

FRANCESCO LAMPERTI

The Art of Singing

Revised Edition with Translation by

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# PREFACE.

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## ON THE DECADENCE OF THE ART OF SINGING.

It is a sad, but nevertheless undeniable truth, that the art of singing is in a terrible state of decadence; and this fact is all the more to be regretted, inasmuch as it is not only the opinion of intelligent persons, but also that of the less educated public, that it results from the inferior quality of the musical works represented as much in our leading as in our minor theatres.

This decadence has for some time occupied my attention. I have sought to unravel its cause, and, therefore, I have thought it well to begin this treatise with some reflections on that subject.

It is not to be supposed that the human voice, since the time of the great artistic celebrities has undergone any change for the worse; though certainly it is possible that some vocal phenomena should be developed at one period rather than at another; yet these are extraordinary exceptions, and it is not on them that we have to dwell. On the other hand, bearing in mind the moral and intellectual development of the population from that epoch to the present, it seems to me that the intelligence of those who devote themselves to singing should have also undergone that improvement which the flight of time and the force of progress have extended to all classes of society.

Notwithstanding this, forty years ago we could muster a numerous body of distinguished artists—a thing which in the present day we are unfortunately unable to do; and hence we must suppose that the music of that period, and the thorough grounding in the fundamental principles of the art undergone by singers before appearing on the stage, were the real causes through which we were then able to boast of so many artistic celebrities, striving not only for mere personal success, but also devoted to singing for the love of the art itself.

It is to these two points that I wish to call the attention of my readers.

The famous singer Pacchiarotti wrote in his memoirs: "He who knows how to breathe and pronounce well, knows how to sing well," and this is one of the greatest truths which study and experience have ever suggested to the successful cultivators of the art of singing.

At the time when the music of Rossini was in vogue, and was represented in all the theatres, was it possible, think you, for a man, though gifted with a beautiful voice and musical ability, to sing that music without knowing how to

breathe well? Certainly not. It was necessary to make of that branch of the art a thorough and fundamental study, and at every performance the singer made gradual but sure progress in developing his voice, in pronunciation, in respiration, in correcting faulty intonation and emission, both of which defects were rendered more apparent and, therefore, the more intolerable by the delicacy of the orchestral instrumentation, which was limited for the most part to a simple accompaniment.

Apart from previous training, by virtue of the above-mentioned repertoire, a singer, who might have had only the gift of a naturally good voice and a certain musical talent, found in the music itself the best and surest master; for supposing him to be wanting in pecuniary means or previous study, he could cultivate the art equally well, it not being considered at all to his disadvantage to begin in the secondary characters, the less so when his fellow-artists were the great singers of the day. And thus, with patience and application, it then was possible to supply the want of a regular training under the care of a master. At the present day it is different.

Vocal music, in order to assume a more dramatic character, is almost entirely despoiled of agility of every kind; this is carried to such an extent that by degrees it will become little else than musical declamation, to the total exclusion of melody. Without entering here into the question whether or not any advantage may accrue to musical science through these innovations, I shall only briefly observe that as the singing of melodies, though not absolutely true to nature, is yet productive of much pleasure to the audience; it seems to me a pity that the melodramatic system should be exchanged for one perhaps more realistic, but which tends to the exclusion of melody, and is hence detrimental to the art of singing.

Let the admirers of declamation frequent the theatres of drama and tragedy, where there is no need of orchestral music to intensify the desired expression.

Owing to the fact that singers no longer find the best of methods and masters in the music itself, and either do not wish or are unable to begin their careers in the slow but sure way of their predecessors, they rarely attain more than mediocrity in their art, and their singing is usually defective and unsatisfactory.

Another cause of the decadence of singing is the absence of the *musicisti*, a class of singers incompatible with modern civilization. This, while it presents on the side of humanity a just and necessary progress, leaves on the side of art an irreparable void by depriving it of its most assiduous cultivators.

Pacchiarotti, Crescentini, Veluti, Marchesi, etc., all most celebrated artists, having left the stage, appeared again in their pupils. The very fact of their retiring, while it deterred them from other distractions, obliged them to dedicate their affections, minds, and whole attention to the cultivation of the art, which they had made the sole occupation of their lives.

At one time famous singers, they afterward became masters of incalculable ability and experience, in whose school were educated that large number of great artistic celebrities, upon whose day we now look back as upon a glorious past.

The deficiency of good singers is also due in a great measure to the *impresarios*, in my opinion. Modern operas present more facilities than those of former times, to artists venturing immaturity upon the stage; a theatrical speculator hearing a good voice, even though it be wanting in the first principles of art, engages it, offers and sub-lets it in the musical market, and the treasure of a voice soon becomes badly worn, through the waste of the most beautiful notes emitted without rule, modulation, or support; the middle notes become weakened, the rest uneven, and the voice, which the music of former days would have of itself educated and preserved, is lost for ever.

To these reasons may be added what I shall term the *spostamento della voce*, by which I mean the present habit of considering as mezzo-soprano the dramatic soprano of the past, and of making mezzo-sopranos sing also the parts written for contraltos, hence the almost total disappearance of music written for the true contralto voice in the modern repertoire.

The same applies to the so-called *tenori serii* of the past, who now sing the baritone, to the *tenori di mezzo carattere*, who now strain their voices by singing the parts written for *tenori serii*, and to the little use made of the *basso cantante*. Those who suffer most from this displacement are the sopranos, whose voices, to enable them to sing modern music at all, ought to be exceptional. Obligated as they are to sing habitually on the highest notes of the *soprano sfogato* and on few strong low ones, their medium register becomes weakened and assumes a character of disagreeable inequality.

What is the result? Why, that the true sopranos, obliged by the rules of the profession to sing these parts, in a short time abandon themselves to emitting forced and fatiguing notes, and so destroy the *mezze-voci*, instead of which, had the music been properly adapted to the capabilities of the organ, nature would have improved and strengthened these, the most important notes of the whole voice.

To the raising of the musical pitch much of this displacement is also due, that again adds to the difficulties of *prime donne*.

At the present day one would consider as mezzo sopranos those who sang in *Otello* and *Semiramide*, and almost all the operas which Rossini wrote for sopranos, as also in the earlier operas of Donizetti and Mercadante.

Bellini was the first to write parts of an exceptional range, and what was more, he introduced the system of putting a syllable to every note, thus rendering his music more fatiguing to the voice. His successors exaggerated his mannerism, as much in respect to range as in the arrangement of the words. Much of this displacement may be attributed to these reasons, coupled with the

fact that syllabication in this music had in a great part to be executed by the head notes, which in men's voices, on account of their limited compass, was impracticable, and in women's, productive of much harm.

The fact that modern music affords such facilities to artists contented with mediocrity, is one of the chief reasons why the ranks of the art are crowded with worthless and half-taught singers, and is the origin of the general ruin of voices or want of fundamental study.

It seems to me that now, more than ever—as much in the interest of art, as for the benefit of singers—a man should apply himself to severe and careful study, and that, independently of the kind of music which the public taste may demand, he should strive to train his voice by singing the music of the old masters, more suited as it is to the development of his natural talents than that of the present day.

Here, I would observe that singing, being but an extension of speaking, the notes which we use in speaking are naturally animated, as they express rage, irony, love, pity, etc., and the words with which these feelings are expressed are emitted clearly. But without the necessary study, how would one emit, with equal clearness of tone and pronunciation, those notes on which one does not speak? how could one support them by regular and natural respiration, and failing that, how could one animate them so as to express the passions and feelings mentioned above? No matter how exquisite the taste or beautiful the voice a man might have, it would be impossible.

Granted that a man be gifted with these excellent qualities, but without a fundamental education, he may become a shouter, but a singer never. His, perhaps, extraordinary but uncultivated notes will always be cold, and in spite of their strength and sonority, always without expression, always wanting in true dramatic accent, monotonous, and incapable of varying their character, according to the meaning which the poet or the composer has conceived; wanting alike in thorough education and artistic experience, he will certainly run the risk of injuring and perhaps of totally ruining his voice.

In such times as these, when new music, new composers, and new singers are taking the place of old ones, I have determined to check, if not all at least a part of the abuses as regards singing, and to counterbalance the influence which modern music exercises to the prejudice of good singing, by some practical and fundamental rules, the result of experience gained in many years of teaching.

By means of these I hope to avert the ruin of voices and to obtain happy and fruitful results for those who devote their attention to vocal music.

I do not wish this guide to be considered as a new method of teaching singing; I would rather suggest it as counsel, which, if wanting in scientific merit, will, as the fruit of my experience and study, be of some value.

## ARTICLE I.

### THE VOICE.

*Q.* What is the voice?

*A.* The voice is the sound produced by the air expelled from the lungs and passing through the apparatus in the throat called the larynx.

*Q.* Are all voices suitable for cultivation?

*A.* No; only those which possess extension, equality, force, and flexibility.

*Q.* Is it enough to possess a beautiful voice and extensive compass to become a good singer?

*A.* No; besides the voice it is necessary to have a good ear—that is, a natural aptitude for correctly seizing and repeating sounds, be they of another voice or of any instrument; wanting in this, a singer must not expect success.

## ARTICLE II.

### THE VARIOUS REGISTERS OF THE VOICE.

*Q.* Are all the notes of the voice of the same quality?

*A.* No; only those which belong to the same register; the others, no matter how even the voice may be, differ from each other, as does the mechanism of the throat in producing them.

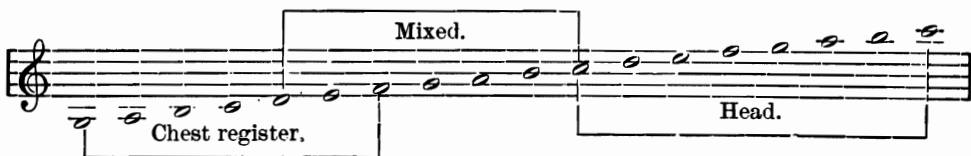
*Q.* Of how many registers does the female voice consist?

*A.* Of three: the chest, mixed, and head registers.

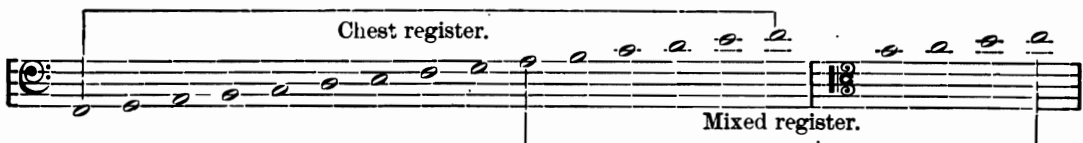
*Q.* Of how many registers is the male voice composed?

*A.* Of two only: the chest and mixed registers.

#### FULL EXTENSION OF WOMEN'S VOICES.



#### FULL EXTENSION OF MEN'S VOICES.



## ARTICLE III.

### THE POSITION OF THE BODY, MOUTH, AND VOCAL ORGAN.

*Q.* How should the pupil stand while singing?

*A.* He should hold himself erect, with the chest expanded and the shoulders easy—in a word, in the position of a soldier.

*Q.* What should be the expression of the mouth to most facilitate the emission of the voice?

*A.* The mouth should be smiling, the lips should be drawn sufficiently tight to merely show the upper row of teeth, that the sound, striking on a hard surface, may vibrate with greater intensity, and thus give a ring and brilliancy to the voice.

*Q.* How should the tongue and the rest of the vocal apparatus be disposed?

*A.* The tongue should remain extended, in order to leave the largest possible space in the mouth, and that the throat may be easy and open.

## ARTICLE IV.

### OF RESPIRATION.

*Q.* What is meant by respiration?

*A.* It means the double action of the muscles of the thorax in receiving into and expelling air from the lungs.

*Q.* It is, then, an important thing that the singer should know how to take breath properly?

*A.* It is of the very utmost importance, for, if he has not a perfect mastery of the respiratory organs, he can neither develop the voice nor ever execute any piece of music artistically.

*Q.* How is a perfect respiration to be obtained?

*A.* By standing in the position, and observing closely the directions pointed out in Article III., and then inhaling the air, first through the nose, so that the lungs may dilate gradually and without strain; a breath thus taken may be held for a considerable time without fatigue.

*Q.* What is this gradual and complete respiration called?

*A.* A full breath.

*Q.* In singing an exercise or melody in strict time, should one always take a full breath?

*A.* No, only when it is interrupted by long rests; when this is not the case, and especially when written "allegro," one is obliged to breathe quickly, introducing only a small quantity of air into the lungs for the necessities of the moment.

*Q.* What is this instantaneous breathing called?

*A.* A half breath.

*Q.* Is there any general rule for the duration of the breath?

*A.* No, a long or short breath depends upon the capacity of the lungs of the individual singer, and so it would not only be impossible, but useless, to fix the breathing places in vocal music.

*Q.* For how long can a pupil, well practised in this manner of breathing, continue a given note?

*A.* Up to twenty seconds, and sometimes more.

## ARTICLE V.

### OF THE QUALITIES OF THE VOICE.

*Q.* How many different qualities are there in the voice?

*A.* The principal are two, the open and the closed.

*Q.* Which of these should the pupil use for the purpose of daily study?

*A.* The open.

*Q.* What reason have you for saying so?

*A.* He should use the open in preference to the closed quality, because in it defects are more apparent, and hence do not escape detection; the emission of high notes is rendered more easy, the notes become sweeter, and what is of more importance, he does not fatigue his voice.

*Q.* How are notes produced in the open quality?

*A.* By following the directions given with reference to position and respiration, and opening the throat with the vowel A.

*Q.* Why the vowel A in preference to any other?

*A.* Because that is the vowel which, more than all the others, opens the throat, and so when the pupil can vocalize with ease on A, he will find no difficulty in doing the same on the other vowels.

*Notes and Observations on Article V.*

I mentioned above that, for the purposes of study, the pupil should make use only of the “*timbro aperto* ;” I would here warn him to be careful lest, by inattention to the rules in respiration, he should confound this with singing *bianco* and *squaiato*.

The open quality, as Duprez observes, should be produced by the vowel A, as in the word *anima*. It should be formed in the bottom of the throat, care, however, being taken that it does not change into O ; since such an inflection, though it might give to the voice a more full and rounded character in a room, would render it smaller and without brilliancy in a theatre.

A most important point to observe in teaching, especially women, is the development of the medium notes ; these, generally weak by nature, are rendered more defective still, in the case of sopranos, by the mania for forcing high notes, and *vice versâ* the low notes in the case of contraltos.

With some few exceptions, this weakness in the middle notes is more productive of failure than any other defect, as it is with these very notes that the artiste has to perform the greater part of her singing, and with them produce the more important effects.

Of naturally defective *timbri*, the least adapted to singing is that caused by a goitrous formation of the throat, commonly called throaty singing, and according to Mancini, the one least unfitted is the nasal timbro.

## ARTICLE VI.

### OF THE EMISSION OF THE VOICE.

*Q.* What is meant by the just emission of the voice ?

*A.* It means attacking a note, with the greatest possible clearness, with a pure and correct intonation, and sustaining it to the full extent of the breath.

*Q.* In how many different ways may one practise the *messa* or *tenuta* of the voice ?

*A.* In four ways.

*Q.* Which is the first ?

*A.* After having slowly and quietly taken breath, in the manner shown in Article IV., the note should be attacked cleanly with the full voice, and without forcing should be sustained with equal loudness to the full extent of the breath, care, however, being taken to finish the sound before the air in the lungs is completely exhausted.

*Q.* Why should the note from the beginning be emitted with the full voice, instead of commencing it *piano* and afterward making a *crescendo*?

*A.* Because the beginner neither can nor ought to attack notes *piano*; by trying to force him to do so, instead of favoring his progress, it will only retard him, and besides tiring the muscles of the chest, he may acquire a cramped manner of singing.

*Q.* Which is the second way of practising the *messa* or *tenuta* of the voice?

*A.* The second should only be attempted when the pupil is sufficiently advanced; it consists in attacking the note with the full voice, as mentioned above, and then making a gradual diminuendo to *pianissimo*, retaining throughout a firm control over the breath, and finishing before it is exhausted.

*Q.* Which is the third way?

*A.* The third way consists in commencing the note *pianissimo*, and without forcing, to gradually increase in strength, finishing, to avoid fatiguing the lungs, before the breath is exhausted.

*Q.* Which is the fourth and last method, and when only should it be practised?

*A.* The last, the most important, and most difficult method should only be practised when the pupil is well advanced in vocalization, and consists in attacking a note *pianissimo*, reinforcing it to the full extent of the voice, and then gradually diminishing it, so as to end *pianissimo*, retaining the same quality of sound in all the gradations of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*.

*Q.* How are notes thus produced called?

*A.* They are called *note filate*.

### *Notes and Observations on Article VI.*

A good rendering is necessary, and should be carefully studied, as upon it depends the grace of good singing, and without it a pleasing impression can never be conveyed to the public.

Just as Socrates, when asked, What are the qualities necessary for an orator? answered, "Delivery, Delivery, and Delivery;" so it is for a singer.

And as an easy emission of the voice depends much upon the respiration, the pupil should, generally speaking, breathe in as large a quantity of air as the lungs can contain, avoiding noises and all movements of the figure, especially raising the shoulders, and strive to give always to his singing a semblance of ease and elegance. To attain this end, the mouth should retain a smiling expression; but if by exaggeration the pupil should assume an affected air, it will be better to change that expression for one of supplication.

It is also of the very utmost importance that the voice emitted should be less in force than the force of breath which supports it; this will render the singing

more natural, even and spontaneous, and will also convey to the audience a feeling of security and pleasure.

Mancini is of the opinion that the master should exaggerate all defects of emission on the part of the pupil, to render them more apparent to him, and thus more easy to avoid.

## ARTICLE VII.

### THE APPOGGIO OF THE VOICE.

*Q.* What is the *appoggio* or support which should be given to the voice to enable one to study without fatigue to the throat?

*A.* The support afforded to the voice by the muscles of the chest, especially the diaphragm, acting upon the air contained in the lungs.

*Q.* How is this support to be obtained?

*A.* By observing the rules in Article III., with regard to position, and then opening the lower part of the throat with the vowel A. The sound thus produced will be clear and sympathetic; but if the pupil is not able to pronounce the vowel A with a full tone, let him first begin with LA, which will render its emission more easy and secure. This is a most important point for an artist to observe, as on it will depend, in the majority of cases, the success of his future career.

### *Notes and Observations on Article VII.*

It is by singing with the voice well *appoggiata*, that the pupil, under careful supervision, will learn what is the true character and the capabilities of his own voice; he will know what music to sing, how to render his singing elegant, and remedy defects of intonation. In this, in my idea, lies the great secret of the art of singing.

He who does not support his voice in the manner here indicated does not sing; he may be able to emit loud, resonant sounds; but they will be without expression, they will never be living sounds, by which he can convey the emotions of the soul or express the various feelings of the human passions. Expression is wholly wanting in a voice not *appoggiata*. Love, hate, or revenge produces a sound of one and the same character; the singing is monotonous, and though loud notes may surprise, they can never convey pleasure to the lover of good singing.

## ARTICLE VIII.

### OF VOCALIZATION AND AGILITY.

*Q.* What is meant by vocalization and agility?

*A.* It means the execution of a series of notes on the vowels, with more or less quickness.

*Q.* In how many different ways may it be studied?

*A.* Agility may be studied in many different ways, though the principal are four.

*Q.* Which are they?

*A.* *Portamento*, *Legato*, *Picchettato*, and *Martellato*.

*Q.* Of these, which is the most useful?

*A.* *Legato*.

*Q.* Why the *Legato* in preference to the others?

*A.* Because *Legato* is the predominating quality, not only of all agility, but of good singing in general; so the singer would do well not to study the others until he shall have mastered the art of singing *Legato*.

#### *Notes and Observations on Article VIII.*

*Agility should be studied slowly.* The exercises should be executed so that the intervals are clearly distinguishable. The breath should be held steady in the passage from one note to the other, and the notes should be produced clearly and with a shock of the *Glottis*. By this means the pupil will acquire the power of taking the exact note without sliding up to it, a fault which a beginner is very likely to confound with singing *Legato*.

When once this is mastered, he may proceed to the study of these other kinds of agility, but let him bear in mind that the possession of a clear and secure agility depends always on a thorough proficiency in the primary rules of singing.

I have said that agility in the case of beginners should be practised slowly. This maxim I intend to apply to those pupils who have a natural agility, as well as to those who are not so gifted; I should recommend caution and moderation in the study of agility as the voice by too rapid exercises is apt to become tremulous and weak, and thus, what otherwise would have been one of the most beautiful embellishments of singing, becomes one of its most serious defects.

In conclusion, I may add that I consider the enormous quantity of exercises which one finds in many books on singing superfluous, and more likely to injure than preserve the voice, or cultivate a clear and beautiful agility.

Exercises to be useful should be melodious and tastefully written, as it is their quality and not their quantity which makes the pupil a good singer.

The singer should accustom himself when practising exercises to begin the notes of an ascending scale, and gradually crescendo to the highest note, and *vice versâ*. Songs may be practised the same, except in passages where the composer has marked otherwise.

## ARTICLE IX.

### ON PORTAMENTO AND LEGATURA.

Q. What is meant by *Portamento*?

A. It means passing from one note to the other by slurring the voice, but in such a manner that the intervening notes are heard as little as possible. This is done by leaving the first note before the end of its value, so as to anticipate with the vocal organ the other, to which the voice is to be carried.

EXAMPLE:



Q. What do you infer from this example?

A. I infer that if I want to execute these two notes by means of a *Portamento*, I should continue the vowel of the first note to the second, before pronouncing the syllable of the second.

Q. Should *Portamento* be executed quickly or slowly?

A. There is no fixed rule; it depends upon the movement of the passage to which it belongs.

Q. What is meant by *Legato*?

A. It means passing from one note to another quickly, so that the voice does not dwell upon the intervening notes, just as if it were executed upon a piano or any other keyed instrument.

### *Notes and Observations on Article IX*

The power of sustaining notes being one of the peculiar attributes of the human voice, the pupil should make *Legato* singing a special study. He who

cannot sing *Legato* cannot sing well; but let me here warn the pupil lest he fall into the error of singing *Strisciato*—that is, slurring up to his notes in mistake for *Legato*. For instance, when the interval is a minor second, he is very apt to take the intermediate quarter tone first before arriving at the semitone instead of making a diminuendo on the first note and then clearly and securely taking the semitone.

He should guard, too, against abandoning the control over the breath in the passage from one note to another, as the second will always be wanting in character and color, without which two qualities singing can neither be artistic nor capable of expression.

In singing of all kinds, due regard should be paid to the just value of the notes; there should be no slurring up to intervals; the sound should be emitted pure, and *great attention* paid to the rules of respiration.

EXAMPLE.



See Article 12. *The application of the rule for the appoggio of the voice.*



Only in singing *portamento legato*, may it be allowed to anticipate the second note, deducting, however, the value from the *first*, either in ascending or descending.

EXAMPLE.



The master may transpose and vary this exercise according to the *voice*, intelligence, and capacity of the pupil.

## ARTICLE X.

### GENERAL RULES FOR STUDY.

*Q.* What is the first thing a singer has need of to enable him to study with advantage?

*A.* A pianoforte in perfect tune and at the proper orchestral pitch, so that he may accustom his ear to the correct intonation of intervals.

*Q.* What is the best time for exercising the voice?

*A.* After the period of digestion, whether it be in the morning or afternoon, and particularly in the evening, as it is then that the pupil will find himself in the fulness of his physical and mental powers.

*Q.* Would it be hurtful to practise on an empty stomach, or during digestion?

*A.* Yes; because in both cases it would be necessary to take breath too frequently, which would fatigue the chest to the detriment of the voice.

*Q.* What is the most advantageous way of studying?

*A.* Singing with the voice full and clear, with as much grace and ease as possible, and being very careful to avoid forcing.

*Q.* Should singing be practised for long or short periods at a time?

*A.* The general rule is to study moderately, and with a variety of exercises, always finishing before feeling tired.

*Q.* What extent of the voice ought to be the subject of daily practice?

*A.* The middle part only, exempting the two highest and two lowest notes of the voice altogether.

*Q.* What else is necessary for the purpose of study?

*A.* A looking-glass, which the pupil should place before him while singing, so that he may avoid grimaces and other bad habits.

*Q.* How should the pupil study his exercises?

*A.* He should study them mentally, until he has thoroughly understood their true nature and then he may sing them.

### *Notes and Observations on Article X.*

On the choice of a good master depends entirely the successful result of what I have said in Article X. It is a false idea to consider that any teacher is good enough for a beginner. It is of far greater importance that the beginning should be made under the guidance of an experienced and capable master, even though it costs more than under an inferior one; for in case the second one be inferior, the pupil will easily perceive it, while he will always consider as good his first instructor, no matter how worthless he may be.

The art of singing cannot be learned cheaply. The money expended in

lessons should be considered as an investment, and though for a year or so the expense may press heavily on the student, he is certain to gain many hundreds per cent upon his outlay.

The pupil is recommended to pay great attention to the rules I have laid down with regard to the *breath*, *appoggio*, and *messa di voce*, until habit becomes in him a second nature; let him guard against forcing or using more voice than he has breath to sustain, so he will avoid the danger of rendering his voice tremulous, a defect almost always produced by forcing. It is caused by a weakness of the nerves of the vocal organ, and, if taken in time, may be remedied by rest and careful study, but if deferred paralysis attacks the nerves, and cure is hopeless.

The pupil is also warned to avoid *humming*, as, wanting in the support of the chest, there is nothing which more fatigues the throat, or renders more uncertain the intonation.

*Piano* should in all respects, with the exception of intensity, resemble the *forte*; it should possess the same depth, character, and feeling; it should be supported by an equal quantity of breath, and should have the same quality of tone, so that even when reduced to *pianissimo* it may be heard at as great a distance as the *forte*.

In order to preserve the voice fresh and unworn for the professional career, the pupil should make much use of the mental method of study; by this means he may do much toward educating his voice without drawing upon its valuable resources.

In conclusion, I would put the pupil on his guard once more against the trembling of the voice, a defect which in the beginning of this century was sufficient to exclude any singer from the stage. I would not have him confound this, however, with the oscillation produced by expressing an impassioned sentiment.

## ARTICLE XI.

### ON PRONUNCIATION.

*Q.* What peculiar attribute has the human voice?

*A.* The human voice, more than any instrument, has the power of conveying feeling to the soul of another, and in order to take every advantage of this important quality, the voice should be emitted with a full and sustained sound taking care, however, not to sacrifice the clear articulation of the words to mere sonority of voice.

*Q.* Under how many heads may *Pronunciation* be considered?

*A.* Under two—*Articulation* and *Sound*.

*Q.* What is the effect of bad articulation in singing?

*A.* Bad articulation is apt to produce hardness and harshness.

*Q.* What is the effect of a faulty emission of the voice ?

*A.* It detracts from the purity and elegance of the pronunciation.

*Q.* What study forms the surest foundation for a good pronunciation ?

*A.* The study of *Solfeggio*, the importance of which cannot be overrated.

*Q.* By what means may the pupil guard against defects of articulation ?

*A.* He should be very careful in singing *Solfeggio* not to pronounce the consonants double when they are single, and *vice versâ*, he should support the notes well with the breath, and strive to sing the vowels on the various notes as pure as possible.

*Q.* When does one meet with double consonants in *Solfeggio* ?

*A.* Every time that *Sol* is either followed by itself or any other note.

*Q.* Of how many kinds are the consonants which one meets with in *Solfeggio* ?

*A.* Of four—*Linguo-dental*, *Linguo-palatal*, *Labial*, and *Labbro-dental*.

*Q.* Tell me the notes of the scale, and mention to which class each consonant belongs ?

*A.* *Do*, which has *D* as its consonant, a *Linguo-dental*, on account of its being formed by the contact of the tongue and teeth.

*Re*, with the consonant *R*, a *Linguo-palatal*, formed by the contact of the tongue and palate.

*Mi*, with the consonant *M*, a *Labial*, formed by the pressure of the lips.

*Fa*, with the consonant *F*, a *Labbro-dental*, formed by the lips and teeth.

*Sol*, *La*, and *Si*, like *Re*, have for their consonants *Linguo-palatals*.

*Q.* How, in the study of *Solfeggio*, should the pupil seek to render with clearness the double consonants ?

*A.* As consonants have no sound of their own, but are only heard when applied to a vowel, it will be necessary, as in the case of singing *Sol*, *La*, to leave an almost imperceptible silence between the two notes in the following example :

*How it should be sung*



The pupil should arrange solfeggi so that they will present the greatest number of double consonants. I would also recommend him to pay great attention to the purity of the vowels, in order to avoid singing *Fua* for *FA*, or *Lor* for *La*, and to begin consonant and vowel together; he would do well also to study the vowels *A*, *E*, *I*, *O*, *U*, either alone or preceded by a consonant.

EXAMPLE OF DOUBLE CONSONANTS.

NOTE.—The sign 2 marks the silence between the double consonants.

No. 1.

Sol La Sol So.l La Si La Sol So.l So.l La Si So.l Si

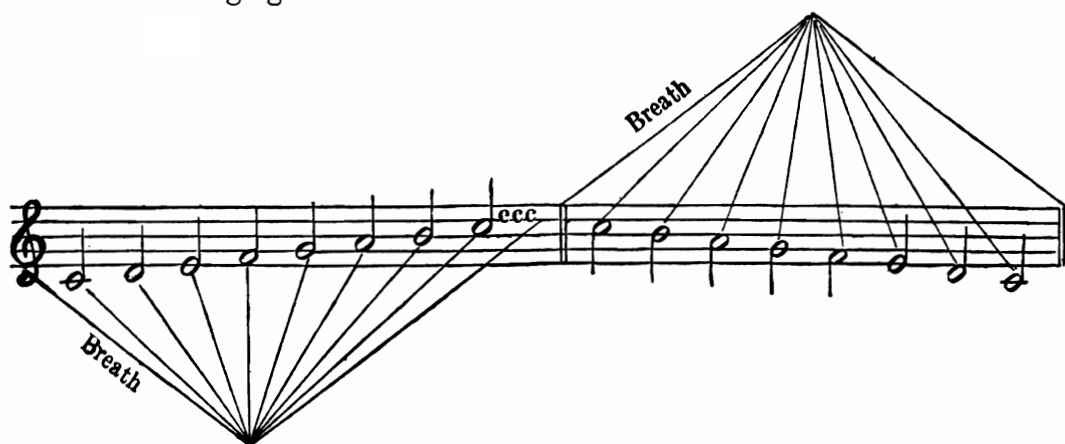
No. 2.

Sol La Sol So.l La Si La Sol So.l So.l La Si So.l Si

## ARTICLE XII.

### THE APPLICATION OF THE RULE FOR THE APPOGGIO OF THE VOICE.

By singing *appoggiata*, is meant that all notes, from the lowest to the highest, are produced by a column of air over which the singer has perfect command, by holding back the breath, and not permitting more air than is absolutely necessary for the formation of the note to escape from the lungs. By practice he will be able to do this without any effort, and so avoid those defects caused by straining the breath, such as frowning, contraction of the tongue, and a fixed expression of the eyes; for the voice will never be either well *appoggiata* nor capable of expression until the pupil is able to render his features calm and natural while singing.



The student should hold his mouth natural and still while singing; it may be allowable in the very highest notes to open it wider; but the difference should be very slight, and made without the least shock or sound of the air escaping. To avoid this, let him keep a firm hold upon the breath.

He should, therefore, under the guidance of his master, and by dint of study and patience, strive to gain the power of retaining the mouth immovable; or, notwithstanding the beauty and strength of his voice, he can never become otherwise than a bad singer.

## ARTICLE XIII.

### ON THE ATTACK OF THE NOTES.

Q. To what should the pupil principally pay attention in singing his exercises?

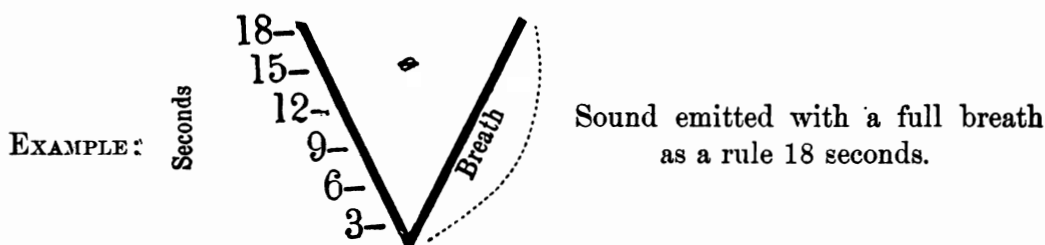
A. To the attack of the notes and the control over the breath.

*Q.* How may he know that the sound has been emitted with a full respiration?

*A.* By measuring first the length of the respiration, and then that of the breath; as a breath slowly inhaled will last much longer than one hurriedly taken.

*Q.* How can you best give an idea of the right moment for attacking a note, so that it may have the proper quantity of breath for its support?

*A.* I should take the sign in use for crescendo, and placing it vertically, mark upon it the seconds for which the breath of an ordinary person may be sustained.



*Q.* Would it be prejudicial to attack it on the lower numbers, as 6, 9, and 12?

*A.* Certainly, as the sound thus emitted would be found wanting in steadiness and feeling.

*Q.* What are the advantages to be obtained by following the rules of Article VII. and the hints I have given here?

*A.* The fullest development of tone, the union of the registers, legato singing sweetness of quality, security of intonation, an even agility, and a general elegance of execution, which qualities combined are necessary for good singing.

It is of the utmost importance that the pupil should, under the guidance of his master, study the true character of his own voice, so that he may not deceive himself as to its extension or character, and also that he may know what kind of music he ought to sing. One can easily see what is the true character of a voice by paying attention to the length of the breath on a given extension of notes, and up to what in these notes the singer can pronounce distinctly, and modulate their character, so as to convey the expression of love, hate, etc.

### NOTE.

As my opinions with regard to respiration coincide with those expressed by the celebrated DR. MANDL of PARIS, in his treatise on the maladies of the larynx, I quote a few passages from his valuable work bearing upon that subject :

*Respiration* is of three types—the *Diaphragmatic* or *Abdominal*, the *Lateral* and the *Clavicular*.

In *abdominal respiration*, the diaphragm, a large muscle at the base of the thorax, is the motive agent ; its action is shown by the movement of the stomach.

*Lateral respiration* is caused by the dilation of the middle part of the thorax, and is shown by the movement of the ribs and breastbone.

*Clavicular respiration* is caused by the dilation of the upper part of the thorax, and is shown by the movement of the breastbone, ribs, collar-bones, shoulders, vertebræ, and sometimes also the head.

These different types of respiration are often combined, or rather succeed one another ; for instance, a continued abdominal respiration will become also lateral.

A prolonged lateral respiration may become either abdominal or clavicular, and a prolonged clavicular respiration will become lateral.

In abdominal respiration the only muscle made use of is the diaphragm ; it enlarges and deepens the base of the thorax, pressing down upon the liver, stomach and intestines, which, yielding to the pressure, leave a larger space for the dilation of the lungs, the larynx also remaining perfectly natural and unconstrained ; for which reason good singers invariably make use of this type of breathing.

To obtain a respiration purely abdominal, let the reader, for the sake of experiment, seat himself on a chair, and cross his hands behind the back of it as high up as possible ; then the shoulders and upper part of the chest being rendered immovable, a breath so taken cannot be other than abdominal.

Clavicular respiration is very different ; the displacement of the upper ribs, shoulders, vertebræ, etc., necessary for the expansion of the higher portion of the cavity of the chest, entails the use of a considerable amount of force, on account of the resistance offered by the inflexibility of these parts ; the muscles of the throat and larynx are thereby considerably cramped in their action, and the emission of the voice is thus rendered very fatiguing to the vocal organs.

It is a mistake to suppose that the clavicular type of breathing is natural to women ; on the contrary, it never exists in nature ; that which has given rise to this erroneous impression is the following circumstance :

The pressure of the corset upon the abdomen, or in some cases the abnormal development of the stomach not permitting of the natural descent of the

diaphragm, the respiration becomes lateral ; the movement of the ribs and breast-bone causes the rise and fall of the bosom, thus leading one to believe that the breathing is clavicular ; but it will be seen that there is no movement of the collar-bones, and so we may be sure that the natural type of respiration in the case of women, if not abdominal, is lateral.

The voice is the sound produced by the passage of the air expelled from the lungs through the larynx.

To sustain a given note the air should be expelled slowly ; to attain this end, the respiratory muscles, by continuing their action, strive to retain the air in the lungs, and oppose their action to that of the expiratory muscles, which, at the same time, drive it out for the production of the note. There is thus established a balance of power between these two agents, which is called the *lutte vocale*, or vocal struggle. On the retention of this equilibrium depends the just emission of the voice, and by means of it alone can true expression be given to the sound produced.

## The relation of art and nature to singing.

Every art may be divided into two parts—the Natural and the Acquired. The mind conceives the idea, and the instrument represents to others the mind's conception.

A painter conceives the subject of a picture, but it is necessary that his hand and eye be educated by art to enable him to paint it. This argument we will apply to singing, and in the following pages we shall endeavor to see what it owes to nature and what to art.

Singing, being the art of expressing the various emotions of the soul by means of the voice, with the help of words and music, we shall seek to discover the means by which the voice may be so brought under the influence of the will as to convey to others the sentiments and passions felt, and the ideas conceived by the mind of the singer.

In Article I., we have seen that the voice is the sound produced by the passage of the air expelled from the lungs through the larynx ; hence, we see that the groundwork of singing is the respiration.

To obtain a natural emission of the voice, it is necessary that the respiration be natural also, for which reason we must make use of the abdominal type of respiration explained in the preceding note.

The great fathers of the art of singing, *Pacchiarotti*, *Marchesi*, *Veluti* and *Crescentini* were all of the opinion that, apart from natural gifts, a thorough study of respiration and pronunciation was necessary to ensure success in the

## EXERCISES FOR DAILY USE.

These exercises may be adapted by transposition to any class of voice.

All singers should make daily use of these, or other such exercises, for the preservation of the voice, especially during an operatic engagement.

I particularly recommend these exercises to sopranos and mezzo-sopranos while singing dramatic work, for if they do not entirely check they will, at any rate, greatly retard the deterioration of the voice, to which dramatic singers are so liable.

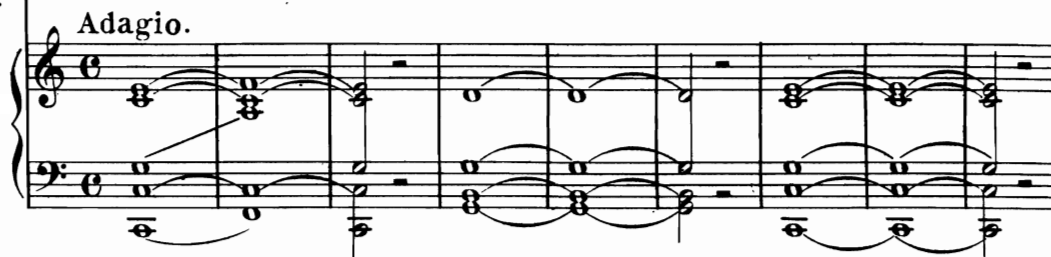
To avoid weakening the centre of the voice, I should recommend all beginners, in daily practice, not to let the compass of voice exercised exceed the range I have here given.

## Adagio.

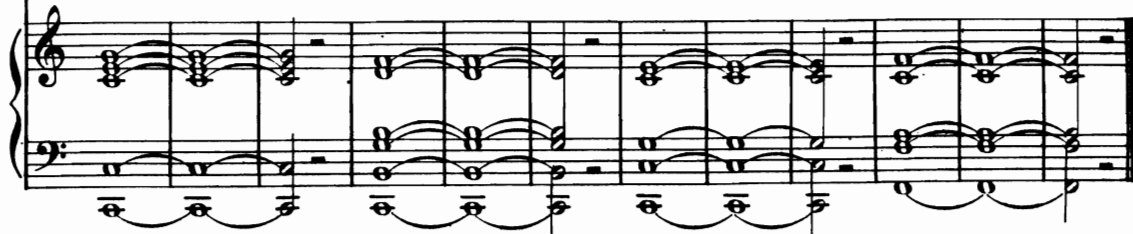
*To place the voice.**For practising the voice.*

No 1.

## Adagio.



1



As the beauty of scale passages, etc. depends in a great measure upon the correct intonation of the various intervals, I have marked with the sign  $\circ$  those notes which are generally found most difficult.

# Adagio.

Nº 2.

The musical score is for a piece titled "Adagio. Nº 2." It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Adagio." and the piece is numbered "Nº 2." The score includes several measures of music, with the vocal line featuring a series of "la" notes. The piano accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation. The score is divided into sections by tempo markings: "rall." (rallentando) and "a tempo." (return to tempo). The vocal line includes various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The piano accompaniment includes various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The score is written in a standard musical notation style, with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 4/4.

## Moderato.

Nº 3.

la la la la la la la la

la la la la la la la la la la

la la la la la la la la la la

la la la la la la la la la la

la la la la la la la la la la

## Moderato.

Nº 4.

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

## Moderato.

Nº 5.

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

## Adagio.

Nº 6.

la la — la la — la la — la la — la la — la la —

## Adagio.

Nº 7.

la la la la la — la la la la —

la la la la la — la la la la —

la la la la la — la la la la —

la la la la la — la la la la —

Moderato.

*ff* *pp*

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

No 8.

*a tempo.* *ff* *pp* *a tempo.* *ff* *pp*

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

*a tempo.*

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

*a tempo.* *a tempo.*

la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

*a tempo.*

[illegible]

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". It consists of two systems of music. The first system features a vocal melody on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style with eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff, the lyrics "la la la la la la la la" are written, with a long horizontal line indicating a continuation of the melody. The second system features a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays chords and single notes, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. The key signature changes to one flat (Bb) in the second system. The lyrics "la la la la la la la la" are repeated under the second system.

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system features a vocal melody on a treble clef staff, with lyrics 'la' and 'la la la la la la la la' written below. The second system shows a piano accompaniment with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a piano (p) dynamic marking. The melody is in 3/4 time, and the key signature has one flat (B-flat).

## Moderato.

№ 9.

## Moderato.

This musical score is for a voice and piano piece, numbered 9. It is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Moderato.' The score consists of five systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and is accompanied by a steady piano accompaniment of chords and single notes. The word 'la' is written below the vocal line in each system, indicating the pitch of the notes. The piano accompaniment is written in both treble and bass staves, with chords and single notes. The score ends with a double bar line in the fifth system.

Moderato.

№ 10.

Moderato.

*rall.*

la

la

*rall.**rall.**rall.**rall.**rall.**rall.*

la *rall.*

la *rall.*

**Moderato.**

la

**Nº 11. Moderato.**

**Moderato.**

la

**Nº 12. Moderato.**

First system of music. The upper staff features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, some marked with circles. The lower staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with sustained chords. The word "la" is written below the upper staff.

Second system of music. The upper staff continues the melodic line with various accidentals. The lower staff features a more active accompaniment with moving bass lines and chords.

Third system of music. The upper staff has a melodic line with many circles above notes. The lower staff has a steady accompaniment. The word "la" is written below the upper staff.

Fourth system of music. The upper staff continues the melodic line. The lower staff has a steady accompaniment. The word "la" is written below the upper staff.

Fifth system of music. The upper staff continues the melodic line. The lower staff has a steady accompaniment.

**Nº 14.** Moderato.

The musical score for N° 14, Moderato, is written in 6/8 time and B-flat major. It consists of a single system with a treble and bass staff. The melody in the treble staff is a continuous eighth-note line. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Moderato.



Nº 15.

Moderato.



## Moderato.

Nº 16.

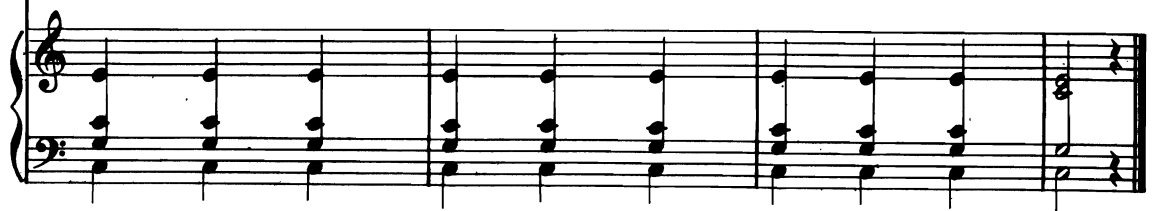
## Moderato.

The musical score is for a piece titled "Nº 16. Moderato." It is written for voice and piano. The tempo is marked "Moderato." The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score consists of six systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and a lower line with the syllable "la" written below it. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes in both the right and left hands. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

**Moderato.**



Nº 17. *Moderato.*



As it is impossible to lay down a code of absolute and infallible rules suited to all voices, that being reserved for mechanical instruments, which have a given and unchangeable register, so it is impossible to write solfeggi adapted to all voices, without regard to character or range.

In spite of this axiom, I have yet thought fit to close this my treatise on the art of singing with four solfeggi, which are not progressive, but written to give the pupil an idea of the modern style; leaving to the judgment of the master the option of either choosing from them that one which he may consider most adapted to the voice and capabilities of his pupil, or else of keeping to those solfeggi, which so many famous masters have already written.

I do not consider it superfluous here to remind the master that he should never either in solfeggi or exercises, allow his pupil to sing on either the two lowest notes of his voice; but confine him to exercising the middle notes, so as to render the voice even and agreeable throughout its full extension.

In case the pupil finds a difficulty in syllabating on certain notes, he should return to emitting them on a simple vowel, and continue only syllabation on those notes which he finds easy. The master should be very careful to allow the pupil to sing only those solfeggi which are of such a medium range, as to enable the pupil to articulate the notes with clearness.

In conclusion, I would advise the pupil to inspire his solfeggi with some sentiment, love, prayer, irony, etc., and to realise also the dramatic situation. Let him make an analysis of the feeling of some piece of poetry, and embody the expression of it in his solfeggio; by this means he will cultivate a graceful method of singing, and render each song an artistic composition.

Let him remember that feeling in singing must be subordinate to art, for untutored feeling chokes the voice; let him never abandon himself to his feelings, but instead, strive always to sing with a warm heart, yet a cool head.

If young masters, and those who have not had much experience in teaching, will have the patience to read attentively the rules, hints and suggestions, contained in this treatise, they may continue the studies of their pupils without fear of spoiling their voices. I would now again for the last time warn them to avoid teaching modern dramatic operas, so destructive to voices in general, and to female voices in particular; but in their stead, urge them to teach the operas of Bellini and Donizetti, and in preference to all, those of Rossini.

The only exception I can make is in favour of baritones, a register of voice so to say, created by Giorgio Ronconi, by the combination of the tenor-serio and basso-cantante.

These may study modern operas, as music was not written for their voices in the Rossinian repertoire. Some rare exceptions may be made in favor of tenors and basses, but the old repertoire will always be found more fruitful of good results, and less dangerous.

To prevent the ruin of voices was the object which I had in view in writing this treatise, if I succeed I shall deem myself very fortunate in having been the means, whereby advantage has accrued to an art, the cultivation of which has been the occupation of my life.

**Nº 1.**

*Andante.* *pp*

*portando la voce.*

*pp*

\*) Do Fa Mi So - l La

*Andante.* *pp*

Si La Si Mi Re Do La La Do Si La La So - l Re Si

*dolce.*

\*) Be careful to avoid slurring up to the note on the consonant.

*a tempo.* ***ff*** ***pp***

*rall.*

***Più mosso.*** ***dolce.*** ***Più mosso.*** ***p*** ***pp*** ***stacc.*** ***ppp*** ***pp dolce.***

***stent.*** ***legato.*** ***ppp*** ***rallentando.*** ***a tempo.*** ***dolce.*** ***f***

First system of the musical score. The upper staff features a melodic line with various ornaments and slurs. The lower staff is a piano accompaniment with chords and moving lines. Performance markings include *pp*, *cresc.*, *poco a poco*, *calando.*, and *pp*. An *L.H.* marking with an accent is present above the right-hand staff.

Second system of the musical score. The upper staff continues the melodic development. The lower staff features a more active piano accompaniment. A *pp* marking is visible in the lower staff.

Third system of the musical score. The upper staff shows a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff has a steady piano accompaniment. Performance markings include *affrett.*, *allargando.*, *Tempo I.*, and *rallentando.*

Fourth system of the musical score. The upper staff features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff has a piano accompaniment. Performance markings include *rall.*, *a tempo.*, *col canto.*, *cresc.*, and *marcato.*

Animato.

Animato.

*mf*

*pp* *dim.* *pp*

*rall.*

*col canto.*

*pp*

*f* *f* *pp* *rall.* *f*

Andante.

*dolce.*

No 3.

Andante.



First system of musical notation. The upper staff features a melodic line with slurs and accents, ending with a *ppp* dynamic marking. The lower staff consists of two parts: the right hand has chords with vertical accents, and the left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A *ff* dynamic marking is placed between the staves, and a *ppp* marking is in the right hand.



Second system of musical notation. The upper staff includes a *cresc.* marking, a fermata, and a *rall.* marking, followed by a *dolce.* instruction. The lower staff continues the accompaniment, with a *tranquillo.* marking in the right hand.



Third system of musical notation. The upper staff continues the melodic development. The lower staff features a *secondando.* marking in the right hand, indicating a change in tempo.



Fourth system of musical notation. The upper staff begins with a *ff* dynamic marking. The lower staff includes a *secondando.* marking in the right hand.

*pp*

*ff*

*pp*

*dolce. pp*

*ppp*

*rall.*

*f pp*

*stentando.*

*ff* *pp* *p* *ff* *rall.*

*pp* *allarg.* *ppp* *ppp*

*pp* *ff* *pp*

*Andante comodo.*

Nº 4.

*legato assai.*

musical score for piano and voice, page 59. The score is in B-flat major and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes complex textures with triplets and sixteenth notes. Performance markings include *rall.*, *a tempo. ppp*, *legato.*, and *stent.*

*p*

*ppp*

*pp dolce assai.*

*ppp*

*ppp allarg.*

*ff*

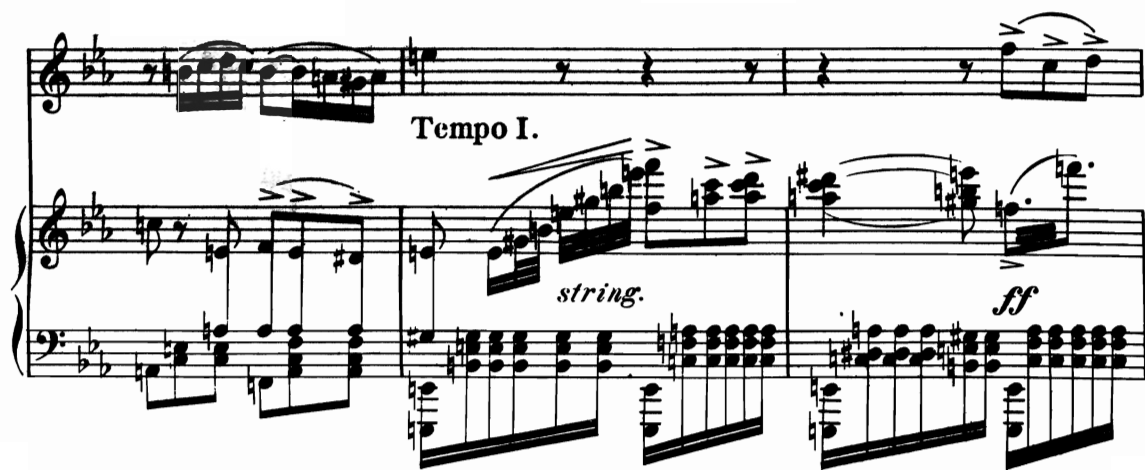
*dim.*

*pp*

*accarezzando.*

*pp allarg.*

Detailed description: This musical score is for a piano and voice piece. It consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows the piano introduction with a melody in the right hand and dense chords in the left hand. The second system features a vocal entry with a melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. The third system continues the piano accompaniment with a melody in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The fourth system shows the piano accompaniment with a melody in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *ppp*, *pp*, *ff*, *dim.*, *allarg.*, and *accarezzando.* The key signature is B-flat major (two flats).



Tempo I.

*string.*

*ff*

This system contains two staves. The upper staff features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and some rests. The lower staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The tempo is marked 'Tempo I.' and the dynamics include 'string.' and 'ff'.



Tempo I.

*legato assai.*

This system continues the musical piece. The upper staff has a melodic line with some rests. The lower staff features a more active accompaniment with eighth-note patterns. The tempo is marked 'Tempo I.' and the dynamics include 'legato assai.'



*stent.*

This system continues the musical piece. The upper staff has a melodic line with some rests. The lower staff features a more active accompaniment with eighth-note patterns. The dynamics include 'stent.'



This system continues the musical piece. The upper staff has a melodic line with some rests. The lower staff features a more active accompaniment with eighth-note patterns.

*stent.*

*allarg. pp*

*ppp*

*pp*

*cresc.*

*string.*

*dim. e rall.*

*col canto.*

*ff*

*fff*

*ppp*

*pp*

*ff*

*pp*

*pp allarg.*

*rall.*

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