and fearless, eating, drinking, sleeping, loving,  
No law less than ourselves owning, sailing, soldiering, thieving, threatening,  
Misers, menials, priests alarming, air breathing, water drinking, on the turf or the  
    sea-beach dancing,  
Cities wrenching, ease scorning, statutes mocking, feebleness chasing  
Fulfilling our foray.

V.

Are you the new person drawn toward me?  
To begin with take warning, I am surely far different from what you suppose;  
Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal?  
Do you think it so easy to have me become your lover?  
Do you think the friendship of me would be unalloy'd satisfaction?  
Do you think I am trusty and faithful?  
Do you see no further than this façade, this smooth and tolerant manner of me?  
Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground toward a real heroic man?  
Have you no thought O dreamer that it may be all maya, illusion?

VI.

When I peruse the conquer'd fame of heroes and the victories of mighty generals, I do not  
envy the generals,  
Nor the President in his Presidency, nor the rich in his great house.  
But when I hear of the brotherhood of lovers, how it was with them,  
How through life, through dangers, odium, unchanging, long and long,  
How through youth and through middle and old age, how unfaltering, how affectionate and  
faithful they were,  
Then I am pensive—I hastily walk away fill'd with the bitterest envy.

VII.

A glimpse through an interstice caught,  
Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-room around the stove late of a winter night,  
and I unremark'd seated in a corner,  
Of a youth who loves me and whom I love, silently approaching and seating himself near,  
that he may hold me by the hand,  
A long while amid the noises of coming and going, of drinking and oath and smutty jest,  
There we two, content, happy in being together, speaking little, perhaps not a word.

VIII.

This moment yearning and thoughtful sitting alone,  
It seems to me there are other men in other lands yearning and thoughtful,  
It seems to me I can look over and behold them in Germany, Italy, France, Spain,  
Or far, far away, in China or Russia or India, talking other dialects,  
And it seems to me if I could know those men I should become attached to them as I do to  
men in my own lands  
O I know we should be brethren and lovers,  
O I know, I know I should be happy with them.

IX.

Trickle drops! my blue veins leaving!  
O drops of me! trickle, slow drops,  
Candid from me falling, drip, bleeding drops,  
From wounds made to free you whence you were prison'd,  
From my face, from my forehead and lips,  
From my breast, from within where I was conceal'd, press forth red drops, confession drops,  
Stain every page, stain every song I sing, every word I say, bloody drops,  
Let them know your scarlet heat, let them glisten,  
Saturate them with yourself all ashamed and wet,  
Glow upon all I have written or shall write, bleeding drops,  
Let it all be seen in your light, blushing drops.

X.

And now, gentlemen,  
A word I give to remain in your memories and minds,  
As base, and finale too, for all metaphysics.

(So, to the students, the old professor,  
At the close of his crowded course.)

Having studied the new and antique, the Greek and Germanic systems,  
Kant having studied and stated, Fichte and Schelling and Hegel,  
Stated the lore of Plato, and Socrates, greater than Plato,  
And greater than Socrates sought and stated, Christ divine having studied long,  
I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and Germanic systems,  
See the philosophies all, Christian churches and tenets see,  
Yet underneath Socrates clearly see, and underneath Christ the divine I see,  
The dear love of man for his comrade, the attraction of friend to friend,  
Of the well-married husband and wife, of children and parents,  
Of city for city, and land for land.

## SHAKESPEARE SONNETS: SELECTIONS (William Shakespeare)

1. XVIII.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest;  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

2. CVI.

When in the chronicle of wasted time  
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,  
And beauty making beautiful old rime  
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,  
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,

Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,  
I see their antique pen would have exprest  
Even such a beauty as you master now.  
So all their praises are but prophecies  
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;  
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,  
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:  
For we, which now behold these present days,  
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

3. CIV.

To me fair friend, you never can be old,  
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,  
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold  
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,  
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd  
In process of the seasons have I seen,  
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,  
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.  
Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,  
Steal from his figure and no pace perceived;  
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,  
Hath motion and mine eye may be deceived:  
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred;  
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

4. XCVII.

How like a winter hath my absence been  
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!  
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!  
What old December's bareness every where!  
And yet this time removed was summer's time,  
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,  
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,  
Like widow'd wombs after their lords' decease:  
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me  
But hope of orphans and unfather'd fruit;  
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,  
And, thou away, the very birds are mute;  
Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer  
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

5. XCVIII.

From you have I been absent in the spring,  
When proud-pied April dress'd in all his trim  
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,  
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.  
Yet not the lays of birds nor the sweet smell  
Of different flowers in odour and in hue  
Could make me any summer's story tell,  
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew;

Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,  
Nor praise the deep vermillion of the rose;  
They were but sweets, but figures of delight,  
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.  
Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,  
As with your shadow I with these did play.

6. LXXIII.

That time of year thou may'st in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or few, or none, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire  
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.  
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

7. LVII.

Being your slave, what should I do but tend  
Upon the hours and times of your desire?  
I have no precious time at all to spend,  
Nor services to do, till you require:  
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour  
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,  
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour  
When you have bid your servant once adieu:  
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought  
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,  
But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought  
Save, where you are, how happy you make those;  
So true a fool is love that in your will,  
Though you do any thing, he thinks no ill.

8. CIX.

O never say that I was false of heart,  
Though absence seems my flame to qualify.  
As easy might I from myself depart  
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie:  
That is my home of love: if I have ranged,  
Like him that travels I return again,  
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,  
So that myself bring water for my stain.

Never believe, though in my nature reign'd  
All frailties that besiege all kind of blood,  
That it could so prepost'rously be stain'd,  
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;  
For nothing this wide universe I call,  
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

9. XXXI.

Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts  
Which I by lacking have supposed dead,  
And there reigns love and all love's loving parts,  
And all those friends which I thought buried.  
How many a holy and obsequious tear  
Hath dear religious love stol'n from mine eye  
As interest of the dead, which now appear  
But things removed that hidden in thee lie!  
Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,  
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,  
Who all their parts of me to thee did give;  
That due of many now is thine alone:  
Their images I loved I view in thee,  
And thou, all they, hast all the all of me.

10. LIII.

What is your substance, whereof are you made,  
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?  
Since every one hath, every one, one shade,  
And you, but one, can every shadow lend.  
Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit  
Is poorly imitated after you;  
On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,  
And you in Grecian tires are painted new:  
Speak of the spring and foison of the year;  
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,  
The other as your bounty doth appear;  
And you in every blessed shape we know.  
In all external grace you have some part,  
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

11. CII.

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming;  
I love not less, though less the show appear:  
That love is merchandised whose rich esteeming  
The owner's tongue doth publish every where.  
Our love was new and that but in the spring  
When I was wont to greet it with my lays,  
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing  
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:

Not that the summer is less pleasant now  
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,  
But that wild music burthens every bough  
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.  
Therefore like her I sometime hold my tongue,  
Because I would not dull you with my song.

12. XXXII.

If thou survive my well-contented day  
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,  
And shalt by fortune once more re-survey  
These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,  
Compare them with the bettering of the time,  
And though they be outstripp'd by every pen,  
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,  
Exceeded by the height of happier men.  
O, then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:  
“Had my friend’s Muse grown with his growing age,  
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,  
To march in ranks of better equipage:  
But since he died and poets better prove,  
Theirs for their style I’ll read, his for his love.”

13. CXXVIII.

How oft, when thou, my music, music play’st,  
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds  
With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently sway’st  
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,  
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap  
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,  
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,  
At the wood’s boldness by thee blushing stand!  
To be so tickled, they would change their state  
And situation with those dancing chips,  
O’er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,  
Making dead wood more blest than living lips.  
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,  
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

14. XL.

Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all;  
What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?  
No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call;  
All mine was thine before thou hadst this more.  
Then if for my love thou my love receivest,  
I cannot blame thee for my love thou usest;  
But yet be blamed, if thou thyself deceivest  
By wilful taste of what thyself refuseth.

I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,  
Although thou steal thee all my poverty;  
And yet, love knows, it is a greater grief  
To bear love's wrong than hate's known injury.  
Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,  
Kill me with spites; yet we must not be foes.

15. LXXI.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead  
Then you shall hear the surly sullen bell  
Give warning to the world that I am fled  
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:  
Nay, if you read this line, remember not  
The hand that writ it; for I love you so  
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot  
If thinking on me then should make you woe.  
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse  
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,  
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse.  
But let your love even with my life decay,  
Lest the wise world should look into your moan  
And mock you with me after I am gone.

16. XLVII.

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,  
And each doth good turns now unto the other:  
When that mine eye is famish'd for a look,  
Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,  
With my love's picture then my eye doth feast  
And to the painted banquet bids my heart;  
Another time mine eye is my heart's guest  
And in his thoughts of love doth share a part:  
So, either by thy picture or my love,  
Thyself away, art present still with me;  
For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,  
And I am still with them and they with thee;  
Or, if they sleep, thy picture in my sight  
Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight.

17. XXVII.

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,  
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;  
But then begins a journey in my head,  
To work my mind, when body's work's expired:  
For then my thoughts, from far where I abide,  
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,  
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,  
Looking on darkness which the blind do see

Save that my soul's imaginary sight  
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,  
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,  
Makes black night beautiful and her old face new.  
Lo! thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,  
For thee and for myself no quiet find.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Italy, 1930s.



## SUSPENDED BETWEEN TWO CONTINENTS

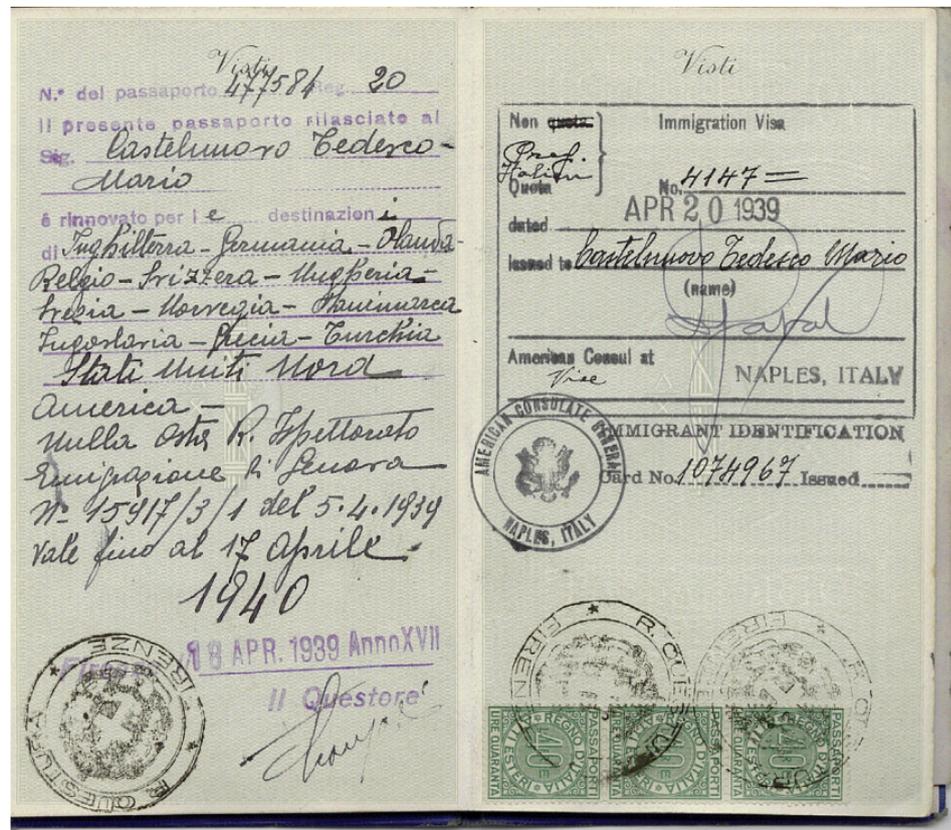
by James Westby

On 3 April 1895, Mario Gabriele Castelnuovo-Tedesco was born into an Italian banking family that had been in Tuscany for more than 400 years. On 16 March 1968, at 10:18 a.m., he would die from an acute hypocardial infarction in Los Angeles. The years between those dates were divided almost equally between Italy and America. While born in Italy, he never self-identified solely as Italian, and although he became a U.S. citizen in 1946, he certainly was never American. Throughout his life, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco was Florentine, and it could easily be argued that exile made him even more authentically Florentine.

The trigger for exile from Italy was Mussolini's 1938 Manifesto of Race; at that moment it became clear that Florence was no longer a place to raise his two children. He would stress that he "immigrated" to America rather than "escaped" from Italy. When it came down to the departure, he carefully staged his exit. At the same time he was composing what would prove to be his most beloved and popular composition, the Guitar Concerto, Op. 99, he was also carefully orchestrating his exodus. Years later, in his autobiography, *Una vita di musica* (*A Life with Music*), he would describe the concerto's second movement as his "tender farewell to the hills of Tuscany."

Traveling to Switzerland in late 1938 to avoid postal censors, Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote for help first to Toscanini, who responded immediately by telegram saying "they would all try to find some kind of work for me" in America. A few short weeks later, the American consul in Naples received the necessary affidavits and documents in support of Castelnuovo-Tedesco from his American sponsors—Jascha Heifetz and Albert Spalding.

Wanting to protect his parents and brothers, Castelnuovo-Tedesco then applied for a tourist



Castelnuovo-Tedesco's passport and visas.



His musical education was typical. His mother started him with piano at home, followed by formal training at the Istituto Musicale “Luigi Cherubini” in Florence and the Liceo Musicale in Bologna, under the primary guidance of the single most important musical influence in his life, Ildebrando Pizzetti. Pizzetti’s influence was deep and lasting. In 1939, shortly after arriving in America, Castelnuovo-Tedesco described Pizzetti as a man “of very great personal charm and of extreme nobility, [who] has had a profound influence, even greater spiritually than technically.”

After leaving the conservatory, Castelnuovo-Tedesco attracted the attention of Alfredo Casella, who became an ardent supporter, quickly incorporating Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s music into his repertoire. His patronage was crucial and went beyond performing the younger composer’s works. In 1917, Casella, along with Pizzetti, Malipiero, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and others, formed what would become the Società Nazionale di Musica (later Società Italiana di Musica Moderna), the primary goal of which was to perform “the most interesting music of young Italians” and ultimately organize “a system of exchanging new music with the principal foreign countries.”

Castelnuovo-Tedesco also enjoyed great success as a performer, critic, and essayist during the 1920s and ’30s. As a performer, he was described as a brilliant concertizer, appearing as solo recitalist, accompanist, and ensemble performer. As an accompanist, he appeared with Madeleine Grey, Lotte Lehmann, Elisabeth Schumann, and Gregor Piatigorsky. As a critic, he wrote articles for several Italian journals.

In the early ’30s, Castelnuovo-Tedesco became increasingly concerned with developing problems for Italian Jews. When Jascha Heifetz approached him for a violin concerto (*I Profeti*, 1931), Castelnuovo-Tedesco saw an opportunity to express his pride in his heritage. Anti-Semitism was on the rise in Europe; in his unpublished manuscript *The Jewish Chapter of my*



Young Castelnuovo-Tedesco, seated far right; Florence, 1903.

*Autobiography*, the composer wrote: “By reaction, I felt proud of belonging to a race so unjustly persecuted; I wanted to express this pride in some large work, glorifying ‘the splendor of the past days’ (what Whitman would have said) and the burning inspiration which inflamed the ‘envoys of God,’ the Prophets.”

In America, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was drawn towards California. Shortly after his arrival in New York, Heifetz’s agent, Rudy Polk, made arrangements for a contract between Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer. Thus began his relationship with the film studios, among them Columbia, Universal, Warner Bros., 20th Century Fox, and CBS. Facility, craftsmanship, an evocative narrative style, and an ability to compose self-contained, short musical segments were the qualities Hollywood demanded of its composers. These he had in abundance.

In California, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was held in high regard and received many awards of distinction. He trained an entire generation of motion picture composers. Jerry Goldsmith recalled warmly the occasions that his teacher would invite him to a recording session at the studio. The roster of his students is extensive and impressive: John Williams, Henry Mancini, Nelson Riddle, et al. André Previn said that the phrase “Studied under Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco” was an absolute requirement for California musicians in both film and jazz.

In the 1960s, Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote that even though he returned to Italy often, and maintained an apartment in Florence overlooking the Arno and the Ponte Vecchio, “America is now my home, where my sons have been educated and my grandchildren are now growing up. I feel sometimes like a cloud suspended between the continents.”

On 19 March 1968, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco was buried in a small cemetery near UCLA. The location is famous as the final resting place of one of the greatest icons of the 20th century, Marilyn Monroe. Amidst the names of those who contributed to the construction of the mythology of Hollywood are many who collaborated with Castelnuovo-Tedesco and many

who were his close friends, among them his fellow émigré and composer Ernst Toch and the cellist Gregor Piatigorsky, who championed Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s Cello Concerto. This tiny cemetery encapsulates the diverse culture that Castelnuovo-Tedesco enhanced. In some ways, there could be no more appropriate place.

**FLORENCE AND FURTHER HORIZONS:  
MARIO CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO'S ART SONGS**

by Mila De Santis

In 1923 Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco published *Six Shakespeare Songs*, the first book of a 12-volume series of settings for voice and piano of the complete song texts scattered throughout Shakespeare's plays. In a foreword to the first collection, the London publisher Chester writes: "These Shakespeare songs, by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, who is well known to all musicians as one of the most distinguished figures in modern Italian music, are the more interesting because they show that a Latin artist can be inspired by English poetry. Not only is the English declamation of these songs perfect, but they are as Shakespearean as possible in spirit, not to mention the fact that they must be regarded as truly beautiful and individual modern works." Beyond the slightly emphatic tone attributable to the publisher's role in promoting the work, this very concise portrait summarizes, if partly by implication, the unique position that the still-young Castelnuovo-Tedesco had attained in the Italian and European musical scenes within just a few years of beginning his career.

A bright, precocious pupil of Ildebrando Pizzetti, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was taken at a very early age under the protective wing of Alfredo Casella and soon became a protagonist—together with the other composers of the so-called "Generation of the 1880s"—of the renewal that animated Italian musical life in the second decade of the 20th century. The first concert season (1916-17) of the newly founded Società Nazionale di Musica organized in Paris and in several Italian locations included two of his short piano pieces (*Il raggio verde* and *Lucertolina*) as well as two song cycles (*Por la niña de mi corazon*, or *Coplas*, set to vernacular Spanish poems, and *Briciole*, to poems by the Florentine Aldo Palazzeschi). At such concerts,

members of the Società promoted an emphatically modern Italian musical idiom that bore little resemblance to the operatic tradition of the previous century.

It was to the piano miniature and especially the art song that Castelnuovo-Tedesco would always remain faithful. In them he would realize to a significant degree his true expressive nature, even after gradually becoming familiar with the more complex genres of instrumental chamber, concert, and symphonic music, opera and choral pieces, and the new world of composition for the guitar. His 1932 review in *Pègaso* of the first important book on Schubert published in Italian (by Mary Tibaldi-Chiesa) contains an open confession of (benign) envy of Franz Schubert. This confession expresses his predilection for the art song genre, as well as his consistent "romantic" inclination toward expressing a poetic text in song. "Were a modest artist of today to envy a great composer of the past (but it isn't really envy; rather, a devoted and heartfelt gratitude, and perhaps a secret nostalgia), I would want to have composed—more than passionate melodramas, grand symphonies, or masterly fugues—one of these simple melodies: 'Du bist die Ruh' or 'Litanei für das Fest "Aller Seelen."' One could say they were dictated by God for the consolation of humankind." When, in the early 1950s, the time would come for a retrospective evaluation of his musical life, Castelnuovo-Tedesco would not hesitate in his autobiography to regard song composition as "the form of expression most suited" to his temperament, and to value his song production as most representative of his oeuvre: "In the union of poetry and music I have found my most sincere and most personal expression; if something of my music will remain, I think it will be my songs." (*Una vita di musica*, pp. 164-165)

When Castelnuovo-Tedesco began producing art songs, this genre had already experienced a process of gradual transformation in Italy that made it a sophisticated, culturally engaged art form. Unlike Italian opera of the past, these art songs showed little interest in gratuitous

vocal display, but nevertheless were sensitive to possible readings, interpretations, and musical contextualizations of poetic texts, even by major authors. Here again, it was Pizzetti who paved the way for his pupil, offering him ample material for reflection via the direct example of his own music and the mediating influence of his critical essays. Pizzetti encouraged his colleagues to set “the true poetry of the true poets,” as he defined it in his 1914 article *La lirica vocale da camera*. In 1908, his setting of *I pastori* by D’Annunzio provided an ideal example of the Italian art song, and after many years, Castelnuovo-Tedesco still referred to it as “the most beautiful Italian setting of the last fifty years.”

Castelnuovo-Tedesco adopted many of Pizzetti’s recommendations, using them as a point of departure for further exploration. However, the disciple would definitely surpass the teacher in productivity, mastery, and polyglot approach. One need only consider the poems Castelnuovo-Tedesco chose to set, enticed as he was on the one hand by folk poetry and on the other by the increasingly attractive challenges posed by the most inspired pages of Italian, European, and American literature. The origin of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s interest in folk or folk-inspired poetry may very well have been the models provided by Pizzetti in 1912 with his songs *San Basilio* and *Il clefta prigionero* (published in 1916), as well as the *Due canzoni corali*. In 1920 Castelnuovo-Tedesco attained international success, thanks to his settings of folk poetry, this time from Tuscany. His song cycle *Stelle cadenti*, composed during the First World War, was selected to represent Italy in the Salzburg International Chamber Music Festival of 1922. By integrating new music and folk elements, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was attempting to create something that would seem at once essentially Florentine and yet also unmistakably modern and international.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco expressed his Florentine identity most directly by selecting texts that had a particular geographical and cultural character, as well as by stylistic allusions to

old Florentine folk songs (stornelli). By the mid-1920s, a number of works established him as the quintessential “musician of Florence.” His first work for the stage, *La mandragola*, a “Florentine musical comedy to an original text by Niccolò Machiavelli,” won the 1925 competition of the Direzione generale delle Belle Arti and was produced by the Teatro la Fenice of Venice in May 1926. Over these same two years, he composed *Quattro scherzi per musica di Messer Francesco Redi* for voice and piano and began working on *Bacco in Toscana*, a one-act dithyramb based on a work by the same versatile Tuscan author. In 1927 *Quattro sonetti da “La vita nova”* of Dante were published; Castelnuovo-Tedesco had already set *Sera*, based on Canto VIII of *Purgatorio* by this greatest of Florentine poets.

Florentine identity was also a convenient category through which critics identified distinctive features of his work: grace, elegance, balance, refinement, and the absence of radicalism. In those years, Florence and Tuscany were part of the complex mythology of “Mediterranean” culture. Fueled by nationalistic trends and supported by the cultural authority of Gabriele D’Annunzio, the new myth revisited in modern form the older ideals of the Risorgimento, acting as a defensive wall against the alleged superiority of “foreign” cultural imports. Castelnuovo-Tedesco approached D’Annunzio only when he set *Sera fiesolana* (1923, unpublished), a modern lauda inspired by the hills surrounding Florence. Tuscan, and in particular Florentine, identity was in his case neither something to be discovered nor a national myth, but rather a unique sense of belonging to a place and its history. When in a letter to the composer Alessandro Pavolini dated January 27, 1938, he objected to Italian radio’s exclusion of music by Jewish composers (one of the first warnings of the imminent general ban of Jews from public life, itself a consequence of the so-called “action in defense of race”), Castelnuovo-Tedesco claimed to have composed “a purely Italian...even regional music.” He continued: “For years I was referred to as the ‘young

musician of Florence,’ not only because of my birthplace, but also because my art seemed evocative and representative of my serene Tuscan land...Of all the praise, this has been to me the most welcome.”

A brief look at Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s catalogue reveals settings of numerous milestones of both Italian and international literature, selections that excluded what the composer regarded as affectation and pretense, and focused on the more direct, intimate, and subjective aspects of the literary arts. In the years prior to the Whitman settings, in addition to the above-mentioned authors, we find Horace, Leopardi, Heine, de Musset, Shelley, Gide, Petrarca, du Bellay, and Proust—a list that complements the Florentine character and helps to define the composer’s identity. Among the Italian composers of his generation, international poetry—both new and old, in the original and in translation—was rather an exception. Since Italian composers regarded the art song genre as representing the unique, national character of modern Italian music, to a certain extent they wagered on having sufficient literary and linguistic national resources at their disposal. In this regard, Castelnuovo-Tedesco appears strikingly different.

The reasons for this difference are to be found first of all in the influence of an exceptionally cosmopolitan family and education. Additionally, his close relationship with the Florentine intellectual and artistic milieu, particularly vibrant between the mid-1920s and the mid-1930s, enhanced his internationalist inclinations. These were the years of the Florentine journal *Solaria*, which contributed greatly to the dissemination of the new Italian and French literature, as well as works by authors of Central Europe (Rilke, Kafka, Mann, Zweig), Russia (Mayakovsky, Pasternak), Great Britain (Eliot, Joyce, Woolf), and the United States (Hemingway and Faulkner). Arturo Loria, Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s close friend, was a leading figure of this scene. In addition, his acquaintance with Florentine cosmopolitan writer Carlo



Usigliano di Lari, family home in Tuscany (Pisa), where the composer worked on the Whitman settings in the summer of 1936.

Placci offered Castelnuovo-Tedesco the opportunity for greater familiarity with English prosody, a necessity in setting Shakespeare. Another family friend, physician Vincenzo Lapicciarella, introduced him to Whitman's poetry.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco's effort to combine his music with poetry relies on exceptional perceptiveness and flexibility. His modern harmonic colors and textual declamation, clearly indebted to French composers, stand beside a still perfectly Romantic approach: the "character piece"; word painting; a piano part evocative of specific atmospheres (as in Schubert) or interacting with the voice in order to create the musical texture (as in Schumann). All components are text-oriented, including the formal aspects of a piece. For expressive purposes, he even deploys strophic forms typical of the song genre, as in the Shakespeare Songs—the first, fundamental step of a journey that would repeatedly lead him even before his final immigration to the United States to combine his music with English verse.

In Italy, Castelnuovo-Tedesco's appreciation of the qualities of the English language was new and pioneering, since the Latin tradition considered English unsuitable for musical setting. As stated in his January 1944 article "Music and Poetry: Problems of a Songwriter," published in *The Musical Quarterly*, the prevalence of monosyllabic words, and of consonants over vowels, resulted in a lack of "sonorous substance" that fascinated this composer and led him to consider English "one of the most spiritual and transparent languages I know." Castelnuovo-Tedesco captured in remarkable fashion that spirituality and transparency; in 1936, he would turn to Whitman's most intimate and profound verses. Once having crossed the ocean, he would revisit Shakespeare and the complex universe of his Sonnets.

*(Translated from Italian by Aloma Bardi)*



Castelnuovo-Tedesco  
studio portrait; 1921.



Castelnuovo-Tedesco,  
in Florence with  
violinist Jascha Heifetz  
and conductor Vittorio  
Gui, on the occasion  
of the Florentine premiere  
of his Violin Concerto  
No. 2, Op. 62; 1934.



Castelnuovo-Tedesco  
with Igor Stravinsky;  
Beverly Hills, 1955.

**THE MUSIC OF A SPIRITUAL AND TRANSPARENT LANGUAGE:  
THE LEAVES OF GRASS SONG CYCLE AND THE SHAKESPEARE SONNETS**  
by Aloma Bardi

If for the polyglot, highly educated Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Whitman's poetry was a sudden discovery that proved to be highly inspirational, William Shakespeare was a constant source of delight and musical interest.

For the 10-song cycle *Leaves of Grass*, Op. 89b, the composer set nine of the 45-poem *Calamus* cluster first published in the 1860 third edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, plus one additional poem ("And now gentlemen—The Base of All Metaphysics"), added to the cluster in 1871. Settings of Whitman's "Louisiana," Op. 89a, and "Ocean," Op. 89c, complete the opus. All the Whitman settings were written in Italy in 1936, three years before the composer and his family immigrated to the United States.

While in America, Castelnuovo-Tedesco set 32 of Shakespeare's 154 sonnets. Opus 125 (28 sonnets) was composed in 1944-45 (27 pieces) and 1947 (one piece); in 1963, four more sonnets were set as addenda to Op. 125. Among Castelnuovo-Tedesco's other works inspired by Shakespeare are 11 orchestral overtures to individual plays ("The overtures to the operas I will never compose," he would jokingly repeat), as well as Four Dances for *Love's Labour's Lost*. The first opera set to a Shakespeare play, *All's Well That Ends Well*, was begun in 1954 and completed in 1958 to a libretto in English and in Italian. This was followed by *The Merchant of Venice*, completed in 1956. He also composed *Three Shakespeare Duets* Op. 97 for soprano, tenor, and orchestra (1937, unpublished) and transcribed some of the Shakespeare Songs for the violinist Jascha Heifetz.

All the pieces featured on this CD remain unpublished at the time of this recording (2014)

and have rarely been performed in public. The manuscripts are part of the Castelnuovo-Tedesco papers at the Library of Congress Music Division. This large collection of the composer's published and unpublished music was initiated in 1966 by Castelnuovo-Tedesco and his wife Clara, and subsequently continued by the family. Original sources, including music manuscripts and related documents, were used in the preparation of this recording and its notes.

*Leaves of Grass* and the Shakespeare Sonnets reveal Castelnuovo-Tedesco's fascination and admiration for English and American literature, as well as the great attention he lavished on the poetic texts and musicality of the English language. The Whitman cycle was particularly dear to the composer, who mentions it fondly in his autobiography *Una vita di musica (A Life with Music)*. Written mostly in the 1950s and published in Italy in 2005, the book narrates the composer's life and work against the background of cultural and social events on both sides of the ocean. Recalling the slowness of his recovery from a nervous breakdown, he writes of Whitman's poems: "They gave me the urge to get back to work! And I did work, almost feverishly, setting one poem daily." In his 1944 article "Music and Poetry: Problems of a Song-Writer," published in *The Musical Quarterly*, he describes Whitman as "that great fraternal soul." The article's conclusion moves beyond artistic considerations to a statement of the composer's humanistic vision: "And let me express a hope: that the English-speaking people (American especially) find in their admirable poetry a rich source of inspiration for their song literature, towards the furthering of happiness and fraternity among men, as their great poet Whitman would have wished."

The first critical evaluation of the Whitman cycle came from composer-critic Mario Pilati (1903-38), a dear friend of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's who saw the manuscript in the summer of 1936, soon after its completion. On August 3 of that same year, Pilati wrote the composer



Mario and Clara Castelnuovo-Tedesco in the composer's studio at their home; Beverly Hills, 1960s.

to express his admiration. Among other songs, he praised “The Base of All Metaphysics,” suggesting that Castelnuovo-Tedesco had set “a masterful poem, in its ascent towards the human and Christian conclusion.” Pilati’s emphasis on the supposedly Christian aspects of these pieces is striking in retrospect. He was of course aware that Castelnuovo-Tedesco was Jewish, but the two composers shared a tolerance for different religious beliefs. Having played an active role in Italian unification and Italian liberal society, Jews in Italy were generally not yet subject to overt anti-Semitism before the enforcement of the Racial Laws.

During the Fascist era, Castelnuovo-Tedesco expressed his views on musical freedom in Italy. On September 14-17, 1944, he attended a conference of the Musicians Congress Record at UCLA. He lectured in the same session as Theodor W. Adorno and Hanns Eisler, both exiles from Nazi Germany. In his unpublished paper “Music under Italian Fascism,” the composer mentions a second phase of music under Fascism after “the period of organization” (1922-33), “that of the absorption by the State of all musical activities” (1933-38). He notes, however, that “the Fascist Government had made no attempt to create a specific Fascist” music. It was in this environment that he set the Whitman songs of Op. 89. That they remained unpublished helped preserve Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s artistic freedom; while still in Italy, he never even attempted to submit the manuscript to publishers and thus did not have to face the potential ire of the Fascist censors.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s text-oriented musical poetics perfectly express the style and lyricism of *Leaves of Grass*. The songs that make up the cycle are indeed stamped “with the authentic and therefore undetachable seal of melody” that in his 1944 *Musical Quarterly* article the composer would define as the objective of his urge to set poetry to music. They form a unified whole, constituting a true song cycle in the tradition of the great Romantic lied composers.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco drew inspiration from Schubert throughout his life. Before immigrating to America, he was a concert pianist who also accompanied recitals of Schubert and Schumann lieder. In his essay on Schubert published in *Pègaso* in November 1932, he regards the composer's songs as his finest creations: "The balance between the voice and the accompaniment, between the word and the sound, is nearly always perfect." He praises, in particular, "the innocence and candor, the overwhelming power" of the songs.

The increasingly explicit reappearance of themes and melodies connects the songs motivically and thematically (especially notable in the transition from Song IX to Song X), growing in intensity until they outline a narrative of sublime musical ascent towards those universal values that Walt Whitman had first expressed in poetic verse. By paying homage to Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms, and to the melodic gift of the Italian vocal tradition, the composer intended to acknowledge the stature of American poetry, and Whitman in particular.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco experienced his love for Shakespeare as answering a call from the poet himself. In his article "Shakespeare and Music," published in the *Shakespeare Association Bulletin* of July 1940, he states that Shakespeare "asked for musical collaboration as a necessary element for completing the poetic expression." He regrets that even Purcell "did not have recourse to the original text of Shakespeare (a fact which greatly diminishes his importance) but he employed the adaptations of librettists, often unfortunate." Castelnuovo-Tedesco goes on to wonder whether opera is "truly the ideal form to express the humanity, the fantasy, the poetic essence of Shakespeare, to realize the musical collaboration for which the poet wished." In his opinion, Shakespeare's poetry is untranslatable and can only be set in the original. "His English is a perfectly musical language: I dare say (from my experience with it) that it unites the spiritual subtlety of



Castelnuovo-Tedesco with  
Madeleine Grey, "the composer's  
favorite interpreter of his songs."

English with the sonorous splendor of Italian. We must therefore approach him in English (and with the original text).”

Castelnuovo-Tedesco devotes chapter 89 of his autobiography to the “solitary and proud cycle (or better, group) of the Shakespeare Sonnets”: “Perhaps they do not have the variety and pleasantness of the Shakespeare Songs (nor could they have it) but I believe them to be, in the marriage, so to speak, of the voice and the piano comment, more perfect, and I regard them, as far as songs go, my highest accomplishment. It is a work of which (I confess) I am particularly proud, also for its quantity and body. While the Songs have been set to music innumerable times by composers of all ages, very few dared approach the Sonnets, and never in this number. (Vanity? Ambition? Perhaps!) Also for this reason I never decided to publish them.” And he continues: “Precisely because they are my ultimate accomplishment, and because I could hardly find such great poetry after Shakespeare, I practically abandoned the art song after the Sonnets.”

One can only admire how the composer treats the Shakespeare Sonnets’ characteristic opening subjunctives, interrogatives, comparisons, and other Elizabethan syntactic devices and complexities. Castelnuovo-Tedesco succeeds in creating infinite shades of color and expression within the boundaries of the strophic construction and its rhyming scheme, the metric uniformity of the Shakespearean pentameter, and the sonnet’s typical development of subject matter. This search for a variety of colors at times leads him to specify explicit instrumental qualities in the piano part: *dolce* (like lute); *p espr* (like bassoon); light and crisp (like harpsichord); *mf espr* (quasi cello solo). This is but one example of how, in answering Shakespeare’s call for musical collaboration, Castelnuovo-Tedesco shaped a world of nuances, correspondences, and subtle variety of effects.

## WHITMAN, FASCIST AMBIGUITY, AND CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO’S COVERT CRITIQUE

by John Champagne

Discovering how a work of art came into existence is never simple, for where one looks can determine what one sees. While it is tempting to follow the romantics and simply attribute a work to the urgings of the artist’s spirit, the modernist avant-garde vociferously challenged the assumption that art is equivalent to self-expression. As someone whose aesthetic was a rich mix of Romanticism and Modernism, Castelnuovo-Tedesco invites us to imagine in complex ways the circumstances that led to the Whitman songs. That *Leaves of Grass* was composed in year 14 of the Fascist *Ventennio* renders particularly prescient the question of how the cycle came to be. Considered in the shadow of Fascist Italy, Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s decision to end the cycle with a poem invoking “the dear love of man for his comrade” can only intrigue modern listeners.

Plato proposed that no poet could hope to achieve greatness and also lack the madness that results from possession by the Muses. Following a painful period of nervous exhaustion, Castelnuovo-Tedesco composed *Leaves of Grass* in a Bacchic frenzy itself in keeping with Whitman’s pagan sensibility. So debilitated by exhaustion and feelings of loneliness that this typically prolific composer could not work, Castelnuovo-Tedesco had received a book of Whitman’s poetry in 1936 from his family doctor, Vincenzo Lapicciarella, and “what medicine could not do, poetry could!” As he recounts in his autobiography *Una vita di musica (A Life with Music)*, the composer immediately “fell in love” with Whitman’s poetry, “so full of warmth, of enthusiasm, of human solidarity.” Castelnuovo-Tedesco considered the songs “among [his] best; I found in them a freshness of inspiration and a

warmth of inflection I had long lost.” He had hoped to have them published in the U.S., but archly confessed, “I found in American editors a strange bias against the poetry of Whitman (who is nonetheless considered *the* national poet, but only due to his patriotic poetry).”

Given that Whitman was known internationally as the preacher of brotherly love and the great poet of democracy, how was it possible for Castelnuovo-Tedesco—a modernist (at least according to Fascist hardliners) and a Jew—to write these songs without fear of retribution? The composer’s efforts coincide with the struggle to determine a properly Fascist aesthetic and the debates, conducted in the Italian Fascist press, around Modernism—specifically, the tendency among certain “Fascists of the first hour” to equate Modernism with Internationalism, Hebraism, and Bolshevism. It is well remarked, however, that, unlike Hitler, Mussolini himself refused to denote a single Fascist aesthetic. The catholicity of his patronage was on the one hand an attempt to secure the loyalty of artists and on the other a kind of gambit: Hoping that someone would bring glory to Fascist Italy, Mussolini gave financial support even to artists who were not strong advocates of the regime, as long as they did not publicly voice their opposition.

Italian Fascism’s attitude toward anti-Semitism was ambiguous. Certain of Mussolini’s supporters were anti-Jewish from the regime’s beginnings. Their position was strengthened after the approval of the Concordate in 1929. They used the long history of philanthropic efforts of Italian Jews toward their co-religionists in Palestine to question the loyalty of Jews to the Italian nation. The scholarly consensus today is that Italian anti-Semitism was homegrown and not merely a “foreign” import from Germany, as the post-war myth of Italians as *la brava gente* asserted. Until 1938, however, anti-Semitism did not extend to the enactment of anti-Jewish laws, and Jews were allowed to be members of the party,



An envelope autographed by Walt Whitman and addressed to Henry Scott Tuke (1858-1929); given to the composer by his physician, Vincenzo Lapicciarella.

as Giorgio Bassani's *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* reminds us. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Jewish identity did not automatically endanger his career.

Whitman was first introduced to Italian audiences in 1879. Additional translations were published sporadically until 1887, when the first Italian volume of Whitman's work appeared. The year 1907 saw the publication of a two-volume edition of the complete poems that was then revised in 1923. The poet's work was championed by Giuseppe Mazzini, hero of the Risorgimento, and Nobel Prize-winning poet Giosuè Carducci.

Unfortunately, post-war accounts of Fascism have largely failed to imagine how some of the artwork created during the Ventennio may have been, however covertly, critical of its ideologies. Significantly, Whitman's poetry appealed to Fascists and anti-Fascists alike. Castelnuovo-Tedesco set poems from what is considered Whitman's most homoerotic cluster, *Calamus*. The extent to which the composer heard these overtones can be imagined as consistent with the same tolerant cultural and humanist outlook with which he regarded Shakespeare's Sonnets and their powerful expression of love, free of prejudice and constraints. We do know that these overtones were perceived by Italian author Cesare Pavese (arrested in 1935 for his anti-Fascist activity). Pavese's response is itself fascinating: He accepts Whitman's pansexuality as a product of the poet's healthy, prelapsarian sensibility—an attitude similar to one adopted by Renaissance scholars like Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino toward antiquity, and also typical of how European intellectuals of that time regarded America as a land of “innocence.”

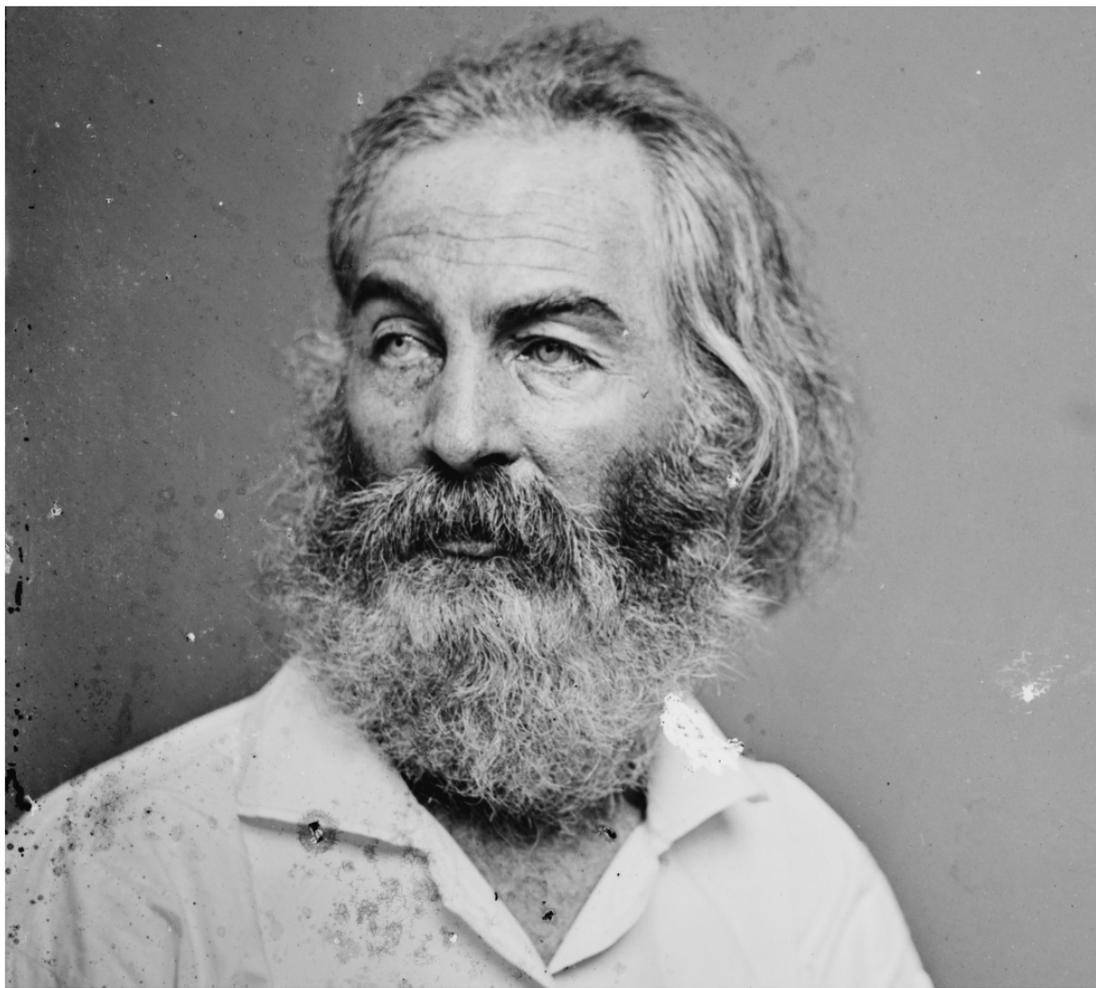
The idea of Whitman as prelapsarian also found expression, however, in Giovanni Papini's embrace of the poet, Papini locating in Whitman's lyrics a modern primitivism or barbarism in keeping with Fascist ruralism, anti-intellectualism, and critique of the “soft” bourgeoisie—a phrase used to vilify the leaders of liberal Italy. That is, the same

characteristics that led an anti-Fascist like Pavese to praise Whitman were also those that could be admired by anti-Semitic Fascists like Papini. Whitman's sensibility could be read as consonant with Fascist calls for a new Italian male characterized by his virility and modeled after Mussolini himself.

That both allies and foes of Fascism could find in Whitman a fellow traveler alerts us to the contradictions of Mussolini's dictatorship—for the critique of the bourgeoisie did nothing, for example, to dissuade Italian industrialists from turning to the regime to “solve,” via thuggery, the problems of strikes and labor disputes. These contradictions are to some degree what made it possible for Castelnuovo-Tedesco to write his Whitman songs minus fear of reproach. For the history of virility is itself traversed by contradictions.

Specifically, in an attempt to imagine itself as the predestined heir of imperial Rome, Fascism frequently employed an antiquarian aesthetic that of necessity alluded to Platonic homoeroticism (as well as Roman pansexuality). Fascism's visual references to ancient Rome could not sidestep this historical reality. What the Renaissance, the poetry of Whitman, and the Fascist appropriation of Greco-Roman culture could not contain are precisely the contradictions of Platonism. Today we use the term “platonic love” to define intimate, nonsexual friendships. As described by Plato, however, these friendships were highly eroticized, and homosexual behavior was not automatically associated with effeminacy.

But the Fascists' obsession with virility and their appropriation of images from Ancient Rome is only half of the story. The Fascist years also saw the production of representations of masculinity more complex than the adjective “virile” implies. To understand how and why, we must turn once again to the contradictions of the regime. The early decades of the 20th century saw, in response to changes in capitalism, transformations in Western masculinity. A process begun in the late 19th century with the appearance of the dandy continued,



Left: Walt Whitman  
(1819-92) photographic  
portrait; c. 1862.

Right: Whitman's draft  
copy of "What Think  
You I Take My Pen in  
Hand to Record?"

VI Calamus 32 p. 372  
What think you I have  
taken my pen to record?  
Not the battle-ship, perfect-  
model'd majestic, that I saw  
to-day arrive in the offing,  
under full sail,  
Nor the splendors of the past  
day - nor the splendors of  
the night that envelopes me -  
Nor the glory and growth of  
the great city spread around  
me.

But the two ~~my~~ men I saw  
to-day on the pier, parting  
the parting of dear friends,  
The one ~~who~~ <sup>remained</sup> hung on  
the other's neck and passionately  
kissed him - while the one  
who ~~to depart~~ <sup>departed</sup> tightl' prest the  
one ~~who~~ <sup>remained</sup> in his arms.

9

accelerated by Fordism and Taylorism and their demand for a managerial class. (Prior to the Wilde trials in 1895, the dandy was not perceived as homosexual; in the Italian context, Gabriele D'Annunzio, whom Castelnovo-Tedesco personally knew and admired, is perhaps the most famous example, though Castelnovo-Tedesco appears in some photos to himself reflect the model of refined, dandified elegance.) The transformations in Western notions of gender that accompanied modernization included the targeting of men as consumers. Masculinity increasingly became something that could be purchased.

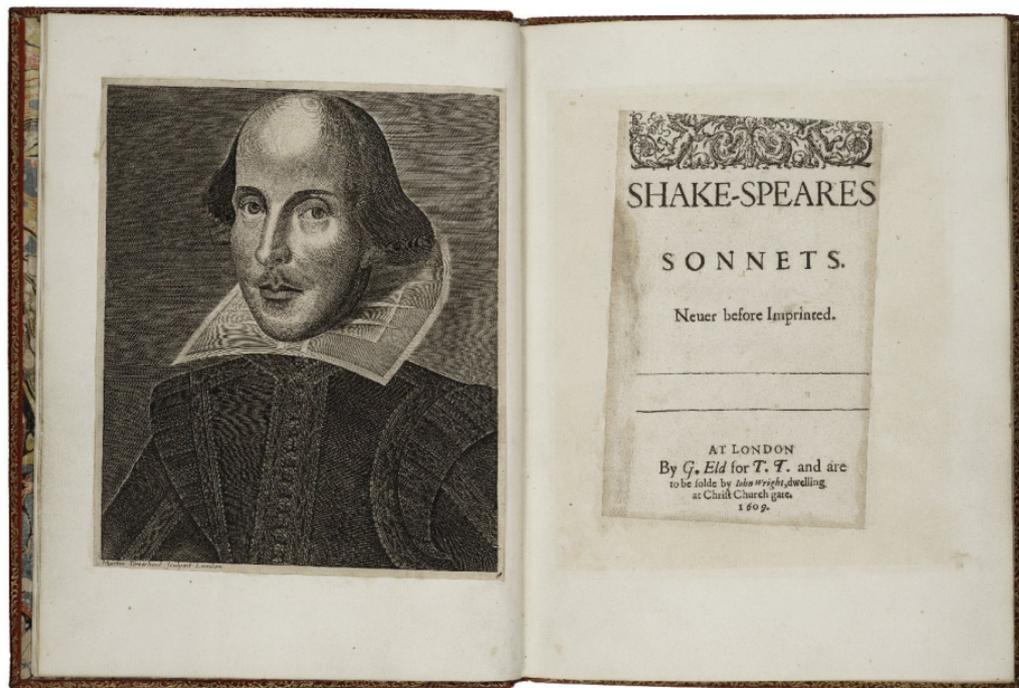
Fascism could not insulate itself from these transformations, and, despite his paeans to ruralism, perhaps most characteristically embodied in the photographs of the time period—Mussolini driving a tractor, Mussolini threshing wheat—*Il Duce* was committed to industrializing Italy. He was not anti-capitalist but instead had to encourage a limited consumption in keeping with the realities of the Italian economy. Hence, Mussolini offered the new managerial class on which the regime was increasingly dependent a scaled-down version of the benefits provided by Fordism. Fascist anti-bourgeois ideology acted as a check on conspicuous consumption, while Fascist discourses of virility attempted to calm the potential homoerotic panic unleashed by the increased commodification of masculinity. Concern with one's mode of appearance always threatened to conjure the specter of effeminacy, particularly in an Italy with a long tradition of figures like the *cicisbeo*—the indolent aristocrat—and the decadent dandy.

To return to the Whitman cycle: Within this complex historical context, should Castelnovo-Tedesco's setting be considered a felicitous exploitation of the regime's own contradictions? The months of Castelnovo-Tedesco's depression—mid-1935 to mid-1936—coincided almost exactly with Fascist international aggression: Seeking to expand its colonial possessions in Africa, Italy invaded Ethiopia, ultimately deploying chemical weapons.

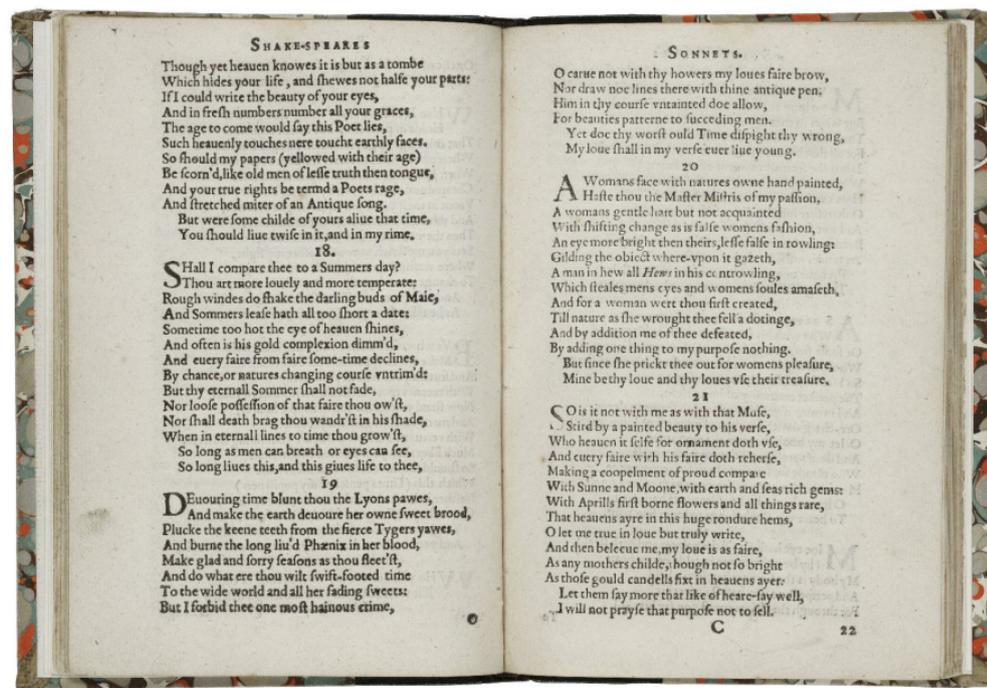
Thanks to victory, King Victor Emmanuel III added "Emperor of Ethiopia" to his title, and both the regime's and Mussolini's personal popularity were at an all-time high. Two years later, the 1938 race laws would force the composer and his family to flee Italy.

Given these historical circumstances, I suggest that we imagine Castelnovo-Tedesco's cycle as a covert critique of Fascism that redeploys some of the Fascists' favorite tropes—the land, the crowd, brotherhood, blood, and glory—to mask that critique. If, following the lead of contemporary philosophers such as Jacques Rancière, we extend our definition of politics to encompass any attempt to address a wrong, the Whitman settings are, and were, "political." They are evidence of Castelnovo-Tedesco's effort to counter Fascist bellicosity and belligerence. And, whether he recognized it or not, Castelnovo-Tedesco's efforts were—and are—part of a long tradition in Italy of artistic *impegno*. Roughly translated as "commitment," *impegno* has a rich series of connotations, including obligation, responsibility, diligence, enthusiasm, and caution. When applied to something like a song cycle, it reminds us of the "work" involved in bringing a creative impulse to fruition.

In one of the poems chosen by Castelnovo-Tedesco, the speaker suggests that if he were to know the "yearning and thoughtful" of the entire world, "I should become attached to them as I do to men in my own lands." Perhaps, in writing his songs, Castelnovo-Tedesco was also moved by another kind of madness Plato describes: the madness of love, which can overcome any boundaries. He would remain true to this source of inspiration when, a few years later in the United States, he set a selection of Shakespeare sonnets.



Castelnuovo-Tedesco's copy of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Sonnets; Printed by G. Eld; London, 1609.



## PHOTO CREDITS AND CAPTIONS

### FRONT COVER

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco at desk; Florence, early 1930s. Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C., Box 143, Folder 14/5; reproduced by permission.

### INSIDE COVERS

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Leaves of Grass*: I., “What Think You I Take My Pen in Hand to Record?,” holograph manuscript score, p. 1; 1936, unpublished; The Library of Congress Music Division.

### PAGE 25

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Italy, 1930s; Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C., Box 143, Folder 11; reproduced by permission.

### PAGE 27

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s passport and visas; Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C.; Biographical Materials, Box 157, Folder 5; reproduced by permission.

### PAGE 28

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s ticket for the ship *Saturnia*, sailing from Trieste to New York on 13 July 1939; the return portion of the ticket is left blank; Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C.; Biographical Materials, Box 157, Folder 5; reproduced by permission.

### PAGE 31

Fotografia Parigina, Firenze, summer 1903; Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C., Box 143, Folder 1; reproduced by permission.

### PAGE 39

Period color postcard of Usigliano di Lari, family home in Tuscany (Pisa), where the composer worked on the Whitman settings in the summer of 1936; early 1930s; Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C., currently [Nov. 2014] Unprocessed Box No. 1, donated by Lisbeth and Diana Castelnuovo-Tedesco, March 11, 2014; received at Library of Congress 03/21/2014; reproduced by permission.

### PAGE 41

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Photographic studio portrait; A. Cattani & Figli, Florence, 10 October 1921; Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C.

### PAGE 42

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco in Florence with violinist Jascha Heifetz and conductor Vittorio Gui, on the occasion of the Florentine

premiere of Violin Concerto No. 2, Op. 66, *I Profeti* (*The Prophets*), commissioned by Heifetz and written as a response to the rise of antisemitism in Europe; symphonic season 1933-34, Ente Autonomo Teatro Comunale Vittorio Emanuele II, Teatro Comunale, 4 March 1934; Foto Locchi; Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C., Box 143, Folder 12; reproduced by permission.

### PAGE 43

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco with Igor Stravinsky; Beverly Hills, 1955; Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C., Box 144, Folder 10; reproduced by permission.

### PAGE 46

Mario and Clara Castelnuovo-Tedesco in the composer’s studio at their home in Beverly Hills; 1960s; Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C., Box 144, Folder 15; reproduced by permission.

### PAGE 49

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco with Madeleine Grey, “the composer’s favorite interpreter of his songs—also a favorite of Ravel” (*Una vita di musica*, Capitulo XXXIV. “Cantate e liriche”); Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Papers, The Library of Congress Music Division, Washington, D.C.

### PAGE 53

An envelope autographed by Whitman and addressed to Henry Scott Tuke (1858-1929); given to the composer by his physician Vincenzo Lapicciarella.

### PAGE 56

Walt Whitman (1819-92), photographic portrait (carte-de-visite type) by Mathew Brady or Alexander Gardner; Brady Studio, New York, c. 1862; this image portrays the poet at around the time when he wrote *Calamus*; Brady-Handy Photograph Collection, The Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

### PAGE 57

Walt Whitman (1819-92), draft copy of “What Think You I Take My Pen in Hand to Record?” (*Calamus*, *Leaves of Grass*); holograph manuscript.

### PAGE 60

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Sonnets; Printed by G. Eld; London, 1609; Frontispiece, with Shakespeare’s Portrait, and Title Page.

### PAGE 61

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Sonnets; volume in quarto format published by Thomas Thorpe, printed by G. Eld and sold by William Aspley; London, 1609; Sonnet XVIII, “Shall I compare thee to a summers day?”

This recording is dedicated to the memory of Lisbeth M. Stone Castelnovo-Tedesco (1936-2014) and the Castelnovo-Tedesco family for their encouragement and support of this project and their tireless efforts in promoting the music of Mario Castelnovo-Tedesco.

Oberlin Music would like to acknowledge the assistance of ICAMus, The International Center for American Music, and its founder, American-music scholar Aloma Bardi, in researching and coordinating material for this book.

ICAMus is a nonprofit organization founded in Florence in 2003. It is committed to the study, performance, and teaching of American music and America's musical life.

Special thanks to Diana Castelnovo-Tedesco; to James Westby, longtime Castelnovo-Tedesco scholar and cataloguer of his works; and to the Library of Congress Music Division, Susan Vita, head, and Katherine Rivers, special collections curator.



**OBERLIN MUSIC** is the official record label of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. It celebrates the artistic vision and superlative talent of Oberlin's faculty, students, and alumni—on campus and on tour. Essential to this mission is Clonick Hall, a superior recording facility dedicated to capturing studio sessions in the heart of the conservatory. Oberlin Music titles are available on CD and digital music channels worldwide. For more information, visit [oberlin.edu/oberlinmusic](http://oberlin.edu/oberlinmusic).

The **OBERLIN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC**, founded in 1865 and situated amid the intellectual vitality of Oberlin College, is the oldest continuously operating conservatory in the United States. Recognized internationally as a professional music school of the highest caliber, it was awarded the National Medal of Arts, the country's highest honor given to artists and arts patrons.

**LABEL DIRECTOR:** Michael Straus

**EDITORIAL DIRECTORS:** Cathy Partlow Strauss and Erich Burnett

**PRODUCER, AUDIO ENGINEER, EDITING, AND MASTERING ENGINEER:** Paul Eachus

**HISTORICAL CONSULTANT:** James Westby

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Ryan Sprowl, [www.ryansprowl.com](http://www.ryansprowl.com)

**DEAN OF THE CONSERVATORY:** Andrea Kalyn

Recorded May 15, 16, 19, 2014.





I.

*Lento-grave-funebre* *ben declamato*

*What think you I take my pen in hand to record? the*

*mf pesante*

*subito mosso (quasi il doppio)*

*little-ship, perfect model'd ma-jestic, that I saw pass the*

*mf. luminoso*