The Italian Opera Conductor During the Verismo Era: A Consideration of Tempo and Expression as a Developing Element of Conductors' Performance Practices

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Preface

The evolution of the art of conducting is a topic I have always been fascinated by. After finishing my bachelor's degree in music education and then after my Master of Music degree in conducting, and even despite having achieved a vast experience in conducting, my curiosity towards the evolution of the performance practices of the opera conductor remained unsatisfied. This triggered my desire to undertake this research project and I have been fortunate to be able to develop this research at the Conservatorium of Music of the University of Sydney.

However, the course of this research project was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it difficult to realise the lecture-recitals in a conventional way. An important aspect of this research project are the three lecture-recitals that I have conducted during my candidature. These lecture-recitals constitute the practical component of this research project. The purpose is to validate the findings gathered from the analysis of the musical excerpts of the music scores, opera sound recordings, and the literature review. These lecture-recitals are designed to exhibit the overview for the creative works proposal, background of the research, research question, research methodology, repertoire and research context, remarks, and conclusions. Once having gathered all the material, I put together a set of lecture-recitals to demonstrate the insights of my research with the collaboration of singers and an orchestra.

However, the restrictions implemented by the Australian Government in its effort to mitigate the impact of the spread of the COVID-19 virus made it difficult to realise the performances with singers and large ensembles, or an orchestra. In accordance with the guidelines and recommendations and in consultation with my supervisors, the best solution was having the demonstrations done with the collaboration of one singer and piano accompaniment instead.

I am extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to the fulfillment of this research project. My sincere gratitude goes to the Colombian Government's Colciencias program for granting me such a generous scholarship – this research project simply would not have been possible without this financial support.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my main supervisor, Dr Stephen Mould, for the countless hours of supervision, for your kind guidance and contributions, and for your never-ending generosity and kindness. Your deep knowledge in the areas of opera and conducting were crucial. You always attended to my queries and offered words of wisdom – thank you so much. I am extremely fortunate to have had Professor Neal Peres Da Costa as auxiliary supervisor and I would like to thank you for your magnificent guidance. Your enormous contributions to my understanding of the research area are invaluable. Thanks to you, I now have the strong desire to develop further a research career.

Many thanks also to the singers, Camilla Wright, Livia Brash and Paola Monroy, for assisting me with your wonderful talent and expertise in demonstrating my findings through my lecture-recitals. Special thanks go to Jasmine Wei and Benjamin Burton who were always keen to collaborate as piano *repetiteur*. I also express my most sincere gratitude to Anita Bellman as well as Patricia Hoyle, for their endless hours of editing and proofreading.

Most of all, thank you to my dear mother, Sonia Ospino, for her constant support, encouragement, and ever-flowing love. To my beloved wife, Luisa Fernanda Rosales Ariza, I cannot thank you enough. Your gentle and kind support was constant; you encouraged me and gave me strength throughout this whole process.

Abstract

This research, which combines historical survey, performance practice, and practice-led methods, examines the evolution of the Italian opera conductor and their subsequent influence upon the development of the Italian *verismo* composer. The focus of the research is on musical criteria such as tempo markings, tempo modification, and rhythmic freedom (*rubato*). The transformation from the composer as chief interpreter of their own music, the conductor as chief interpreter, is also explored.

Such an examination contextualises performance practices of the conductor of Italian opera. Practical insights are gained from analysis and emulation (imitation) of specific historical sound recordings of Italian opera in conjunction with contemporary written evidence. This allows the researcher to draw conclusions about historically appropriate conducting practices of the era. The research uses creative work approaches and presents case studies to explore the un-notated tempo conventions of the nineteenth-century Italian opera conductor. Recordings include those by Arturo Toscanini (1867–1957), as well as composers-conductors such as Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857–1919) and Pietro Mascagni (1863–1845), all of which preserve late nineteenth-century conducting traditions.

Historical research methodology augments the practice-led research and brings to light additional important findings. This is achieved by compiling documented historical evidence to highlight key elements that illustrate the evolution of the opera conductor's performance practices during the *verismo* era.

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Abbreviations and signs

Anticip.	Anticipation
CMM	Composer's metronome marking in the score
CTR	Composer's tempo in the recording
Disl.	Dislocation
Disp.	Displacement
Ex.	Example
Fig.	Figure
HIP	Historically informed performance
M.M	Metronome Marking
PLR	Practice-led research
Rall.	*Rallentando*
Rit.	*Ritardando*
T. Fluct.	Tempo fluctuation
T. Recit.	Tempo of recitative
TTR.	Toscanini's recorded tempo
T. Lg.	Tempo of the language

Chapter 1. Research Context

1.1 Introduction

The nineteenth century saw a great revolution in the operatic industry in Italy as well as in other countries in Europe. Notably during this time, the composer gradually moved away from the position of creator and interpreter, while the figure of the conductor emerged as a single entity: the creator and interpreter, distinct from that of the composer.[1] Louis Spohr (1784–1859), Hector Berlioz (1803–1869), Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847), Franz Liszt (1811–1886), Richard Wagner (1813–1883) and others were distinguished for being interpreters of their own works as well as those of other composers. In contrast, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) and later Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924), relied increasingly on specialist conductors, such as Arturo Toscanini (1867–1957), to interpret and even première their operas.[2]

A series of shifting circumstances led to the conductor as interpreter to become elevated to the predominant position in performance. The growing complexity of operatic works during the nineteenth century created an increased need for the conductor as the driving force in the performance. There were also the additional demands of increasingly detailed expression markings, and tempo markings accompanied by metronome indications.

It is within these progressively complex musical developments that the interpretative role and decision-making process became an increasingly important aspect of what would become the conductor's role. To gain insight into how the developing role of the opera conductor began to influence performance practices, we must establish the range of decisions the conductor became responsible for in realising the composer's musical expectations. "

[1] Jeremy Siepmann, "The history of direction and conducting," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, edited by Colin Lawson. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 119.
[2] Michael Rose, "The Italian tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*, ed. José Antonio Bowen. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 157.

1.2 Historical context

This research project spans the end of the golden age of *bel canto*, from the mid-nineteenth century,[3] to the end of the *verismo* era marked by Puccini's death in 1924. The term *bel canto* as it was used in this era refers to a singing style that emphasised such factors as legato vocal phrasing, light tone colour and higher vocal register.[4] Its origins can be traced in vocal music and practices of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[5] Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848) and Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835) were leading figures in the nineteenth-century *bel canto* tradition.

Verismo has its origins in the style of realism that emerged in literature around 1860. In opera, the term is used to portray events related to real life or *verità*.[6] The first opera in the *verismo* style was *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890) by Pietro Mascagni (1863–1945), where the composer used a play by the Italian *verismo* writer Giovanni Verga (1840–1922). Along with Mascagni and Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857–1919), Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901), in particular his works *Don Carlo*, *Mefistofele*, *La Gioconda*, and *Otello*, is considered to have set the tone for the genre to develop.[7] Puccini, also contributed to the further development of the *verismo*.

The art of opera in Italy was gradually transformed during the late nineteenth century with the operatic style of *verismo* gradually taking over from that of *bel canto*.[8] It was also during this period that the role of the conductor was shaped into what we know it as today.

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[3] James Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (University of Toronto Press, 1999), xix.
[4] Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*, xvii.
[5] Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*, xvii.
[6] Andreas Giger, "Verismo: Origin, Corruption, and Redemption of an Operatic Term," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 60, no. 2 (2007): 272.
[7] Burton D. Fisher, *History of Opera: Milestones and Metamorphoses*. (Miami, United States: Opera Journeys Publishing, 2003), 296.
[8] Fischer, *History of Opera: Milestones and Metamorphoses*, 296.

1.3 Research question

The primary area of interest is to assess how realising a composer's tempo designations and metronome markings can establish authenticity in the interpretation with a focus on musical criteria, such as tempo markings, tempo modification, rhythmic freedom (*rubato*) and un-notated tempo conventions.

Another area of interest is to assess the extent to which the scores of Leoncavallo, Mascagni, and Puccini offer information that fulfils their expectations. The research explores the evidence of historical sound recordings which preserve the performance practices of the various nineteenth-century trained conductors who interpreted Leoncavallo, Mascagni, and Puccini's operas. It also examines how these practices supported or even contradicted composers' expectations for the interpretation of their music.

How did the development of singing styles in nineteenth-century Italian opera influence the development of the conductor? This research explores that central question and examines the relationship between creator (composer) and interpreter (conductor). Historic sound recordings and musical criteria such as tempo designations, that reflect the establishment of the conductor's role will be analysed. Music scores, correspondence letters and sound recordings provide evidence of collaboration between composer and conductor, illustrating the transformation that took place.

This evidence informs the research question regarding the musical events that contributed to this transformation. By comparing the sound recordings with the composer's musical concepts as expressed in the score, it is possible to examine the conductor's emerging role as musical interpreter.

1.4 Research methodology

An historical approach, combined with practice-led research, provides a solid foundation for investigation into the performance practice of the nineteenth-century opera conductor. The

historical review (theoretical) approach includes a consideration of the evidence in relevant publications such as journal articles, correspondence, music scores, and biographies. These publications provide valuable insights into performance practices of the nineteenth-century opera conductor.

Practice-led research, imitating (emulating) the performance practices of the opera conductor as heard on historical recordings, provides practical insights as a result of the researcher's internalisation of the performance techniques, to recreate the following musical elements:

- expression markings
- metronome markings
- tempo modifications
- tempo of the spoken language
- un-notated conventions.

In this research, I analyse Arturo Toscanini's (1867–1957) 1946 recording of Puccini's *La Bohème*. Although other recordings exist, these are not included in this research (Table 1-1). This is a unique document which preserves the interpretation of Toscanini who premièred the work. Among the conductors who collaborated with Puccini during his lifetime, Toscanini is the one Puccini esteemed the most, despite their tumultuous relationship.[9] Examining their interaction sheds light on the shifting relationship between composer and conductor.

[9] Arman Schwartz and Emanuele Senici, *Giacomo Puccini and His World*. Bard Music Festival. Edited by Arman Schwartz and Emanuele Senici. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 233-234.

Table 1-1 List of early sound recordings of La Bohème, 1917 to 1956.

Early Recordings of LA BOHÈME		
Premiere: Teatro Regio, Turin; 1 February 1896. Conductor: Arturo Toscanini.		
Premiere (revised version): Opéra-Comique, Paris; 13 June 1898. Conductor: Alexandre Luigini.		
Conductor	**Date**	**City**
Carlo Sabajno	8-27 February 1917	Milan
Carlo Sabajno	1928	Milan
Lorenzo Molajoli	17 November - 3 December 1928	Milan
Umberto Berrettoni	May - 1938	Milan
Gennaro Papi	10, February 1940	New York
Arturo Toscanini	3, 10 February 1946	New York
Tulio Serafin	1951	Naples
Sir Thomas Beecham	16-17 March, 1-3, 5-6 April 1956	New York

1.5 Structure of the analysis

The analysis undertaken in this research considers how the musical criteria of tempo and expression markings have been set by three of the *verismo* composers (Leoncavallo, Mascagni, and Puccini) on the one hand, and on the other, the conductor (Toscanini) who has imbued the recording with his own interpretation of the composer's markings. The recordings provide insights into the role and performance practices of the late-nineteenth century Italian opera conductors that were immersed in the *verismo* tradition. These insights are gained by comparing the practices of the conductors with tempo and expression markings in the score to clarify the decision-making processes with which these *verismo* opera conductors engaged.

The analysis explores the extent to which the music score offers adequate information to fulfil the composer's expectations. The aim of this approach is to establish the connection

between the composer's tempo as notated in the score with the context of the performance practices of nineteenth-century *verismo*.

The analysis also considers whether *verismo* composers did specify all details they expected in performance, or instead, whether they worked on the assumption that performers would draw on the array of un-notated conventions in common practice to create an expressive performance.[10] When considering the tempo and expression markings, understanding the underlying meaning may clarify the answers, as well as the context in which the composer brought about those tempo indications. Composers' tempo markings often alter during the compositional and initial performance processes.[11] Corrections and amendments of metronome markings after premières, and even after publishing works, may affect the composer's final decision, causing misreading and, more frequently, misinterpretation.[12] Puccini often revised his scores following the work's première, and even following the publication. These amendments are not always included in the final version of the score, establishing with this, an oral tradition which could possibly create ambiguity in the interpretation of these works. Evidence of this practice has been found in Ricci's book.[13]

Examining these markings in full detail is therefore critical. Rather than being a mere mannerism, these indications convey an individual approach.[14] When viewed in the historical context, what might seem a discrepancy regarding the tempo of a *verismo* composition, could in fact be what the composer had in mind. Although this may appear to be a contradiction, the historical review is key to understanding the composer's mindset and individual performance practice.

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[10] Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell. *The Historical Performance of Music an Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2.
[11] Roberta Montemorra, "Verdi and the Metronome," *Verdi Forum* 1, no. 20, (1992): 6.
[12] Leon Botstein, "On Time and Tempo," *The Musical Quarterly* 78, no. 3, (1994): 421-428.
[13] Harry Nicholas Dunstan, Jr., "Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci," (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1989), ix-x.
[14] Botstein, "On Time and Tempo," 1-2.

1.6 Analysis methodology

The analysis encompasses different aspects such as the printed text, the sound recording and the historical revision, each of which is designed to develop a better understanding of the performance practices employed by conductors in the case study sound recordings. The analysis deliberately focuses on tempo delivery with comments based on structure, harmony, and orchestration to support the findings of the analysis.

For the analysis, the feature of "dislocation," the placement of the orchestra accompaniment chord slightly after the singer's note,[15] will also be considered. Although this is not indicated in the score, dislocation occurs as a result of the conductor's tempo approach with respect to the orchestra's and singers' responses. This feature also could possibly be inherited from the tradition of *bel canto*, where the singer effectively led the performance.[16]

When tempo designations include a verbal designation as well as a metronome indication, such as *andante sostenuto* with M.M ♩ = 50, the verbal designation is understood to signify the character of the music.[17] Along with the time signature, the Italian terminology could directly affect the delivery of the performance.[18] The tempo instructions indicate the composer's musical intentions in the printed score and will establish a reference point for analysis. This will allow examination of how the interpreter sees and converts these indications into audible impulses. Supported by the historical review of the literature, this will also reveal insights into the composer's mindset regarding the metronome markings.

A crucial aspect of the analyses in this research project lies in the conductor's approach to the metronome markings. Tempo designations are subject to inflections according to the

[15] Roland Jackson, *Performance Practice: A Dictionary-guide for Musicians* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 12.
[16] Stephen Mould, "From bel canto to verismo: How the rise of the conductor influenced the transformation of Italian opera during the long nineteenth century," *The Opera Journal*, Volume LIV, Number 1 (2021): 66.
[17] Roberta Montemorra Marvin, "Verdi's Tempo Assignments in "I Masnadieri." *Revista de Musicología* 16, no. 6 (1993): 6.
[18] Mei Zhong, "Tempo in Puccini's soprano arias." (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1999): iv-v.

context in which they appear.[19] In searching for insights regarding the performance practice of the nineteenth-century opera conductor, turning towards composers and conductors who were immersed in the same historical context in which the performance practice was established will cast light on a definition of authentic interpretation.

To quantify the conductor's tempo approach in recorded material, I have used the following practice-led methodology:

i) Emulating or imitating the conductors' tempo nuances.

ii) Closely listening to and analysing the performance practices found in the recording and annotating these in the score.

iii) Using a digital metronome to calculate the tempo fluctuations in the sound recording excerpts by tapping the recording tempo during playback. Allowing for certain error,[20] this method examines the correspondence between the conductor's interpretation and the composer's metronome markings.

iv) Disseminating and reproducing metronome data collected from the analysis in the context of case studies and creative works involving singers and piano accompanists.

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[19] David Fallows "Tempo and Expression Marks," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed July 10, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027650.

[20] It is worth considering the difficulty presented since tempo on the recordings is not consistent, which makes it hard to quantify an exact figure for the metronome markings. Nevertheless, it still provides a reference from which it is possible to draw a conclusive measure regarding the tempos registered on the sound recordings. A margin of error may occur during the process of tapping the tempo during the playbacks, the time frame between the audible impulse and the reaction of the tapping could cause the results to be slightly behind in reference to the actual tempo on the recordings.

1.7 Literature review

This literature review summarises existing knowledge relating to the transformation of performance practices of the Italian opera conductor during the nineteenth century. To examine the performance standards, practices and techniques of the opera conductor, the literature review covers a selection of historical recordings featuring conductors from the late nineteenth-century opera tradition. I also examine recordings of composers who conducted their own works, such as by Ruggero Leoncavallo in 1907,[21] and Pietro Mascagni in 1940[22] (Table 1-2, page 33).[23]

Since its inception, opera has developed through the interaction of text, music and drama as it plays out in a staged performance.[24] As Burton D. Fisher explains in *A History of Opera: Milestones and Metamorphoses*: "In every phase of opera's evolution over the last four centuries, the focus of its innovators and reformers has been to seek a musico-dramatic ideal."[25] He refers to the relationship between words, music and theatrical elements. Although Fisher succeeds in providing a concise historical approach to the evolution of opera, he does not present any evidence whatsoever of opera genres or related performance practices. However, it is still a valuable source for this research project in terms of the historical overview.

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[21] Ruggero Leoncavallo (1907). *Leoncavallo: Chatterton, Pagliacci*. [Recorded by Orchestra/Ensemble: Milan Teatro alla Scala Orchestra, Milan Teatro alla Scala Chorus, Conducted by R. Leoncavallo]. On Leoncavallo: Chatterton, Pagliacci / Leoncavallo, Granados, Paoli, Et Al. [DC]. Milan, Italy. 08/01/2004.

[22] P. Mascagni (1940). *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni/La Scala). [Recorded by Milan La Scala Orchestra and Milan La Scala Chorus, Conducted by P. Mascagni]. On Great Opera Recordings, Pietro. Mascagni. Cavalleria Rusticana. [Streaming audio]. Retrieved from https://usyd-naxosmusiclibrary-com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/catalogue/item.asp?cid=8.110714-15#. (07 June 2001).

[23] Although some sources claim that Leoncavallo was the conductor in this recording, it has been argued that Carlo Sabajno led the recording while Leoncavallo was present. Either way, the recording represents a close collaboration between composer and interpreter. Therefore it stands as an authentic footprint of the composer's interpretation of his own work. See: Ward Marston, "Leoncavallo's Chatterton and Pagliacci," Blog, Marson records, August 28, 2021,
https://www.marstonrecords.com/search?q=Leoncavallo

[24] Burton D. Fisher, *A History of Opera: Milestones and Metamorphoses*. (Opera Journeys Publishing, 2005), 14.

[25] Fisher, *A history of Opera: Milestones and Metamorphoses*, 14.

Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker take a different approach and present insights about the evolution of opera during the nineteenth century in *A History of Opera: The Last Four Hundred Years.*[26] One aspect worth considering is the position of the poet and composer throughout the different stages of opera evolution. Abbate and Parker outline a shifting and conflicting role between the language and the music. In this regard, Abbate and Parker stated:

> It is often said that being in essence sung theatre, involves a battle between words and music. The basic term of the tussle – the battle-lines [sic] between words and music – are drawn up again and again in the history of opera.[27]

This approach to the text in relation to the music is important when trying to understand the Italian opera conductor's approach to tempo fluctuation. This research aims to apply this particular feature to the analysis of the historical audio recordings. It provides important insights into the conductor's performance practice regarding the influence of the spoken language, as this is one of the most relevant aspects of decision-making of the opera conductor in terms of tempo approach.

Roger Parker in his contribution "The Opera Industry" in the *Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*,[28] offers a clear view regarding the international position of the opera industry. Parker claims that:

> Towards the end of the eighteenth century, regular operatic performances could be seen through much of Europe, even as far afield as Russia. Fifty years later, though, the genre had become a well-nigh global phenomenon, perhaps the earliest example of "world music." Apart from certain pockets of resistance, this expansion was primarily of Italian opera, first in a huge wave of Rossini-fever (there was, to give one startling example, a Rossini vogue in Chile in the 1830s), and then of his followers, in particular Verdi. By 1850 the most popular Italian operas were being performed in many a far-flung outpost of North, Central and South America, and had also spread to Australia, India and South Africa.[29]

The author outlines other aspects that contributed to this popularising of Italian opera, such as an increase in the publication of operas, including vocal scores and instrumental

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[26] Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, *A History of Opera: The Last Four Hundred Years*. (London: Penguin Books Limited, 2012).
[27] Abbate and Parker, A *History of Opera: The Last Four Hundred Years*, 2.
[28] Roger Parker, "The opera industry," in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Musi*c, ed. Jim Samson. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 87.
[29] Parker, "The opera industry," 88-89.

arrangements. This book is of paramount importance for understanding the Italian composer's gradual relinquishing of the role of interpreter, and therefore, the emergence of the figure of the conductor during the nineteenth century.

James Stark in *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* outlines a clear approach to *tempo rubato* from a historical perspective.[30] Regarding the evolution of *tempo rubato*, Stark identifies composers-performers such as Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) and Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) who embraced the technique which they borrowed from Italian opera tradition such as works by Bellini.[31] This historical approach to tempo modification in the context of the *bel canto* will help in the understanding of the evolution of the performance practice of the nineteenth-century opera conductor.

Robert Toft in *Bel Canto: A Performer's Guide* provides an interesting insight into the performance practice of *bel canto* singers during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[32] In respect to tempo, Toft claims: "Once they understood the relationship between the subject matter of the text and the energy and force of the music they could quicken, slow, or suspend their speed of delivery so that the tempo of a passage matched its sentiment."[33] This reference is important to understanding the approach to tempo in the nineteenth-century Italian opera tradition.

In his article, "From bel canto to *verismo*: How the rise of the conductor influenced the transformation of Italian opera during the long nineteenth century,"[34] Stephen Mould presents a clear and concise picture of the evolution of the leadership role of the Italian opera conductor during the long nineteenth century. From the *maestro al cembalo* to the *primo violino capo*

[30] James Stark, *Bel canto: a history of vocal pedagogy* (University of Toronto Press, 1999).
[31] Stark, *Bel canto: a history of vocal pedagogy*, 174.
[32] Robert Toft, *Bel canto: a performer's guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[33] Toft, *Bel canto: a performer's guide*, 79.
[34] Mould, "From bel canto to verismo: How the rise of the conductor influenced the transformation of Italian opera during the long nineteenth century," 64.

d'orchestra, Mould emphasises the features that contributed to the establishment of the Italian opera conductor from the *bel canto* tradition to the *verismo*.

Examining the particular aesthetic characteristic regarding singers leading the performance, Mould explained:

> It is proposed that the bel canto style that remained in currency in the early nineteenth century was, at least in part, characterised by a dynamic in performance where the singer would extemporise, ornament and employ rubato and other forms of tempo manipulation to shape their performance according to their instinctive emotional responses to the libretto, effectively "conducting" their performance from the stage.[35]

Mould also provides examples of Verdi's opera performances in which the composer was present supervising or even conducting the performance. This paper will be valuable to this research as it shows a clear example of the process by which the figure of the modern conductor was established in Italy during the long nineteenth century. From here, my research focuses on the conductor's approach to tempo markings as a defining element of the role and performance practice of the Italian opera conductor in the context of the *verismo* style.

David R. B. Kimbell in his *Italian Opera* alludes to Bellini's treatment of the vocal line.[36] He refers to this as freedom of *parlante* style which is shown in the composer's approach to the text in the aria "Casta diva" in Act I from his opera *Norma* (1831).[37] When approaching the *verismo* operatic style and its relationship with Italian naturalism, Kimbell draws attention to the movement in literature known as realism.[38] From there, a parallel with the *scapigliatura*[39] movement in Italian and French realism in the late nineteenth century can be traced.[40] This approach to prose writing and music is essential to understanding style and how the composers mould their musical discourses to fit the demands of art.

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[35] Mould, "From bel canto to verismo: How the rise of the conductor influenced the transformation of Italian opera during the long nineteenth century," 66.
[36] David R.B. Kimbell, *Italian Opera* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[37] Kimbell, *Italian Opera*, 519.
[38] Kimbell, *Italian Opera*, 621.
[39] (Dishevelled ones), An Italian artistic movement represented by Emilio Praga (1839–1875), Arrigo Boito (1842–1918), and Franco Faccio (1840–1891). These artists were associated with the German Romanticism, and the French Symbolism. This movement is considered the precursor of verismo.
[40] Kimbell, *Italian Opera*, 619.

Kimbell examines the figure of Mascagni within the historical context of the end of the nineteenth century.[41] Analysing the style of the most representative composers of the *verismo* style and works of, among others, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Puccini and Verdi (as a precursor of the *verismo* style), he examines the evolution of the figure of the conductor.

Puccini's music has been the subject of academic scrutiny for at least the past 50 years. In his *Problems of Tempo in Puccini's Arias*, Mei Zhong discusses Puccini's approach to tempo markings and their interpretation as evidenced in early sound recordings.[42] Regarding his score writing and dramaturgy, Zhong claims that Puccini's compositional style also evolved, affecting his approach to metronome designations:

> The fact that Puccini's tempo markings in Butterfly's last aria are closely matched to those used by singers may be attributed to a variety of possible reasons. The first may be due to the fact that Puccini was beginning to understand the performers' abilities to convey the dramatic intent of the music and text. Secondly, he was also gaining experience and understanding of how tempo affects dramatic intent in performance.[43]

According to Zhong, Luigi Ricci (1893–1981) claims that Puccini's approach to the tempo of his arias contradicts at times the general structure, although it does serve the purpose of the drama.[44] Therefore, before arriving at any conclusion, it is important to analyse Puccini's tempo designations in relation to the tempo markings, speed and inflections of the words. Zhong's article is fundamental to determining Puccini's individual compositional evolution and the historical context in which he developed his music style.

[41] Kimbell, Italian opera, 625.
[42] Mei Zhong, "Problems of Tempo in Puccini's Arias," *College Music Symposium* 40 (2000): 140-41.
[43] Zhong, "Problems of Tempo in Puccini's Arias," 146-47.
[44] Zhong, "Problems of Tempo in Puccini's Arias," 142.

In "The Rise of Conducting" in the *Cambridge Companion to Conducting*, José Bowen compares the evolution of the conductor in France, Germany, and Italy.[45] Bowen claims that: "Conducting emerged simultaneously with the rise of an independent performer who was a 'mere' interpreter of another's work."[46] This reference is compelling in understanding the events surrounding the emerging figure of the opera conductor.

Michael Rose's "The Italian Tradition" in *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*, approaches the subject from the perspective of the role of the conductor:[47]

> The *maestro al cembalo*, at the keyboard, continued the role of filling out the harmonies and accompanying the recitatives – he taught the singers their notes, rehearsed them, and in performance marked the tempo for them with his hands or by stamping his feet.[48]

From the *maestro al cembalo* to the establishment of the baton-wielding conductor, the author outlines the main Italian conductors from the early nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.[49] This tradition was established by Gaspare Spontini (1774–1851), Michele Costa (1808–1884), Luigi Arditi (1822–1903), Angelo Mariani (1821–1873), Franco Faccio (1840–1891), Emilio Usiglio (1841–1910), and Luigi Mancinelli (1848–1921).[50] Referring to Toscanini, the author points out:

> Toscanini was quite simply the greatest conductor in the world, and though this view might perhaps be contested today, he was certainly the greatest Italian conductor. "Maestro" in professional circles never meant anyone else. But in the end his Italian-ness was a matter of nationality and temperament, not of tradition. His insistence on fidelity to the composer's score, though it had a profound influence on his successors, was certainly no part of any normal Italian practice; his reforms deliberately attacked established attitudes, and the world recognition of his mastery in symphonic music was something entirely new in the history of Italian conducting.[51]

Raoul Camus's review on Robert Illiano's and Michela Niccolai's *Orchestral Conducting in the Nineteenth Century* noted the elevation in importance of the conductor

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[45] José Bowen, "The rise of conducting," in *The Cambridge companion to conductin*g, ed. José Antonio Bowen. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[46] Bowen, "The rise of conducting," 93.
[47] Michael Rose, "The Italian Tradition," in *The Cambridge companion to conducting*, edited by José Antonio Bowen. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[48] Rose, "The Italian Tradition," 147.
[49] Rose, "The Italian tradition," 147-48.
[50] Rose, "The Italian tradition," 151.
[51] Rose, "The Italian tradition," 159.

during the nineteenth century.[52] As mentioned in his review,[53] Camus asserts that the role of the opera conductor was redefined through a series of events that brought the art of opera into the modern era since the end of the eighteenth century.[54] Illiano and Niccolai state:

> The conception of the orchestral conductor as an autonomous profession is a phenomenon of the early nineteenth century. As a result of various changes to social and industrial environment concert life began to develop modern business structures, led by internationally connected impresarios and agents cooperating with the interests of piano-makers and publishers. Most obviously, the concept of a career as a concert musician, based on meticulously planned international tutors, began to take shape.[55]

Illiano and Niccolai offer a selection of papers in different languages, all of them related to the emergence and evolution of the orchestral conductor in Europe during the nineteenth century. This reference does provide a significant historical review in its approach to the performance practices of the nineteenth-century conductor. This research will investigate how the opera conductor recreates the tempo markings and un-notated tempo modifications.

Clive Brown's review of "Orchestral Conducting in the Nineteenth Century,"[56] synthesises the role and performance practice of the conductor. In this review, Brown focuses on the history of the evolution of the art of conducting in Italy, claiming that "it provides an investigation into the direction of Italian opera at end of the nineteenth century."[57]

Nicholas Baragwanath's *The Italian Traditions and Puccini: Compositional Theory and Practice in Nineteenth-Century Opera* recounts the education and traditions of musical institutions and their influence on composition and performance tendencies in Italy.[58] In identifying the origins of Puccini's compositional style, Baragwanath claims that "Puccini's

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[52] Roberto Illiano and Michela Niccolai, *Orchestral conducting in the nineteenth century*, ed. Roberto Illiano and Michela Niccolai. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).
[53] Raoul Camus, "Orchestral Conducting in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the Music Library Association* 72, no. 2 (2015).
[54] Camus, "Orchestral Conducting in the Nineteenth Century," 362.
[55] Illiano and Niccolai, Orchestral conducting in the nineteenth century, xi.
[56] Clive Brown, "Orchestral Conducting in the Nineteenth Century," edited by Roberto Illiano and Michela Niccolai," *Performance Practice Review* 21, no. 1 (2017).
[57] Brown, "Orchestral Conducting in the Nineteenth Century," 3.
[58] Nicholas Baragwanath, *The Italian Traditions and Puccini: Compositional Theory and Practice in Nineteenth-*Century Opera (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 3-4.

training differed little from that available at the time of Rossini, and perhaps even before. His studies in Lucca even involved some of the same lessons that Rossini would have received at the Liceo comunale di musica in Bologna."[59] This text will play a key role in understanding Puccini's compositional evolution. It will lead to a better understanding of Puccini's writing style and his copious tempo designations as well as how these affect the conductor's decision-making as interpreter of Puccini's tempo markings.

A fundamental resource in this research is the performance practice evidence provided by Ricci in his book *Puccini interprete di se stesso* (1954).[60] This book was translated by Harry Nicholas Dunstan in his PhD thesis as *Performance Practices in the Music of Giacomo Puccini as Observed by Luigi Ricci*.[61] Dunstan portrays Ricci as a vocal coach, assistant conductor, music director and backstage assistant for Toscanini, Tullio Serafin (1878–1869), Victor de Sabata (1892–1967), and Gino Marinuzzi (1882–1945). Ricci's concern to preserve Puccini's performance tradition motivated him to write down comments, changes, and corrections made during rehearsals for productions of which Puccini attended the rehearsals.[62] For the purpose of articulating Puccini's musical expectations, this research considers these comments when analysing the audio recording by Toscanini and his tempo approach to Puccini's *La Bohème*.

Michele Girardi's and Laura Basini's *Puccini: His International Art*,[63] is a significant reference for understanding Puccini's approach to the text and poetic meter.[64] Girardi and Basini focus upon the relationship between Puccini and his librettists Luigi Illica (1857–1919) and Giuseppe Giacosa (1847–1906).[65] In particular, they discuss how the composer's demands

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[59] Baragwanath, *The Italian Traditions and Puccini: Compositional Theory and Practice in Nineteenth-Century Opera*, 5.
[60] Luigi Ricci, *Puccini interprete di se stesso* (Ricordi, 1954).
[61] Harry Nicholas Dunstan, Jr., "Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci," (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1989).
[62] Dunstan, "Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci," x.
[63] Michele Girardi and Laura Basini, *Puccini: His International Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
[64] Girardi and Basini, *Puccini: His International Art*, 101.
[65] Girardi and Basini, *Puccini: His International Art*, 99-102.

regarding the treatment of the verse meter needed his publisher Giulio Ricordi's (1840–1912) intervention in order to conciliate Puccini's musical demands with his librettists.[66]

In *Giacomo Puccini and His World*, Arman Schwartz and Emanuele Senici make assertions that are worth considering when analysing the emerging figure of the opera conductor.[67] Referring to the circumstances that trigger this evolution, they claim, "This set of historical circumstances also directly contributed to the corresponding rise of the conductor, whose coordinating presence on the podium was made necessary by the increase in the musical complexity of new operas."[68] This reference to historical events during the nineteenth century is decisive for underpinning the evolution of the role and performance practice of the Italian conductor.

In her article "Toscanini and the Myth of Textual Fidelity," Linda B. Fairtile exposes an interesting point regarding Toscanini's often professed fidelity to the written text.[69] Fairtile examines Toscanini's early approach to conducting and the influential figures in his early musical training.[70] She explains that "Regardless of what he actually did, Toscanini became known as the only conductor selfless enough to perform exactly what was written in the score, no more and no less."[71] Furthermore, she discusses Wagner's influence on the young Toscanini: "It is in Wagner's essay *On the Performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony*, that we find direct evidence of his influence on Toscanini."[72] This reference is significant in considering Toscanini's position towards the written text. This research will examine

[66] Girardi and Basini, *Puccini: His International Art*, 102.
[67] Arman Schwartz and Emanuele Senici, *Giacomo Puccini and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).
[68] Schwartz and Senici, *Giacomo Puccini and His World*, 231.
[69] Linda B Fairtile, "Toscanini and the Myth of Textual Fidelity," *Journal of the Conductors Guild* 24, no. 1-2 (2003).
[70] Fairtile, "Toscanini and the Myth of Textual Fidelity," 49-50.
[71] Fairtile, "Toscanini and the Myth of Textual Fidelity," 50.
[72] Fairtile, "Toscanini and the Myth of Textual Fidelity," 59.

Toscanini's approach to Puccini's writing was to establish the conductor's performance practice within the historical context in which the two figures coexisted.

Erick Neher, in his article "The Complete Toscanini," outlines Toscanini's approach to tempo as evidenced in his recordings.[73] He states that Toscanini remains one of the most significant conductors who turned to interpretation based on *come scritto* (as written) principles in the music score:[74]

> Reports from the era indicate that Toscanini got faster as he got older (reversing the usual trend); and since the recordings almost all date from the last third of his career, it's no surprise that the artist is captured in fleet form. But a close listen to the set shows that it's not so much that Toscanini sped everything up; it's more that he didn't let the orchestra slow down when it didn't need to. And contrary to the perceived notion that his tempos were inflexible, there is in fact a great deal of variation from measure to measure, as with all great conductors. It's just that he privileged a forward momentum that brooked no sentimental rubato.[75]

Toscanini, as a leading figure in the development of the modern conductor, plays an important role in this research. This thesis will examine how *verismo* composer's instructions were interpreted by those who collaborated with them. Toscanini's *come scritto* approach serves as an example of how conductors perceive and achieve a sense of fidelity to the written text.

The documented collaboration between Puccini and conductors such as Toscanini and others provide clear evidence of the positioning of the conductor as a prominent figure in operatic performance practice of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell in *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction*, offer an invitation to consider what the authors describe as "raw material."[76] The music score itself provides a significant amount of information regarding the interpretation of the composer's musical thoughts.[77] However, it may still leave many questions that need to be addressed by

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[73] Erick Neher, "The Complete Toscanini," *The Hudson Review* 65, no. 4 (2013).
[74] Neher, "The Complete Toscanini," 646.
[75] Neher, "The Complete Toscanini," 647.
[76] Lawson and Stowell, "The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction," 17.
[77] Lawson and Stowell, "The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction," 1-2.

the conductor. Lawson and Stowell advocate the study of what they identify as "primary sources," to comprehend the nature of the events in which the composer was immersed:[78]

> In addition to composers' original autographs, sketches and drafts, evaluated later in connection with editions, the performer's primary source materials range from instrumental and theoretical treatises to surviving instruments, iconography, historical archives, references in literature, journals, newspaper reports, and sometimes even letters, diaries, catalogues, advertisements and, latterly, early recordings.[79]

This approach to performance practice is crucial for understanding not only the interpretation of the tempo conventions but for identifying all sorts of un-notated conventions within the operatic performance tradition.

Clive Brown's *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750–1900* presents a concise historical approach to the concept of tempo, as well as the different aspects that influence the interpretation of metronome markings.[80] In commenting on nineteenth-century performance practice, Brown discusses the uncertainty created by different composers' notation of tempo designations.

On the other hand, the list of composers provided as evidence of the variety of opinions regarding tempo designations and metronome markings contains only Verdi as a representative of the Italian opera tradition. Brown quotes a letter from Verdi highlighting his demand for accurate interpretation of his metronome marks.[81] Brown's discussion of tempo and *tempo rubato* offers a clear understanding of the importance of searching for historical evidence to support decision-making in music performance.

Roger Flury's *Giacomo Puccini: A Discography*,[82] offers the most complete list of recordings of Puccini's works that are available. In the section dedicated to *La Bohème*, the author includes those recordings of Carlo Sabajno (1874–1938), who recorded the first

[78] Lawson and Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction*, 17-41.
[79] Lawson and Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction*, 17.
[80] Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic performing practice 1750–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 1999).
[81] Brown, *Classical and Romantic performing practice 1750–1900*, 3.
[82] Roger Flury, *Giacomo Puccini: A Discography* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2012).

complete version of the opera in 1917, and then on two more occasions in 1918 and 1928, respectively. Among other historical recordings listed, Toscanini's (1946) (Table 4-13, page 98), is vital for this research. Toscanini's recording provides documentary evidence of the interaction between these two well-known conductors and Puccini. These recordings shed light on the conductors' approaches to Puccini's tempo markings.

Although this literature review has compiled substantial historical evidence related to the evolution of the nineteenth-century Italian opera conductor, less material has been discovered about the conductor's approach to the printed text. My research offers an investigation of the roles and performance practices of Italian opera conductors in the interpretation of tempo markings and tempo modifications during the *verismo* era. By examining the composer's score, I will show how it is possible to achieve an understanding of the conductor's approach to tempo designations in the context of the *verismo* era, using the data that can be derived from historical recordings.

1.8 Discography

Historical sound recordings of conductors reveal approaches to the interpretation of the music score. This research clarifies the conductor's evolution in response to the composer's musical demands as notated in their scores (Table 1-2) and thus, the decision-making processes that have moulded the figure of the Italian opera conductor in the *verismo* era. The historical recordings used in this research include those by Italian conductors from the late nineteenth century operatic tradition (Table 1-3, page 34). They also demonstrate differing and even contradictory realisations of specific composer's works.

As a conductor, Mascagni achieved recognition not only for conducting his own operas but also the operas of composers such as Rossini, Verdi and Wagner, as well as symphonic works by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), Johannes Brahms (1833–1897), Pyotr Ilyich

Tchaikovsky (1840–1893), and Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904).[83] Mascagni's successful conducting career continued into the recording era in the early twentieth century. He produced an extensive discography that includes recordings of his *Cavalleria Rusticana*.[84]

Although Leoncavallo was known for conducting his own operas,[85] he did not pursue a conducting career to the extent that Mascagni did. Nevertheless, in 1907 Leoncavallo was continually active conducting his own works in the USA, including a recording of his opera *I Pagliacci* for Gramophone and Typewriter Company (G & T).[86] However, recent publications have disputed his participation as conductor, claiming instead that he was acting as supervisor while Carlo Sabajno (1874–1938) led the orchestra:[87]

> Leoncavallo was not particularly known as a conductor, although a recording made of *I Pagliacci* in 1907 was long thought to have been led by him. More recent research suggests, however, that while he was present at the sessions, in fact it was Carlo Sabajno who conducted. That places this piece of recorded evidence in a tantalizingly grey area which invites speculation as to how representative it is of the composer's wishes.[88]

Despite the existence of a vast number of sound recordings of these works (Table 1-2), the selection criteria for this choice lay in the fact that these sound recordings exhibit tangible evidence of the performance practices of the period. At this time, the leading figures of *verismo*, including Mascagni, Leoncavallo, and Puccini, interacted with the emerging character of the modern conductor, exemplified by Toscanini. Therefore, a possible dissemination of the composer's delivery of their own works can be achieved. The conductor's interpretation, as in the case of Toscanini, could shed insights into the approach to the tempo designations as part of the performance practices of the *verismo* composer, as well as the evolving role of the nineteenth-century Italian opera conductor.

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[83] Alan Mallach, *Pietro Mascagni and his operas*. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 117-18.
[84] Mallach, *Pietro Mascagni and his operas*, 300.
[85] Konrad Dryden, "Leoncavallo: Life and Works" (Scarecrow Press, 2007), 123.
[86] Dryden, "Leoncavallo: Life and Works," xvi.
[87] Mould, "From bel canto to verismo: How the rise of the conductor influenced the transformation of Italian opera during the long nineteenth century," 89.
[88] Mould, "From bel canto to verismo: How the rise of the conductor influenced the transformation of Italian opera during the long nineteenth century," 89.

Table 1-2 List of opera scores.

Cavalleria Rusticana (1890)
One act opera, full score unabridged Dover (1993). Republication of the edition published by Ed. Bote & G. Bock, Berlin, n.d. 1919. Berlin: Bote & Bock, GmbH, n.d.(ca.1920). Plate 18720. Reprinted New York: Broude Brothers, n.d.(ca.1950). Plate B.B. 63. Libretto by Giovanni Verga, Giovanni, Targioni-Tozzetti, Guido Menasci.
I Pagliacci (1892)
Opera in two acts, full score unabridged Dover (1993). Republication of the edition published by E. Sonzogno, Milan, 1892. Reprint of the E. Sonzogno, Milan, 1892 edition. Milan: Sonzogno, n.d. [1892]. Plate E. 644 S.
La Bohème (1896)
Opera in four acts, full score unabridged Dover. Republication. Milan: G. Ricordi & C., n.d. (1920). Plate 115561. Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, based on *Scènes de la vie de bohème* by Henri Murger.

The advent of the recording industry at the beginning of the twentieth century provides direct sonic evidence of the performance practices of Italian opera conductors who were active during the late-nineteenth century. This allows us to pay attention to the interpretations contained in the specific sound recordings listed above. In this respect, this research disseminates the data to validate the decision-making of the Italian opera conductor in regard to the tempo approach.

Table 1-3 List of historical recordings.

Composer	Work	Excerpts
Pietro Mascagni (1863–1945)	*Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890)	Preludio e siciliana, 'O Lola ch`hai di latti la camisa' (Turiddu).
		Romanza e Scena, 'Voi lo sapete, o mamma' (Santuzza e Lucia).
Ruggiero Leoncavallo (1857–1919)	*I Pagliacci* (1892)	Prologo: 'Si puo? Si puo?' (Tonio)
		Intermezzo
Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)	*La Bohème* (1896)	Act one, Scene 6: 'Che gelida manina!' (Rodolfo)
		Act one, Scene 7: 'Si. Mi chiamano Mimi' (Mimi)

1.9 Significance of the research

Strong evidence of the interaction between composer and conductor during the late nineteenth century indicates a significant milestone in the evolution of the figure of the opera conductor. The collaboration between composer and opera conductor is an emerging area of research. This research is therefore an important contribution to the understanding of the performance practice of the contemporary opera conductor. By focusing on criteria such as tempo markings, tempo modification and un-notated tempo conventions, this research seeks to illustrate some aspects of Italian opera conductors' performance practices.

The survey of written texts (primary and secondary sources) is used to examine the evolution of the Italian opera conductor during the nineteenth century. Sound recordings of works by three of the most representative *verismo* composers (Leoncavallo, Mascagni, and Puccini) are also analysed to show how particular opera conductors approached tempo markings. Finally, the research delves into the concept of textual fidelity through a case study of Puccini's *La Bohème* as interpreted by Toscanini, along with the composers themselves

interpreting their own works, as in the case of Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* and Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Table 1-1, page 16).

1.10 Research contribution

A significant contribution in identifying key elements of conducting practice is the examination of how the conductor developed a leadership role from that of the time beater, with a paper roll or violin bow, to the specialised musical interpreter that the modern baton-wielding conductor has come to be.

For this research, the historical evolution of the Italian opera conductor of the *verismo* era will be charted by presenting evidence of the evolution of the concert master leading the ensemble from the keyboard or violin desk, to becoming the leader so detached from a musical instrument, not as performer, but as a facilitator. The ever-growing composer's demands expressed in the printed score is a critical aspect in the evolution of performance practice of the conductor leading from the front of the orchestra without playing in the ensemble.

1.11 Discussion

My discussion hinges around whether conductors' approaches to tempo markings as part of their developing role and performance practice is a result of the faithful reading of the score, or whether it is the sum of circumstances that influenced significant divergence from the composer's score markings to serve the musical discourse.

Chapter 2. From Creator to Interpreter

Re-imagining musical performances of past eras involves knowledge of traditions and of past performance practices.[89] In the Western classical music arena since the middle of the twentieth century there has developed a strong interest in adopting vocal and instrumental practices of the past. Naturally, this involves not merely sourcing period instruments, but also investigating earlier styles of performance.[90] This includes arriving at an understanding of the historical context in which a piece of music was first created and performed. While there is increasing information available of past performance practices preserved in written texts, a vast amount of information was un-notated and transmitted orally.[91] This makes the task of interpreting the music of the past in an historically-appropriate manner a challenging endeavour.

In past eras, composers did not feel it necessary to write down all performance details in their scores, because either they performed their own compositions, or they entrusted their performance to musicians who were trained in the same musical conventions and practices.[92]

This chapter explores the relationship between composer and interpreter within the context of Italian opera during the late nineteenth century. Historical evidence allows us to establish the evolution of performance practices of the conductor as a separate entity from that of the Italian opera composer. The chapter also examines the transition from the composer as creator and interpreter of their own works, to the opera conductor as interpreter. This will help to establish the genesis of the opera conductor as an interpreter and will develop an understanding of the relationship between the opera conductor and the composer.

[89] Michelle Dulak, "The quiet metamorphosis of 'Early Music'," *Repercussions* 2, no. 2 (1993): 32.
[90] Lawson and Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction*, 2.
[91] Lawson and Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction*, 2.
[92] Leon Botstein, "History and Performance Practices," *The Musical Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (2005): 2.

2.1 The conductor and his role as interpreter

Creator and interpreter have not always been two distinct entities. The distinction occurred during the nineteenth century, due to a series of events in which the figure of the conductor as interpreter achieved a significant position in the art of music making.

Interpretation is defined as the process of transferring meaning from one source to another.[93] In music performance practice, this is one of the most important concepts and the basis of any serious analysis of musical interpretation. Robert Schumann (1810–1856) in his book *Über Dirigieren* addressed the matter further:

> What the composer created out of his inner self must be recognized by the conductor, who can only achieve understanding through vast knowledge. The spiritual greatness of music cannot be apprehended solely by learning the figured bass, or by studying and serving an apprenticeship, but by diligent study of every science connected with music.[94]

However, there are concerns over whether the conductor can successfully interpret and perform a musical piece according to the composer's ideas expressed in the score:

> Today, we routinely classify musicians as either composers or performers, but the early conductors were both. Conducting emerged simultaneously with the rise of an independent performer who was a "mere" interpreter of another's work. The role of these new musical interpreters in performing a canon of great musical works quickly became a topic of discussion in the (also new) musical press. At first, conductors were hardly capable of interpreting at all; conductors and music critics alike seemed content if orchestras played without major mishap.[95]

The questions that remain are, how does a conductor achieve a sense of fidelity to the composer in an interpretation, and is the music score enough to create a degree of accuracy in conceptualising the composer's initial musical thoughts?

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[93] Carolyn Widner Ward and Alan E. Wilkinson, *Conducting Meaningful Interpretation: A Field Guide for Success* (United states of America: Fulcrum Publishing, 2006), 2-3.
[94] Gunther Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 68.
[95] José Antonio Bowen, "The Rise of Conducting" in *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*, ed. José Antonio Bowen (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 93-94.

2.2 The genesis of the art of conducting in Italy

Today, conductors enjoy a position of distinction in the music industry.[96] However, this was not always the case. The figure of the conductor has undergone a series of transformations influenced by multiple factors including composers' demands, the developing music industry, and even audiences' growing expectation for innovative and ever more realistic operatic productions. These conditions, among others, favoured the acceptance of the operatic style of *verismo* as a new way of portraying elements of real life.[97]

The consolidation of the role and performance practice of the Italian conductor was the result of a series of factors, which placed some demands on the interpretative role and the leadership figure of the performance.[98] Identifying the key elements that triggered the breaking away from composer as interpreter is a crucial aspect of the evolution, not only of music itself but also of the art of conducting.

Throughout different periods in music history, the figure of the conductor has been perceived in a variety of ways. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, changes brought about by social structures affected the way music was treated.[99] With these changes, driven by new ways of interaction between composer and conductor, musical ideas in opera composition and production flourished.

The composer was no longer necessarily the interpreter of their own works. Most importantly, conductors were given the opportunity to interpret composers' musical ideas.[100] Questions were raised about the conductor's personal considerations as an interpreter and the boundaries between the conductor as interpreter and the composer as the creator. Under these

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[96] Leo Samama and Dominy Clements, "The conductor," in *The Meaning of Music* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 159.
[97] Matteo Sansone, "Verismo," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001, accessed 10 July 2021, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000029210.
[98] Fairtile, "The Violin Director and Verdi's Middle-Period Operas," 413-14.
[99] Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor*, 69.
[100] Bowen, "The Rise of Conducting," 262.

circumstances, the figure of the Italian opera conductor underwent a series of transformations that gradually defined the role and performance practice of their art. This set the path for the modern conductor to define his role from that of indentured servant delivering the composer's thoughts exactly as they were envisaged, to displaying their own identity and individuality.[101]

The conductor began merging the composer's musical ideas into their own personal discourse. It was only during the second half of the nineteenth century that the figure of the conductor first displayed the features we have come to expect today.[102] The role of the conductor did not begin to emerge until the end of the eighteenth century.[103] Formerly, the "conductor" (*Kapellmeister*, *maestro*) was a musician who led the ensemble while playing in it, usually from the keyboard, and their main function was time-beating.[104]

The conductor was now seen as an extension of the composer, devoted to the act of conducting someone else's music.[105] Certain factors, including changes in compositional processes and practices led by Verdi, affected this evolution and contributed to conductors gaining power over the composer's work.[106] Composers gradually entrusted their creations to the aesthetic perceptions of the conductor. As Verdi stated in a letter to Ricordi: "The success of our operas lies most of the time in the hands of the conductor. This person is as necessary as a tenor or prima donna."[107]

An important contribution to the development of the figure of the conductor is the fact that composers sought new possibilities to portray their musical thoughts. Verdi clearly

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[101] Mary Hunter, "To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer: The Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 2 (2005), 357.
[102] Jeremy Siepmann, "The history of direction and conducting" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, ed. Colin Lawson. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 113.
[103] Acton Ostling, "The evolution of orchestral conducting through the baroque and early classical periods," *The American Music Teacher* 23, no. 2 (1973): 19.
[104] Ostling, "The evolution of orchestral conducting through the baroque and early classical periods," 19.
[105] Bowen, "The Rise of Conducting," 93-94.
[106] Michael Rose, "The Italian Tradition" in *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*, edited by José Antonio Bowen. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 155.
[107] Rose, "The Italian tradition," 153-154.

exemplifies this tendency. Composers have always pushed the limits of their compositional discourses.[108] In trying to convey the composer's expectations, conductors are charged with understanding and contextualising the meaning of the composer' score.

Verdi's approach brought about innovations in orchestration. By pushing the development of the orchestra, the intervention of the violin-director became more prominent, to the point where they had to relinquish the task of playing and focus solely on leading the orchestra.[109] The increasing intricacy of compositions demanded the use of different direction techniques to communicate efficiently with orchestra and singers.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the practice of directing from the keyboard gradually died out. It was not unusual in the Italian opera theatres that the composer (*maestro*) led the première and the following three performances from the keyboard.[110] Also, the *maestro* was expected to prepare the singers and rehearse the orchestra:[111]

> The *maestro* would prepare and rehearse their progeny for the première, coaching the singers from the keyboard, presiding over the orchestral preparations, supervising matters of staging, and finally leading the première and one or two subsequent performances.[112]

That was the case with the composer Bellini. In 1832, he not only attended but directed rehearsals for his opera *Norma* in Bergamo.[113]

The enlargement of the orchestra in Italian opera houses challenged the keyboard-director to such an extent that the first violin was required to join in leadership of the ensemble.[114] Called the *primo violino direttore d'orchestra* or the *primo violino capo d'orchestra*, this person was given the authority to interpret the composer's work.[115] This

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[108] Leon Botstein, "History and performance practices," *The Musical Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (2005): 2.
[109] Fairtile, "The Violin Director and Verdi's Middle-Period Operas," 423.
[110] Fairtile, "The Violin Director and Verdi's Middle-Period Operas," 313-314.
[111] Mould, "From bel canto to verismo: How the rise of the conductor influenced the transformation of Italian opera during the long nineteenth century," 67.
[112] Mould, "From bel canto to verismo: How the rise of the conductor influenced the transformation of Italian opera during the long nineteenth century," 67.
[113] Stephen Willier, *Vincenzo Bellini: a guide to research* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 4.
[114] Ostling, "The evolution of orchestral conducting through the baroque and early classical periods," 20.
[115] Fairtile, "The Violin Director and Verdi's Middle-Period Operas," 314.

aspect of dual leadership was commonly employed by Verdi during the course of his active career.[116] The violin director, or *maestro concertatore e direttore d'orchestra,* was a performance tradition developed in Italian opera houses. By the second half of the nineteenth century most of the Italian theatres employed this performance practice.[117]

Gradually, the keyboard-director, who oversaw the interpretation, and *the primo violino capo d'orchestra*, who was in control of the orchestra, merged to become the single opera director or *maestro concertatore e direttore d'orchestra*.[118] Although it cannot be established when exactly the conductor stood alone when directing the performance, there is evidence that suggests it was often seen during the second half of the nineteenth century.[119]

The young Toscanini probably witnessed the transition that took place in most of the Italian theatres during the second half of the nineteenth century, whereby the emerging character of the single leader of the performance was in its earliest stages.[120] In addition to Toscanini, others adopted this performance practice and with it, the modern figure of the conductor emerged.

2.3 Performance practice of the *verismo* composers

The process of interpretation implies an organic approach as well as mechanical insight.[121] A faithful rendering of the composer's score is a melding of the composer's musical thoughts with the interpreter's insights into performance practice historical context.[122] The conductor's technique has evolved by responding to the composer's demands while communicating with singers and the orchestra. There is documentary evidence that during the

[116] Fairtile, "The Violin Director and Verdi's Middle-Period Operas," 413.
[117] Fairtile, "The Violin Director and Verdi's Middle-Period Operas," 413-15.
[118] Fairtile, "The Violin Director and Verdi's Middle-Period Operas," 413-15.
[119] Fairtile, "The Violin Director and Verdi's Middle-Period Operas," 413.
[120] Linda B Fairtile, "Toscanini and the Myth of Textual Fidelity," *Journal of the Conductors Guild* 24, no. 1-2 (2003): 57.
[121] Serge Koussevitzky, "Poetry and Music; Musical Interpretation; And Some Remarks about American Orchestras," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 73, no. 1 (1938): 3.
[122] Leon Botstein, "History and Performance Practices," *The Musical Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (2005): 3.

early nineteenth century, opera performances hardly required the presence of the conductor[123]. Instead, the first violin director fulfilled the task of holding orchestra and singers together.[124] However, from a modern perspective it is unthinkable not to have someone conducting the orchestra and singers during an opera performance.

The progressive transformations brought about by *verismo* composers show their intention to push the boundaries of the established opera traditions.[125] Although being deeply immersed in the opera movement known as *giovane scuola*,[126] the artistic roots of *verismo* composers went further back to the early nineteenth century.[127] Puccini, as well as Mascagni, were taught by Amilcare Ponchielli (1834–1886) at the Milan Conservatory in 1883.[128] Leoncavallo had as his teacher, Lauro Rossi (1810–1885), an Italian-born composer highly regarded in the French opera tradition.[129]

Although the spirit and narrative of the *giovane scuola* was innovative, its main representative composers and their performance practices have their direct connection with previous traditions. These earlier traditions are renowned for their conservative approach.[130] They provide critical insights when trying to define the context in which *verismo* composers were trained. Although the study of the Italian schools encompasses practices that remain un-

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[123] Fairtile, "The Violin Director and Verdi's Middle-Period Operas," 413.
[124] Fairtile, "The Violin Director and Verdi's Middle-Period Operas," 417-19.
[125] Adriana Guarnieri Corazzol and Roger Parker, "Opera and verismo: Regressive points of view and the artifice of alienation,"*Cambridge Opera Journal* 5, no. 1 (1993): 40-41.
[126] The term the *giovane scuola* (young school) alludes to a group of young Italian composers of the late-nineteenth century whose compositions were characterised by an emotional rhetoric combined with roughness of poor villagers. Comprising mostly of opera composers such as Alfredo Catalani (1854–1893), Antonio Smareglia (1854–1929), Leoncavallo, Puccini, Alberto Franchetti (1860–1942), Mascagni, Francesco Cilea (1866–1959) and Umberto Giordano (1867-1949). With the success of Mascagni's Cavalleria rusticana (1890), the *giovane scuola* as a movement launched the *verismo*.
[127] Baragwanath, *The Italian Traditions and Puccini,* 3-4.
[128] Michele Girardi, "Mascagni, Pietro," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001, accessed 10 July 2021, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000017964.
[129] Michele Girardi, "Leoncavallo, Ruggero," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001, accessed 10 July 2021, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000016430.
[130] Baragwanath, *The Italian Traditions and Puccini*, 2-3.

notated, existing documents can be traced to the music of early and even mid-nineteenth century composers such as Rossini, Bellini, and Verdi.[131]

During the nineteenth century, the opera industry brought a new set of demands for composers. In an attempt to respond to these demands, composers adopted a different *modus operandi*. This resulted in the developing complexity of tempo markings. In order to understand what these tempo markings meant to the composer performers must come to an understanding of the tradition in which such practices were considered artistically indispensable.

Composers indicate the proper execution of their music by integrating a series of codes and instructions in their scores. Among these, tempo is one of the most fundamental considerations for conductors, especially when considering how flexible or rigid the approach to tempo could be.[132]

In his book, *Puccini interprete di se stesso*, Ricci points out that of the 10 rules of Puccini's performance practice, tempo is the first and foremost. Regarding Puccini's metronome markings, Ricci states, "all have been carefully chosen and revised."[133]

> The metronome numbers written by Puccini in the piano/vocal scores are very exact. Some numeric indications have been changed, some others increased. There is not a metronome sign which has not been scrupulously checked by me in each of the many performances in which I assisted the author.[134]

Most of the examples given by Ricci relate to how singers should interpret Puccini's tempo indications and clarify what the composer expressed in his music score. The composer's employment of tempo in all its varieties, such as, juxtaposition of tempo, hemiola, *tempo rubato*, as well as indications regarding tempo fluctuations, presented challenges for the late nineteenth-century opera conductor. In this quest, and to cope with the demands of composers,

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[131] Baragwanath, *The Italian Traditions and Puccini*, 3.
[132] Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor*, 69-70.
[133] Dunstan, "Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci," 2.
[134] Dunstan, "Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci," 2.

the opera conductor developed ways in which they could communicate and connect the different sections of the ensemble, including singers and orchestral players.

Among the three *verismo* composers studied in this research, Puccini uses metronome markings and expression indications more often than Leoncavallo and Mascagni. This is possibly in response to Puccini's awareness about the performance standards of his time, particularly his tempo markings.

Puccini's 1911 letter to Leopoldo Mugnone (1858–1941) regarding his interpretation of his *La Fanciulla del West*[135] provides evidence of Puccini's careful supervision of his productions. Despite praising Mugnone's interpretation, when Puccini requires "more mosso and more lively in its rhythms and movements" what he is probably referring to is a proper execution of the tempo in general:[136]

> I want to thank you once again for the intelligent care you took of my Fanciulla. Let me emphasize the need to maintain the *vigor* and *color* [*colorito*] that are needed for performing this opera of mine. Let me remind you: a little more poetry and intimacy in the "nostalgia" scene. Minnie's entrance in Act 1 needs to be more effective onstage in terms of movement and merriment, and always vigorous orchestrally. I wish the section beginning with the 3/8 were more mosso and more lively in its rhythms and movements.[137]

The letters mentioned above from Verdi and Puccini[138] led to a questioning of the process of decision making undertaken by the conductor in recreating a successful interpretation of the composer's musical intents. On the other hand, they are proof of the growing concern expressed by composers in their own writings. These insights will cast light on the historical evolution of the opera conductor in response to the expectations and demands of the *verismo* opera composer.

This undoubtedly contributed to the emerging figure of the nineteenth-century opera conductor as the trustworthy authority who could lead the orchestra through the challenges of

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[135] Schwartz and Senici *Giacomo Puccini and His World*, 253-54.
[136] Naples, 12 December 1911.
[137] Schwartz and Senici, *Giacomo Puccini and His World*, 41, 253.
[138] Refer to fn 102.

realising the composer's expectations. However, conductors may have held a different view as *verismo* stylistic approaches brought a new set of demands.[139] The equilibrium between orchestra and the voice is re-structured.[140] In terms of the orchestra development, the *verismo* composer allows the orchestra to act as narrator, during the intermezzo the orchestra anticipates the drama.[141] Along with the approach to the concept of tempo the performance practice of the conductor also evolved as part of the evolution of the opera.

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[139] Adriana Guarnieri Corazzol, and Roger Parker. "Opera and verismo: regressive points of view and the artifice of alienation," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5, no. 1 (1993): 44.
[140] Corazzol, and Roger Parker. "Opera and verismo: regressive points of view and the artifice of alienation," 42.
[141] Corazzol, and Roger Parker. "Opera and Verismo: Regressive Points of View and the Artifice of Alienation," 44

Chapter 3. Tempo as Performance Practice Feature in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera

Motivated by a desire to establish their own voice, composers turned away from the conventions of the operatic styles that dominated the opera scene during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries.[142] The shift in performance practices from smaller to larger and more varied instrumental forces compelled conductors to exercise greater authorial control than had been the case previously.[143] Composers' growing concerns over the misinterpretation of their music led to a shift towards more elaborately notated scores.[144] To satisfy the demands of the rapidly changing operatic industry, the composer gradually relinquished the role of interpreter to the conductor.

This new approach towards opera repertoire, in terms of a more elaborated music score, led to a shift in the performance practices of the opera conductor over the course of the nineteenth century. Such transformations included: i) the expansion of the structure and phrasing of the music;[145] ii) the enlargement of the orchestra size;[146] and, iii) additional demands made by composers' detailed tempo markings and metronome indications.[147] This influenced the rise of the modern conductor as we know it today.

This chapter examines and analyses practices in tempo manipulation in the context of Italian opera in the *verismo* era. Concepts such as tempo designation, tempo modification, *tempo rubato*, tempo transition and tempo of speech, as well as un-notated conventions, will form the basis for the analyses.

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[142] Andreas Giger, "Verismo: origin, corruption, and redemption of an operatic term," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 60, no. 2 (2007): 272.
[143] Bowen, "The rise of conducting," 94.
[144] Botstein, "History and performance practices," 2.
[145] Leo Samama, *The meaning of music* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 159.
[146] Samama, *The meaning of music*, 159.
[147] Schwartz and Senici, *Giacomo Puccini and His World*, 231.

The analysis of these concepts in the context of Italian opera will inform an understanding of the opera conductor's decision-making. This will illustrate how the conductor's approach to tempo relates to those indicated by the composer in their music score. It will be correlated with the research question regarding fidelity of interpretation and how the nineteenth-century opera conductor approached the *verismo* opera composer's tempo indications.

3.1 Nineteenth-century metronome designations

Since the early nineteenth century, composers have approached metronome markings as an approximate reference to indicate the tempo of the music.[148] Since its invention and establishment as a musical device in 1815 by the German musician and engineer Johann Nepomuk Mälzel (1772–1838),[149] the metronome has become a significant tool that enables composers to quantify their tempo indication beyond the traditional Italian terminology.[150]

Beethoven was the first composer to embrace the metronome;[151] however, he often changed metronome markings making it difficult for publishers and interpreters to gain a clear understanding of his tempo markings.[152] For example, in 1827, three days after Beethoven's death, a letter containing the tempo indications for some of his works was sent by Carl Czerny (1791–1857) to Beethoven's publisher.[153] Despite his close relationship with the composer, Czerny's comments on Beethoven's tempo markings have been strongly debated.[154] Czerny's

[148] David Fallows, "Metronome (I)," *Groves Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001, accessed 10 July 2021, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000018521.
[149] Alexander Wheelock Thayer and Dixie Harvey, "Maelzel, Johann Nepomuk," *Groves Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001, accessed 10 July 2021, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000017414.
[150] Beverly Jerold, "Mälzel's Role in Beethoven's Symphonic Metronome Marks" in *Music Performance Issues: 1600–1900,* 165-92. Boydell & Brewer, 2016, accessed July 10, 2021, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt1mmftcn.14.
[151] Thayer and Harvey, "Maelzel, Johann Nepomuk."
[152] Thomas Y. Levin, "Integral interpretation: Introductory notes to Beethoven, Kolisch and the question of the metronome," *The Musical Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (1993): 88.
[153] Peter Stadlen, "Beethoven and the Metronome, I," *Music & Letters* (1967): 330.
[154] Marten Noorduin, "Czerny's 'impossible' metronome marks," *The Musical Times* 154, no. 1925 (2013): 20.

approach to Beethoven's metronome markings, as well as those of his own works, seem to be fast, to the point of being questioned by performers and scholars.[155] Despite the discrepancies created by Czerny's metronome markings for Beethoven's scores, Beethoven wrote in his autograph for his song for voice and piano *Nord Oder Süd!* (*North or South!*), Woo 148: "[Metronome marking]100[156] according to Mälzel. However, this can apply only to the first measures, for feeling also has its tempo, and this cannot entirely be expressed in this [metronomic] figure."[157] This statement is supported by Czerny's claim that tempo flexibility is allowed in Beethoven's interpretations, although for the purpose of expression only.[158] Czerny also asserted that the excessive and unnecessary use of tempo modifications should be avoided.[159]

The notion of accurate tempo in performing a piece of music before the invention of the metronome appears to be an issue of uncertainty.[160] Despite having access to a quantifiable measurement for the tempo of their pieces, by the late nineteenth century, there were divided views over the treatment of metronome markings.[161] Some composer-conductors, such as Brahms, rejected this practice and preferred to designate the tempo of their pieces in Italian or German terms.[162] They claimed this approach benefited expression and cohesion of the musical phrasing. Wagner stated, "The right comprehension of the *melos* [melody in all its aspects] is the sole guide to the right tempo."[163]

> By "melos" Wagner meant a singing quality, a linear expression, a continuity of line, which he felt was the true essence of all great music, and without which music was meaningless, soulless,

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[155] Noorduin, "Czerny's 'impossible' metronome marks," 19-20.
[156] Although it is mark in the manuscript 'ziemlich lebhaft und eutschlossen', there is no indication whether 100 refers to ♩. or ♪as the basic beat.
[157] Jackson, "Performance practice: a dictionary-guide for musicians," 40.
[158] Jackson, "Performance practice: a dictionary-guide for musicians," 40.
[159] Jackson, "Performance practice: a dictionary-guide for musicians," 40.
[160] Beverly, "Mälzel's Role in Beethoven's Symphonic Metronome Marks," 166-67.
[161] Jackson, "Performance practice: a dictionary-guide for musicians," 234.
[162] Bernard D. Sherman, "Tempos and proportions in Brahms: period evidence," *Early Music* 25, no. 3 (1997): 468.
[163] Sandra P Rosenblum, "The uses of rubato in music, eighteenth to twentieth centuries," *Performance practice review* 7, no. 1 (1994): 49.

abstract and stiff – as he once also put it: "something between grammar, arithmetic and gymnastic."[164]

Prior to the invention and establishment of the metronome, the verbal tempo designation proved to be efficient only when the composer was present[165]. In this regard, Noordium stated, "The entire point of having a metronome was that a composer could indicate a speed regardless of the accompanying Italian tempo description, which would apply mainly to the general feeling of the movement."[166] The assumption that the composer's metronome markings provide a clear indication of the exact speed of the piece conflicts with the tradition of the Italian tempo terminology as a general instruction. As Gelfand claims, "The discrepancy between vague verbal tempo indications and the precision of metronome markings constitutes the basic problem."[167] By creating rigid executions subject to the "exact tempo," metronome markings could also be seen as a means to establish a performance practice contrary to that of *tempo rubato* or tempo modification.[168]

By 1846, Verdi had adopted the use of metronome markings in his works, becoming one of the first Italian composers to provide explicit metronome markings in addition to the standard Italian terminology.[169] Italian opera composers did not hesitate to express their opinions regarding singers' and conductors' approach to the tempo of their music.[170] Verdi was well known for revising and often altering his tempo markings during the various stages of the production of his operas.[171] As seen in his prolific correspondence, Verdi often shows his

[164] Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor*, 97.
[165] Marvin, "Verdi and the Metronome," 4.
[166] Noorduin, "Czerny's 'impossible' metronome marks," 25-26.
[167] Yakov Gelfand, "On Tempo Indications: Based on Beethoven's Music," *College Music Symposium* 25 (1985): 92.
[168] Gelfand, "On Tempo Indications: Based on Beethoven's Music," 94.
[169] Marvin, "Verdi and the Metronome," 6.
[170] Marvin, "Verdi and the Metronome," 4.
[171] Roberta Montemorra Marvin, "Verdi's Tempo Assignments in 'I Masnadieri'," *Revista de Musicología* 16, no. 6 (1993): 67.

concern for the performance standard of his music.[172] In a letter of 10 August 1871, Verdi wrote: “Take care that all the tempos be just as indicated by the metronome.”[173] This provides important insights into the composer’s opinion of his own metronome marks.

Regarding Puccini’s tempo designations, he earned a reputation based on his constant changes and revisions.[174] This prompted Ricci to write down Puccini’s comments, fearing these words of wisdom could be forgotten or lost. It also indicates the challenges composers faced in having their musical thoughts interpreted by performers and, more importantly, conductors. Even when Ricci claimed that Puccini’s tempo markings were carefully considered, evidence exists of Puccini changing his mind about his metronome markings.[175]

3.2 *Tempo rubato* and the concept of tempo modification in opera conducting

The term *rubare il tempo*[176] has been associated with Italian opera since the seventeenth century as a way of conveying meaning in the performance of Italian operas.[177] The ability to alter the execution of the tempo of a piece to achieve expressivity in a performance is one of the underlying concepts of *tempo rubato*[178]. Traditionally, Italian opera upheld the practice of allowing a certain tempo flexibility to the vocal line while the orchestra accompaniment remained steady.[179] This practice demanded a great deal of understanding of the implications of the rubato technique.

> The underlying concept of tempo rubato held by musicians in the 18th century was that of a soloist displacing the written notes in relation to the beat by altering their rhythmic values –

[172] Jacques Gabriel Prod’homme, Giuseppe Verdi, and L. A. Sheppard, “Verdi's Letters to Léon Escudier,” Music & Letters 4, no. 1 (1923), accessed 11 July 2021
www.jstor.org/stable/726178.
[173] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*, 284.
[174] Zhong, “Problems of Tempo in Puccini's Arias,” 140-50.
[175] Zhong, “Problems of Tempo in Puccini's Arias,” 140-41.
[176] steal the time.
[177] Sandra P. Rosenblum, “The Uses of Rubato in Music, Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries,” *Performance Practice Review* 7, no. 1 (1994): 33.
[178] Reginald Gatty, “Tempo rubato,” *The Musical Times* 53, no. 829 (1912): 160.
[179] Yeston, Rubato and the Middleground,” 287.

> lengthening some and shortening others in an improvisatory manner – while the generally homophonic accompaniment maintained a steady beat in a constant tempo.[180]

The mastery of the *tempo rubato* and other tempo modification techniques are regarded among conductors as quintessential in the art of conducting. The practice of altering the tempo as an expressive device was well established by the nineteenth century.[181] However, composers trying to avoid the excessive use of tempo fluctuations opted for marking their scores in different ways.[182] This could have possibly triggered the popularity of the metronome in the early nineteenth century. On this Marvin points out, "Verdi's decision to notate metronomic equivalents (in Attila) as a viable solution to his ever-increasing requirements for precision in all aspects of the performance of his operas."[183]

Undoubtedly, the necessity for accuracy in interpretating the metronome markings constitute an important contribution to the development of the conductor's role and performance practice. Toscanini's approach to tempo was to respond against the established tradition in opera performance practice. His statement "*come scritto"* ("as written") shows his adherence to the written text and could explain why he advocated a rigid and steady approach to tempo.[184] Nevertheless, a wide range of approaches to tempo displaying oscillation and tempo flexibility can be observed in his 1946 recording of Puccini's *La Bohème.*[185]

3.3 The role of the opera conductor in defining tempo

As a unifying element in the music, tempo determines the pace of the piece. As Kramer explains: "Many scholars agree that time is both the essential component of musical meaning

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[180] Rosenblum, "The Uses of Rubato in Music, Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries," 33-34.
[181] Hudson, "Stolen time: the history of tempo rubato," 194.
[182] Hudson, "Stolen time: the history of tempo rubato," 197.
[183] Marvin, "Verdi's Tempo Assignments" in *I Masnadieri*, 5-6.
[184] Schuller, *The compleat conductor*, 71.
[185] Puccini, G. (1946). Bohème (La) (Albanese, Peerce, Valentino, McKnight). [Recorded by NBC Symphony Orchestra and NBC Chorus, Conducted by A, Toscanini]. On Bohème (La) (Albanese, Peerce, Valentino, McKnight). [Streaming Audio]. Retrieved from https://usyd-naxosmusiclibrary-com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/catalogue/item.asp?cid=886446346014, accessed (14 April 2017).

and the vehicle by which music makes its deepest contact with the human spirit. Yet most theorists do not treat time as central to their understanding of music."[186] However, tempo also indicates the intention and expression of the musical phrases as well as connecting the different sections within a musical work.[187] For Brown, "Historical evidence and contemporary experience demonstrate that tempo is among the most variable and contentious issues in musical performance. The majority of musicians regard it as their inalienable right to select their own tempo."[188] Epstein presents the tempo of a piece:

> As a consequence of the sum of all factors within a piece – the overall sense of a work's themes, rhythms, articulations, "breathing" motion, harmonic progressions, tonal movement and contrapuntal activity. Yet tempo is a reduction of this complex Gestalt, or whole, into the element of speed. It is the speed that allows the overall, integrated bundle of musical elements to flow with a rightful sense.[189]

Tempo is connected to duration; tempo can be constant, or it can fluctuate (known as *tempo rubato* or "stolen time").[190] Tempo can also be modified, affecting the perception of the rhythm and meter of the music.[191] Rather than a sequence of beats in a determined given time,[192] the tempo of a piece conveys the meaning of musical phrases. As part of the conductor's performance practice, the approach to tempo has been regarded as a decisive aspect of the conductor's role as interpreter.[193] In attempting to realise the composer's intentions, the composer's score is often taken as the ultimate source of authority. In this regard, conductors such as Toscanini claimed to be faithful to the composer by adhering to the text and to the performance tradition which was familiar to them. However, their approach to the

[186] Jonathan D Kramer, "Studies of Time and Music: A Bibliography," *Music Theory Spectrum* (1985): 72.
[187] Justin London, "Tempo (I) ," *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001, accessed 11 July 11, 2021, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027649.
[188] Brown, Classical and Romantic Performing *Practice*, 1.
[189] David Epstein, *Shaping time: music, the brain, and performance* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1995), 99.
[190] Richard Hudson, "Stolen time: the history of tempo rubato," 195.
[191] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 1-2.
[192] Ruth V. Brittin, "Discrimination of aural and visual tempo modulation," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* (1993): 23.
[193] José Antonio Bowen, "Tempo, duration, and flexibility: Techniques in the analysis of performance," *Journal of Musicological Research* 16, no. 2 (1996): 112.

interpretation of tempo designations reveals discrepancies with reference to the music score. Regarding the conductor's approach to the written text, Brown claims that there have been different tendencies:

> Conductors from Mendelssohn to Toscanini and Norrington have argued that fast and steady tempos "let the music speak for itself" without "interference" from the performer, while Wagner, Furtwängler, and Walter all argued that the conductor "breathed life" into a musical work principally through the practice of slightly modulating the tempo.[194]

Composers as creators were well aware of this specific musical element and increasing attention has been paid to it in performance. This is evident in the composer's approach to tempo markings and specific indications concerning the interpretation of the tempo of their music.

[194] Bowen, "Tempo, duration, and flexibility," 112.

Chapter 4. Analysis and Commentaries on Historical Sound Recordings

This chapter discusses three of the major operas in the *verismo* style: *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890) by Mascagni, *I Pagliacci* (1892) by Leoncavallo, and *La Bohème* (1896) by Puccini (Table 4-1). Through analysis of recorded excerpts from these operas, this chapter will aim to collect and examine data relating to performance practices of conductors of Italian opera. This focus on historical sound recordings from the early to mid-twentieth century features composers who interpreted their own works. Also included are recordings of Toscanini, who conducted the world première at which the composer was present.[195] (Table 1-1, page 16).

Table 4-1 List of musical excerpts for analysis

Composer	Work	Excerpts
Pietro Mascagni (1863–1945)	*Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890)	Preludio e siciliana, 'O Lola ch`hai di latti la camisa' (Turiddu).
		Romanza e Scena, 'Voi lo sapete, o mamma' (Santuzza e Lucia).
Ruggiero Leoncavallo (1857–1919)	*I Pagliacci* (1892)	Prologo: 'Si puo? Si puo?' (Tonio)
		Intermezzo
Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)	*La Bohème* (1896)	Act one, Scene 6: 'Che gelida manina!' (Rodolfo)
		Act one, Scene 7: 'Si. Mi chiamano Mimi' (Mimi)

[195] Neher, "The Complete Toscanini," 650.

4.1 Analysis and commentaries on *Cavalleria Rusticana:* Approach to tempo markings in Mascagni's interpretation as represented in the sound recordings of April 14 to 20, 1940

In this section, I will examine extracts from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Table 4-1, page 54) to reveal the performance practices in Mascagni's interpretation of his own music. Its première at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome was conducted by Leopoldo Mugnone (1857–1941), Puccini would later collaborate with him in 1911.[196] The choice of libretto contributed to Mascagni being awarded first prize in the Sonzogno one-act opera competition,[197] an event launched in 1883 by the publisher and impresario, Edoardo Sonzogno (1836–1920). In the second edition of the Sonzogno's competition, Mascagni presented his *Cavalleria Rusticana*, obtaining first place.[198]

The opening of *Cavalleria Rusticana* is a *Preludio* that introduces a Sicilian folk song, which depicts an atmosphere of tranquillity and serenity, typical of a rural Italian village. However, the rapid changes of harmonies, and the melodic treatment and tempo indications, suggest there is more to the story. This innovative feature was identified by the publisher Sonzogno the first time he heard the piece played by Mascagni on the piano.[199]

***Preludio e Siciliana*. "O Lola ch' hai di latti la cammisa" (Turiddu)**

For the opening of the *Preludio*, the metronome marking indicated by Mascagni in the full score is *andante sostenuto* M.M ♩ = 50 (CMM)[200] (Example 4-1, page 57). No other metronome indication is given until the *Siciliana* in bar 43 (Table 4-2).[201] Instead, Mascagni

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[196] Schwartz and Senici, *Giacomo Puccini and His World*, 253-54.
[197] Thomas Grey, "Opera and Music Drama" in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music,* edited by Jim Samson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 412.
[198] Bianca Maria Antolini, "Sonzogno," *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001, accessed 29 August 2021,
http:////www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000026237.
[199] Mallach, *Pietro Mascagni and His Operas*, 54.
[200] (CMM) Composer's metronome marking in the score. Refer to abbreviations and signs on page xi of this thesis.
[201] For illustrating the harmonies in the analysis, the standard notation system A (Major), a (minor) a flat, A flat has been employed.

employs textual designations to indicate tempo modification such as *poco rall[entando]* in bar 7. In his recording, Mascagni makes several un-notated tempo modifications (Table 4-3, page 58).

Table 4-2 *Cavalleria Rusticana, Preludio e Siciliana,* bars 1 to 43.

Page No.	Bar No.	Key	M.M / tempo Marking	Comments
1	1 to 7	B Flat	M.M ♩= 50 (CMM)	Andante sostenuto poco rall
4	28 to 35	C	I Tempo	T.Fluct
5	36 to 39	Modulatory Sequence towards F	Lo stesso Tempo	T.Fluct / *Accel*
5	40 to 42	F	Cresc. sempre ed affrettando	T.Fluct. / Accel. / rit / T.fluct
5	43	f	Andante ♪=144	Siciliana

Example 4-1 ***Cavalleria Rusticana*****,** ***Preludio e Siciliana*****, bars 1 to 7.**

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1

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

Vorspiel und Siciliana (Turiddu) — Preludio e Siciliana (Turiddu)

Pietro Mascagni.

Andante sostenuto (♩=50)

poco rall.

Kleine Flöte
2 große Flöten
2 Oboen
2 Klarinetten in B
2 Fagotte
1. 2. 4 Hörner in F 3. 4.
2 Trompeten in B
3 Posaunen
Baßtuba
Pauken in F c
Große Trommel und Becken
2 Harfen
1. Violinen
2. Violinen
Bratschen
Violoncelle
Kontrabässe

p dolce

poco sf leggermente

pp dolce e religioso

poco sf

sfp pp

Andante sostenuto

poco rall.

One of the excerpts chosen for analysis is from the *Preludio e Siciliana*, bars 16 to 22 in the orchestra score (Example 4-2, page 59). The indication *molto largo e sostenuto moltissimo*

in bar 20 refers to a tempo modulation in which the ♪ becomes the basic beat in a 2/4 bar, replacing the ♩ as previous basic beat in bars 16 to 19 (Example 4-2, page 59). The tempo of Mascagni's own recording of ♪ = 46/48 (CTR)[202] is significantly slower than the metronome marking at the beginning of the *Preludio* (Table 4-3).

Table 4-3 *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Preludio e Siciliana*, Mascagni's recording, bars 1 to 43.

Page No.	Bar No.	Feature / Analysis	Mascagni's interpretation
1	1 to 7	T.Fluct.	CTR. ♪ = 46/48
4	28 to 32	Tempo Primo M.M 50	CTR. ♩= 60/20
5	33	T.Fluct.	accel.
	34	T.Fluct.	rit
	35	T.Fluct.	Molto rit
	36 to 39	Lo stesso tempo	accel.
	40, 41	cresc. sempre de affretando	rit
	42	cresc. sempre de affretando	Molto rit
	43	Siciliana	

202 (CTR) Composer's tempo in the recording. Refer to abbreviations and signs on page xi of this thesis.

Example 4-2 ***Cavalleria Rusticana, Preludio e Siciliana*****, bars 16 to 22.**

3

rit. - - assai - tenuto

molto largo e sostenendo moltissimo

kl. Fl.

gr. Fl.

pp dolcissimo

Ob.

Klar. B

Fag.

zu 2

1. 2.

Hör. F

3. 4.

pp dolcissimo

Trp. B

Pos.

Tub.

Pk.

gr. Trml. Bck.

2 Hrf.

rit. - - assai - tenuto

molto largo e sostenendo moltissimo

1. Viol.

nicht get.

2. Viol.

Br.

pizz.

Voll.

pp

Kbss.

molto largo e sostenendo moltissimo

rit. - - assai - tenuto

Shortly after, when the strings take over the phrase from the flutes and horn 1 in bars 24 to 27 (Example 4-3, page 61), Mascagni increases the tempo to ♪ = 56/58 (CTR). It is noteworthy that Mascagni's tempo modification occurs despite his written indication *largamente* in bar 24, although this indication appears only in the strings. Then, in bar 27 (before the *primo tempo* in bar 28), Mascagni's tempo fluctuates (un-notated T. Fluct.) and slows significantly to prepare for the transition to the new thematic material in the key of F (Example 4-4, page 62). Again, there is no written indication of such a tempo modification. Although *abbastanza marcato* is indicated in flutes, oboe, and clarinets, and *un po[co]marcato* in the harp and timpani, these indications refer to articulation rather than tempo modification.

Example 4-3 ***Cavalleria Rusticana, Preludio e Siciliana*****, bars 23 to 26.**

Example 4-4 ***Cavalleria Rusticana, Preludio e Siciliana*****, bars 27 to 32.**

At bar 28, the tempo designation is *primo tempo* (M.M ♩ = 50) (Example 4-4). At this point in Mascagni's recording, the tempo increases to approximately ♩ = 60/62 (CTR). The composer increases the tempo even further in bar 33 (Example 4-5, page 64), with the ascending semiquaver line on flutes, first oboe, clarinets and first violins, reaching the climax at bar 34. This is followed by an un-notated tempo fluctuation, as the tempo continues to slow down until bar 35. This tempo modification appears to respond to the tension created by repeating the phrase in bar 32, this time leading to a different section (bars 36 to 43). This is also the case for bars 36 to 43 (Example 4-5, page 64), where the harmonic sequence in the

time signature of 3/4, led by a recurring motif, creates a tension that Mascagni emphasises with an un-notated *accelerando*. This is despite his own indication *lo stesso tempo* (*the same tempo)*. Instead, Mascagni moves the tempo forward as the motif passes from the woodwind section to the string section in bars 36 to 39. This passage reaches its climax in bar 40, at which point the composer indicates *cresc [endo.] sempre ed affrettando* ("increasing always and getting faster"). In contrast, Mascagni's tempo appears significantly slower in bar 40 and he continues to slow down as the musical phrase approaches bar 43 andante ♪ = 144 (CMM). As a result of this tempo modification, the basic beat of the time signature 3/4 shifts from ♩ to ♪ as a subdivision, the new basic beat still in the time signature in 3/4 is the ♪, which he uses to connect with the 6/8 time signature for the *Siciliana* in bar 43 *andante* ♪ = 144. All this is despite not having any tempo indication in the score (Table 4-4, page 66).

Example 4-5 ***Cavalleria Rusticana*****,** ***Preludio e Siciliana*****, bars 33 to 39.**

Example 4-6 ***Cavalleria Rusticana*****,** ***Preludio e Siciliana*****, bars 40 to 46.**

Table 4-4 ***Cavalleria Rusticana*****,** ***Preludio e Siciliana*****, Mascagni's recording, bars 20 to 43.**

Bar No.	Comments		
20	molto largo a sostenendo moltissimo		
21	CMM. ♪= 6/48		
22	T. Fluct.	rit	Un-notated convention
23	T. Fluct.		
24	T. Fluct.	CMM. ♪ = 56/58.	largamente
25			
26			
27	T. Fluct.	rit.	
28	Primo Tempo	CMM. ♩ = 60 / 62	
29	T. Fluct.	Accel.	Un-notated convention
30	T. Fluct	meno.	
31	molto rit.	rit.	
32	Primo Tempo	CMM. ♩= 60 / 62	
33	T. Fluct	Accel.	Un-notated convention
34	T. Fluct	rit	
35	T. Fluct	meno mosso	
36	Lo stesso tempo		
37	piu mosso	accel.	Un-notated convention
38	molto accel,		Un-notated convention
39			
40	Cresc. Sempre ed affretando		
41	rit molto		Un-notated convention
42	rit molto	subdivided ♪ (basic beat)	
43	Andante	♪ = 144	Siciliana

4.2 *Romanza e Scena* "Voi lo sapete, o mamma" (Santuzza and Lucia)

For the *Romanza e Scena* (Example 4-7, page 68), Mascagni's tempo expression marking is *largo assai sostenuto* with M.M ♩ = 50 (Table 4-5, page 69). Nevertheless, Mascagni's recording again reveals a different approach with a significantly slower and fluctuating tempo which deviates from his score instructions. In the first bar of the *Romanza e Scena*, Mascagni's tempo in his recording is quaver ♪ = 62/64, although he slows the tempo in bar 2 creating a *caesura*. He then picks up the tempo in bar 3 and slows it down again in bar 4 (Table 4-6, page 69). In bar 5, perhaps to emphasise the effect of chromatism in the first and second violins and violas, Mascagni accelerates the tempo to a considerably faster one; however, there is no tempo modification indicated in the score. Furthermore, in bar 7, presumably in line with the resolution of the tension created by an un-notated accelerando in the A major arpeggio in bar 6, Mascagni slows the tempo leading to Santuzza's entry on the a chord. In Mascagni's representation, this harmonic progression seems to suggest a tempo modification that affects the psychological tensions such as frustration, intrigue, and jealousy, contained in the *Romanza.* This is followed by the transition to harmonic resolution in bars 9 and 10, showing the change of mood of the character of Santuzza.

Example 4-7 ***Cavalleria Rusticana, Romanza e Scena*** **"Voi lo sapete, o mamma"** ***largo assai sostenuto*****, bars 1 to 12.**

80

Romanze und Szene
(Santuzza und Lucia)

Romanza e Scena
(Santuzza e Lucia)

Largo assai sostenuto (♩ = 50)

Kleine Flöte
2 große Flöten
2 Oboen
2 Klarinetten in A
2 Fagotte
1. 2.
4 Hörner in E
3. 4.
2 Trompeten in A
1.2. Posaune
3. Posaune Baßtuba
Pauken in E H
2 Harfen

Largo assai sostenuto

Santuzza (traurig, mit natürlichem Gefühl)
(mestamente con semplicità)

Als Eu-er Sohn einst fort-zog,
Voi lo sa-pe-te, o mam-ma,

1. Violinen
2. Violinen
Bratschen
Violoncelle
Kontrabässe

Largo assai sostenuto

Table 4-5 ***Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Romanza e Scena* "Voi lo sapete, o mamma" *largo assai sostenuto*, bars 1 to 12.**

Page No.	Bar No.	Key	CMM / Tempo Marking	Comments	
80	1 to 12	e	*Largo assai Sostenuto MM ♩= 50*	CMM	
				CTR. ♪ = 60/62	T. Fluct
				Un-notated convention	T. Fluct / *Accel.*
				Un-notated convention	T. Fluct / rit
			mestamente con semplicita	Un-notated convention	T. Lg

Table 4-6 ***Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Romanza e Scena* "Voi lo sapete, o mamma" *largo assai sostenuto*, bars 1 to 12, Mascagni's recording.**

Page No.	Bar No.	Feature / Analysis	Mascagni's execution
80	1	M.M 50 (CMM)	CTR. ♪ = 60/62
	2	*Largo assai sostenuto*	T. Fluct
	3		CTR. ♪ = 60/62
	4	Un-notated convention	T.Fluct
	5		T. Fluct / *accel.*
	6		T. Fluct / *accel.*
	7		T.Fluct
	8		rit
	9		T. Fluct. Molto rit
	10	Un-notated convention	T. Fluct. Molto rit
	11-12	*mestamente con semplicita*	T. Lg

4.3 Analysis and commentaries on *I Pagliacci* (1892) by Leoncavallo: Approach to tempo markings in Leoncavallo's interpretation as represented in the sound recording of June 1907

This section will examine excerpts from Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* from his 1907 sound recording. Leoncavallo's interpretation of tempo markings in his vocal and instrumental music will be analysed.

The première of *I Pagliacci* (1892) took place at the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan in 1892 under the baton of Toscanini.[203] When Leoncavallo presented the story to the publisher Sonzogno, who had previously sponsored Mascagni's *Cavalleria*.[204] Sonzogno decided without hesitation to support the production of the two-act opera.

In *I Pagliacci*, Leoncavallo portrays emotions such as fear, jealousy, passion, love, and revenge.[205] This is evident in the aria sung by Nedda in Act I, Scene II, "Qual fiamma avea nel guardo"[206] marked *andante con moto* ♩ = 88 (Example 4-8, page 71). In this aria, Nedda expresses fear of being caught in a relationship with Silvio. Besides indicating *vivamente* in an ascending vocal line "Oh! S'ei mi sorprendesse, bruttale come egli è!"[207] (Bars 7 to 9), Leoncavallo also writes *seguendo la voce* ("following the voice").

These indications reveal that the composer is aware of the tensions in the drama created by the language (T. Lg.).[208] Furthermore, he supports this in the harmonic style of his writing. In this case, it is a C sharp diminished 7th chord that directs the vocal line towards G5 followed

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[203] Geary H. Larrick, "The Letters of Arturo Toscanini," *Music Educators Journal* 94, no. 1 (2007): 53.
[204] Antolini, "Sonzogno."
[205] Bernhard Kuhn, "Il teatro e la vita non son la stessa cosa? Self-References and Their Cultural Context in Leoncavallo's 'Pagliacci'," *Italica* 94, no. 1, (2017): 32.
[206] What fire there was in his eyes!
Burton D. Fisher, *Leoncavallo's I Pagliacci (Opera Journeys Libretto Series)*, Opera Journeys Publishing, 2006. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/usyd/detail.action?docID=276102.
Created from usyd on 2021-08-27 12:19:25.
[207] Oh! If that brutal should surprise me!
Burton D. Fisher, *Leoncavallo's I Pagliacci. (Opera Journeys Libretto Series)*, Opera Journeys Publishing, 2006. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/usyd/detail.action?docID=276102.
Created from usyd on 2021-08-27 12:19:25.
[208] (T. Lg.) Tempo of the language. Refer to abbreviations and signs on page x of this thesis.

by a descending interval of an octave in bar 8 (Example 4-8). Clearly, in this passage, the text and psychology of the character dictates the direction of the music in terms of tempo modification.

Example 4-*8 I Pagliacci*, Act I, Scene II, "Qual fiamma avea nel guardo" Nedda, rehearsal figure 36, bars 1 to 12.

***I Pagliacci* (1892) by Leoncavallo: *Prologo* 'Si Puo?' (Tonio)**

The *Prologo* was introduced by Leoncavallo after his encounter with the great baritone, much admired by Verdi, Victor Maurel (1844−1923) who first portrayed Tonio.[209] The language declamation influences the melodic design and the phrasing, a feature Leoncavallo borrowed from the *commedia dell'arte* tradition.[210] This approach to the text allows the music to be directed according to the pace of the spoken language.

The *Prologo* presents a fine and elaborate weaving of textures and musical events that are developed further in the opera. The opening depicts the noisy and hectic mob welcoming the theatre troupe by announcing the show which will begin in the afternoon as "un gran spettacolo a ventitrè ore" ("a wonderful show this evening!").[211] Leoncavallo chose the *scherzo*[212] form for the *Prologo* (ABCB'A').[213] The *scherzo* is interrupted to present Canio's leitmotif in the aria "Ridi, Pagliaccio!" At the *largo assai* ♩ = 44 (Example 4-9, Fig. 4, page 73)[214] the horns present the melodic theme (leitmotif) a presentiment of Canio's character. This thematic idea is developed at the end of the first act and the strings present the love duet theme of Nedda and Silvio (Example 4-9, Fig. 5, page 73).

[209] Matteo Sansone, "The 'Verismo' of Ruggero Leoncavallo: A Source Study of 'Pagliacci'," *Music & Letters* 70, no. 3 (1989): 350.
[210] Kuhn, "Il teatro e la vita non son la stessa cosa?" 34.
[211] Michele Girardi, "Pagliacci," Grove Music Online. 2002, accessed 29 Aug. 2021, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.library.sydney.edu.au/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000903808.
[212] Girardi, "Pagliacci."
[213] Girardi, "Pagliacci."
[214] Dover (1993) republications of the edition published by E. Sonzogno, Milan, 1892. Reprint of the E. Sonzogno, Milan, 1892 edition. Milan: Sonzogno, n.d. [1892]. Plate E. 644 S. Reprinted New York: Broude Brothers, n.d. (1951). Plate B.B. 52, 6.

Example 4-9 *I Pagliacci*, *Prologo*, rehearsal figure 4, bars 1 to 7; rehearsal figure 5, bars 1 to 3.

As a play within a play, Tonio presents himself, then addresses the audience in the opera as if he were talking to the crowd in the play.[215] He clarifies that the author's intention is to bring out the human feelings of the characters, claiming "Poiché siam uomini di carne e d'ossa."[216] In the treatment and development of the plot of *I Pagliacci*, Leoncavallo combines jealousy, love, passion, and murder to create a tight dramatic tension.[217] The *Prologo* is

[215] Kuhn, "Il teatro e la vita non son la stessa cosa?" 34.
[216] Because we are men of flesh and bone.
Burton D. Fisher, *Leoncavallo's I Pagliacci*. *(Opera Journeys Libretto Series)*, Opera Journeys Publishing, 2006. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/usyd/detail.action?docID=276102.
Created from usyd on 2021-08-27 12:19:25.
[217] Girardi, "Pagliacci."

personified by Tonio who, behind the curtain, says “Si puo? Si puo?”[218] The hunchback clown is preparing both the crowd in the play and the audience in the performance for what is about to occur.[219]

For the opening of the opera, the metronome indication set by Leoncavallo in the orchestral score is *vivace* (*In uno*) ♩. = 88 (Example 4-10, page 75). In contrast, a different approach can be observed in Leoncavallo’s 1907 recording (Table 4-7, page 76) where his tempo appears somewhat faster than indicated in the score, Leoncavallo’s recorded tempo appears as ♩. = 92/94 (CTR).

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218 Girardi, “Pagliacci.”

219 John Wright, “La commedia è finita,” *An Examination of Leoncavallo's Pagliacci*, *Italica* 55, no. 2, (1978): 168.

Example 4-10 *I Pagliacci*, *Prologo*, bars 1 to 8.

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PROLOGO

R. LEONCAVALLO

Vivace (In uno)

OTTAVINO
FLAUTI
OBOI
CLARINETTI in SI♭
FAGOTTI
CLARONE in SI♭
CORNI in MI
TROMBE in SI♭
TROMBONI
BASSO TUBA
TIMPANI SOL DO
G.CASSA e PIATTI
ARPE I.ª e II.ª
TONIO
VIOLINI I.i
VIOLINI II.i
VIOLE
VIOLONCELLI
CONTRABASSI

Despite his fast tempo, in bar 3 Leoncavallo performs an un-notated *accelerando* during the semiquavers in the piccolo, flutes, oboes, and clarinets. Later in bar 5, attempting to re-establish his initial tempo, the composer slows down (un-notated T. Fluct.) to his preliminary tempo in bars 1 and 2 (Table 4-7).

Table 4-7 *I Pagliacci, Prologo*, bars 1 to 17, Leoncavallo's interpretation.

Rehearsal Figure	Bar No.	Key	Feature / Analysis	Leoncavallo's Interpretation
	1 to 8	C	M.M ♩. = 88 (CMM)	T. Fluct / Accel / rit
1	1 to 10	Sequence modulation towards E flat	♩. = 92/94 (CTR)	T. Fluct / Accel
	9	sudden side-step into B	Tempo Primo.	T.Fluct.

The rhythmic cell develops into a repetitive harmonic sequence; however, with no further tempo modification indicated in the score, Leoncavallo uses this figure to increase the tempo (Example 4-11, page 77). This results in an incremental increase in the speed (T. Fluct. *accel.*) of the passage from bars 1 to 8, Fig. 1 (Example 4-11). The harmonic sequence in this excerpt leads to the rhythmic cell in bar 9 that originated the phrase, this time in B (Table 4-8, page 78).

Example 4-11 *I Pagliacci*, *Prologo*, rehearsal figure 1, bars 1 to 10.

Table 4-8 ***I Pagliacci*****,** ***Prologo*****, rehearsal figure 1, bars 1 to 9, Leoncavallo's interpretation**.

Rehearsal Figure	Bar No.	Key	Feature / Analysis	Leoncavallo's approach
1	1	A Flat	*M.M ♩. = 88*	T. Fluct. *accel.* ♩. = 92/94 (CTR)
	2	D Flat	*Vivace (In one)*	*accel.*
	3	E Flat		*accel.*
	4	A Flat		*accel.*
	5	D Major		*accel.*
	6	E Flat		*accel.*
	7	B 7th		*accel.*
	8	E Flat		*accel.*
	9	B		Primo Tempo

In preparation for Tonio's first appearance on stage, Leoncavallo indicates *pesante* ("heavy") in bars 10 and 12 (Example 4-12, page 79). [220] This designation implies a tempo fluctuation that could be interpreted as "dragging" or slowing the tempo.[221] Instead, evident in the recording is a constant tempo until the *incalzando* ("getting faster") in bar 13 (Table 4-9, page 80).

[220] Dover (1993) republications of the edition published by E. Sonzogno, Milan, 1892. Plate E. 644 S. Reprinted New York: Broude Brothers, n.d. (1951). Plate B.B. 52, 11.
[221] Michael Kennedy and Joyce Bourne Kennedy, "Pesante," *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2007, accessed 19 July 2021, https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199203833.001.0001/acref-9780199203833-e-6983.

Example 4-12 *I Pagliacci*, *Prologo*, rehearsal figure 9, bars 8 to 20.

Table 4-9 *I Pagliacci*, *Prologo*, rehearsal figure 9, bars 10 to 20.

Rehearsal Figure	Bar No.	Key	Feature / Analysis	Leoncavallo's approach
9	10	D Flat	*pesante*	M.M ♩. = 100/102 (CTR) T. Fluct / Accel.
9	12		*pesante*	M.M ♩. = 100/102 (CTR) T. Fluct / Accel.
9	13 - 20		*incalzando*	T. Fluct

In Example 4-13 (page 81), with the reduction in the orchestration, Leoncavallo performs an un-notated tempo modification (T. Fluct.) with the rhythmic cell, this time in the first flute, first oboe and first clarinet. Once more, there is no tempo indication in Leoncavallo's score referring to this tempo modification. Nevertheless, his rendition includes an increase in tempo to M.M ♩. = 100/104 (CTR) at bar 7.

In Leoncavallo's interpretation there is a stretching of the tempo, as if Tonio has been given plenty of time to allocate his text "Si puo?" (T. Lg.) After Tonio addresses the audience in bar 7 (Example 4-13), the strings rejoin in bar 9 with an ascending sequence of semiquavers; however, in Leoncavallo's version his tempo is rather faster. This feature is often seen in accompanied recitative where the text influences the tempo of the music. This results in a modification of the tempo in bars 1 to 9 of rehearsal figure 10 (Table 4-10, page 82) which is not indicated in the score.

Example 4-13 ***I Pagliacci*****,** ***Prologo*****, rehearsal figure 10, bars 1 to 9.**

12

10

1º Solo

Fl.

Ob.

Clar.

TONIO

(passando la testa a traverso la tela)

Si può?

V.i I.i

V.i II.i

Viole

Celli

C. B.

Table 4-10 ***I Pagliacci*****,** ***Prologo*****, rehearsal figure 10, bars 1 to 16.**

Rehearsal Figure	Bar No.	Key	Text	Feature / Analysis	Leoncavallo's approach
10	1 to 7	G			T. Fluct / rit.
10	7 to 9	G	'Si Puo?'	T. Recit.	lengthening of bars to allocate the text
10	9 to 16		'se da sol mi presento. Io sono il Prologo'	T. Fluct. / T. Lg.	Text dictates the pace of the music

In bar 13 ("Signore! Signori!") Leoncavallo gave the tempo designation *largamente* over the time signature change (Example 4-14, page 84), Tonio lengthens the quavers in bars 12 and 13, but then shortens them to a semiquaver in bar 14. This results in a sense of dislocation between Tonio and the orchestral accompaniment (Table 4-11, page 85). As heard in his recording, Leoncavallo places the orchestra chords slightly after Tonio's vocal lines at the beginning of bars 13 and 15. As accompanied recitative, this feature supports the cohesion of the vocal line, while the orchestra provides the harmonic foundation that leads to the climactic section in bars 15 and 16 (Example 4-14) when Tonio sings "signore" and "scusatemi" respectively. Despite the tempo marking *largamente*, the value of the quaver is compromised by shortening it to a semiquaver (T. Lg.).

In bar 15, Tonio introduces himself to the audience, "Se da sol mi present." For this passage, Leoncavallo incorporates a series of tempo fluctuations, resulting in the stretching of the triplets in the last two beats of the bar (T. Fluct.). Then again in bars 16 and 17, "Io sono il Prologo," (Table 4-11, page 85), Leoncavallo allows Tonio to recite the phrase according to the tension of the text (T. Lg.). Despite indications such as *con autorita* ("with authority") for the voice, and *marcato* for the horns and clarinets only, when Tonio sings the last three quavers

in bar 16, “Io sono il,” no other indication is given to modify the tempo. Nevertheless, Leoncavallo’s recording extends the length (T. Fluct.) of these three quavers.

Example 4-14 *I Pagliacci*, *Prologo*, rehearsal figure 10, bars 10 to 17.

Table 4-11 *I Pagliacci*, *Prologo*, rehearsal figure 10, bars 1 to 17.

Rehearsal Figure	Bar No.	Feature / Analysis	Comments
10	1	M.M ♩. = 88	T. Fluct. *accel.* ♩. = 92/94 (CTR)
	2	*Vivace (In one)*	*accel.*
	3		*accel.*
	4		*accel.*
	5		*rit.*
	6		*rit.*
	7	quaver anacrusis	Displacement
	8	quaver anacrusis	T. Recit.
	9		
	10	quaver anacrusis	T. Lg
	11	quaver anacrusis	
	12	*Fermata*	no rendering the fermata
	13	*Largamente*	Lengthening the quavers
	14	quaver anacrusis	Displacement
	15	displacement of the quaver anacrusis	lengthening the quavers
	16	*con autorita*	T. Fluct. *molto rit.*
	17	*recitanto*	lengthening the bar

I Pagliacci* (1892) by Leoncavallo*: Intermezzo

In Leoncavallo's interpretation of his *Intermezzo*, his approach to tempo is strongly influenced by three major musical elements: the harmonic sequences, orchestration, and the direction of the melodic line. The notated expression and tempo indication are often treated differently by Leoncavallo, with indication ignored or substituted in his interpretation.

Leoncavallo indicates *sostenuto assai* ♩ = 50 (CMM) for the first 20 bars of the *Intermezzo* (Example 4-15, page 87). There are no other major indications of tempo. However, in performance, Leoncavallo was not constrained to this notated tempo indication. His interpretation reveals an array of different tempos. In bar 1, Leoncavallo's recorded tempo is slower than the notated indication (Table 4-12, page 94). In bar 2, he doubles the tempo, then in the following bar, the tempo returns to that of bar 1. Such modifications underpin Leoncavallo's awareness of the drama created by the harmonic sequences of augmented fourth and seventh chords, which are enhanced by these tempo modifications.

Example 4-15 *I Pagliacci, Intermezzo*, bars 1 to 5.

201

INTERMEZZO

Sostenuto assai. (♩ = 50)

OTTAVINO.
FLAUTI.
OBOE.
CORNO INGLESE.
CLARINETTI in LA.
FAGOTTI.
CLARONE.
CORNI in MI.
TROMBE in MI.
TROMBONI.
BASSO - TUBA.
TIMPANI SI MI.
ARPA I.
ARPA II.
VIOLINI I.
VIOLINI II.
VIOLE.
VIOLONCELLI.
CONTABASSI.

drammaticamente

a 2

lamentoso

Sostenuto assai. (♩ = 50)

In the *Intermezzo*, Leoncavallo quotes fragments of leitmotif from the *Prologo*. In bars 8 to 12, he appears to quote Tonio's words as a reminder for the audience to prepare for the events that are about to unfold, "Un nido di memorie in fondo a l'anima."[222] Referencing the musical phrase which occurred in the *Prologo,* Leoncavallo varies notation in the *Intermezzo* for this melodic line (Example 4-16, page 89). However, in Leoncavallo's recording, the first violins marked *divisi* do not play as written; instead, they play this passage as it appears written in the *Prologo* (Example 4-17, page 90). In the *Prologo*, Leoncavallo indicates *andante triste* ♩. = 40, with 9/8 as time signature; however, in the *Intermezzo* he changes to "C" (common time). Despite the metronome marking in the score *sostenuto assai* ♩ = 50 (CMM) for the *Intermezzo*, Leoncavallo's treatment of this passage, in particular his tempo, is significantly slower (Table 4-12, page 94).

[222] *A nest of memories at the bottom of the soul*,
Burton D. Fisher, *Leoncavallo's I Pagliacci. (Opera Journeys Libretto Series)*, Opera Journeys Publishing, 2006. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/usyd/detail.action?docID=276102.
Created from usyd on 2021-08-27 12:19:25.

Example 4-16 *I Pagliacci, Intermezzo*, bars 6 to 12.

Example 4-17 *I Pagliacci, Prologo*, rehearsal figure 14, bars 4 to 8.

At bar 14, Leoncavallo pushes the tempo forward, seemingly to enhance the *cres[endo.] sempre* in bars 14 and 15. However, this appears to anticipate the *affrett[ando.] nervoso con forza* marked in bars 17 and 18 (Example 4-18, page 92). The increased tempo helps build the dramatic tension caused by a descending melodic line based on a sequence of diminished intervals. Another remarkable feature in the recording is heard in bar 19, where Leoncavallo releases the previous tension by performing an abrupt *ritardando,* (Example 4-18). However, this is not marked in the score.

Example 4-18 *I Pagliacci, Intermezzo*, bars 13 to 20.

This excerpt (Example 4-18) presents a clear example of the un-notated performance convention often employed by nineteenth-century opera conductors. Despite the scarcity of tempo designations in the above examples, both Mascagni and Leoncavallo manage to deliver succinct tragic tensions supported by their approach to harmony progressions and melodic design.

Along with the approach to the spoken language, the harmonic progressions and melodic designs, these excerpts provide significant evidence of un-notated performance conventions that were standard practices of the Italian opera conductor in the context of the *verismo* style. By comparing Mascagni's and Leoncavallo's tempo indications with the tempo modifications in their own audio recordings, we can draw conclusions on how *verismo* opera composers perceive and interpret their music beyond the confines of their notation.

Table 4-12 *I Pagliacci, Intermezzo* bars 1 to 21, Leoncavallo's interpretation.

Bar No.	Key	M.M	Expression Marking	Leoncavallo's tempo	Feature / Analysis
1	e	♩= 50 (CMM)	*Sostenuto assai*	♩= 46 (CTR)	T. Fluct.
2	Aug 4th. C 7		*lamentoso*	♩= 56 (CTR)	T. Fluct.
3	B flat				T. Fluct.
4	Aug 4th. C 7				T. Fluct.
5	C7. Eb7				
6	B7				
7	B7				
8	e				
9	e		*con tristezza*		
10					
11					
12					
13	E			accel.	
14	A7		*cres. sempre*	accel.	T. Fluct.
15	D		*cres. sempre*	accel.	
16				accel.	
17			*affrett. nervoso con forza*	accel.	T. Fluct.
18			*affrett. nervoso con forza*	accel.	
19				rit.	T. Fluct.
21	E	♩= 58	Cantabile		

4.4 Analysis and commentaries on *La Bohème* (1896) by Puccini: Approach to tempo markings in Toscanini's interpretation as represented in the sound recording of February 3 and 10, 1946

This section will examine extracts from Toscanini's 1946 sound recording of Puccini's *La Bohème* (Table 4-1, page 54). Although there exist other important historical sound recordings (Table 1-1, page 16),[223] Toscanini's interpretation serves as testimony of the documented collaboration between the opera composer and his interpreter.

Puccini often expressed his concerns about the "correct" interpretation of his music. For example, in 1884, he stated, "The orchestra is really good, ditto the chorus, but the singers a bit weak, especially the tenor." Later, in 1923, he stated, "Last night Butterfly with Kurz, Act 3 a real disaster, the other acts less so, bad orchestra and dodgy tempos, an awful tenor, it was a painful evening."[224] From these statements we could infer that Puccini was well aware of the implications of having some else interpreting his operas and did not hesitate in expressing it.

***La Bohème* (1896) by Puccini: Act I, Scene VI, "Che gelida manina!" (Rodolfo)**

The duet of Mimi and Rodolfo follows a transition where the music portrays a playful and charming scene. The music that anticipates Rodolfo's aria is set by a sequence of descending thirds on the key of D flat over a dominant pedal on A flat played by the bassoon (Example 4-19, page 97). The A flat pedal is passed on to clarinet I, horn I and harp, which prepares the harmonic modulation to D flat, the key of Rodolfo's aria over the tempo designations *dim[inuendo.] e rall[entando] molto stent[ando]*. Puccini marks Rodolfo's aria, "Che gelida manina!" with tempo marking ♩ = 58 (CMM), and the expressive designation *and[anti]no affettuoso* (Example 4-19, page 97). According to Ricci's notes, Puccini's desire

[223] Roger Flury, *Giacomo Puccini: A Discography* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012).
[224] Schwartz and Senici, "Puccini on His Interpreters," 229.

was to execute this tempo to deliver the flow that the duet requires. Ricci claims, "The *andantino affettuoso* is the exact rhythm in which the impressive duet must develop."[225]

Despite Puccini's tempo markings and Ricci's notes on Puccini's comments, the tempo fluctuations displayed in Toscanini's 1946 recording suggests a slightly different approach to tempo. Toscanini's tempo is approximately ♪= 46/48 (TTR) with fluctuations of tempo seemingly made to allow the singer plenty of room for reciting the text of the first phrase in bars 3 to 7 (Example 4-19). Subsequently, when Rodolfo sings his first A flat in bar 3, he extends the anacrusis ♪ of "Che gelida manina!" In so doing, the A flat is lengthened by nearly double the noted value to a ♩ approximately (Table 4-13, page 98).

[225] Dunstan, "Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci," 70.

Example 4-19 *La Bohème*, Act I "Che gelida manina!" rehearsal figure 30, bars 1 to 7.

Table 4-13 *La Bohème*, Act I "Che gelida manina!" rehearsal figure 30, bars 1 to 7.

Rehearsal Figure	Bar No.	Key	Text	Feature / Analysis	Toscanini's tempo approach
30	1 to 7	D Flat	'Che gelida manina!'	and.no (andantino) affettuoso	T. Fluct. / ♪= 46/48 (TTR)
				M.M ♩= 58 (CMM)	Disl. lengthening the anacrusis ♪
			'Se la lasci riscaldar'		T. Fluct. / accel.

When Rodolfo sings "Se la lasci riscaldar" ("If you let it warm up") (Example 4-19, page 97), Toscanini pushes the tempo forward. This tempo fluctuation leads to the second phrase "Al buio non si trova" ("In the dark it is not found") in bars 10 to 11 (Example 4-20, page 99), where once again the tempo slows (Table 4-14, page 100). This seems to be in response to the expressive needs of the Italian language at this moment (T. Lg.), to create a more dramatic tension before passing the phrase to the harp. Despite not having any indication of tempo modification written by Puccini in this excerpt, Toscanini's interpretation still favours the flow of the drama, bestowing a coherent tempo execution.

Example 4-20 *La Bohème*, Act I "Che gelida manina!" rehearsal figure 30, bars 8 to 21.

Table 4-14 *La Bohème*, Act I "Che gelida manina!" rehearsal figure 30, bars 9 to 25.

Rehearsal Figure	Bar No.	Text	Feature / Analysis	Toscanini's tempo approach
30	8	'Cercar che giova? Al buio non si trova.'	T. Fluct. / *accel.*	
	12 to 16		T. Fluct. / *accel.*	
	16 to 22	'Ma per fortuna'	T. Fluct. / rit.	
	23	'e qui la luna l'abbiamo vicina.'	T. Fluct. / *molt rit*	lengthening Bar 23 / T.Lg.
	24, 25	'aspetti signorina'	T. Fluct. / rit.	*a tempo / T. Fluct. / ♪= 46/48 (TTR)*

In the next phrase in bars 16 to 19, rehearsal figure 30, "Ma per fortuna è una notte di luna,"[226] there is no tempo indication in the score. Nevertheless, in Toscanini's interpretation, the tempo fluctuates, seemingly as a response to the direction of the drama. For example, in bar 22 with the indication *affrettando*, Toscanini's tempo slows down instead of getting more excited. Furthermore, in bar 23, despite the indication *poco rit[enuto.]* until *a tempo* in bar 24 (Example 4-21), Toscanini stretches the bar to the point that one extra crotchet beat is added before the last quaver. This allows Rodolfo to finish the phrase, and even take time to breathe before continuing with the next phrase "aspetti signorina" in bar 24. As heard in Toscanini's recording, his tempo approach contradicts Puccini's tempo indications (Table 4-14).

[226] "But fortunately it's a moonlit night."
Burton D. Fisher, "Puccini's La Bohème," Opera Journeys Libretto Series, Opera Journeys Publishing, 2001. ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/usyd/detail.action?docID=3026983.
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Example 4-21 *La Bohème*, Act I "Che gelida manina!" rehearsal figure 30, bars 22 to 27.

Another interesting aspect of Toscanini's recording is how the aria's structure corresponds to the development of the dramaturgy. From bars 29 to 36, a harmonic progression sets the course for Rodolfo to introduce himself, "Chi son?" (Example 4-22, page 103). Then, when Rodolfo reiterates to Mimi who he is in bar 1 (rehearsal figure 31), a C major augmented fifth chord is used to represent Rodolfo's uncertainty (Table 4-15, page 104). Puccini's tempo marking is *andante sostenuto* with no metronome marking given (Example 4-22, page 103). According to Ricci, when Puccini indicates *andante* in his music, he means a "continuous flow" rather than "a slow pace."[227] Nevertheless, in Toscanini's sound recording, the tempo seems to accelerate as a response to the inflection of the text (T. Lg).

[227] Harry Nicholas Dunstan, Jr., "Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci," (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1989), 1.

Example 4-22 ***La Bohème*****, Act I. "Che gelida manina!" rehearsal figure 30, bars 35 to 36; rehearsal figure 31, bars 1 to 4.**

31

And.te sostenuto

91

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in Si♭

Cl. b. in Si♭

Fag.

in Fa Corni in Fa

rall.

Arpa

(Mimì tace: Rodolfo lascia la mano di Mimì, la quale indietreggiando, trova una sedia sulla quale si lascia

rall:............

dolcissimo

ROD.

Vuo - - le? Chi son!?.... Chi son? Sono un po - e - ta. Che co-sa

rall:............

via sordina

Viol.

arco

via sordina

arco

via sordina

V.le

arco

rall:............

Vc.

Cb.

And.te sostenuto

31

32

Table 4-15 *La Bohème*, Act I "Che gelida manina!" rehearsal figure 30, bars 29 to 36; rehearsal figure 31, bars 1 to 8.

Rehearsal Figure	Bar No.	Text	Feature / Analysis	Toscanini's tempo approach
30	29 to 36	'Chi son?'	*poco affrett[ando]* a tempo	T. Fluct. / *accel.* / *rit*
31	1 to 3	'Chi son? Sono un poeta'	*andante sostenuto*	Disl.
	4		*dolcissimo*	♩ = 48 (TTR)
	5 to 8	'E come vivo'	*rall*	T. Fluct

***La Bohème* (1896) by Puccini: Act I, Scene VII, "Si. Mi chiamano Mimi" (Mimi)**

After Rodolfo introduces himself, in a rather poetic display, he kindly asks Mimi to say some words about herself "Chi siete? Vi piaccia dir?"[228] Puccini's indications *dim[inuendo] e allargando sempre* as well as *con semplicità* prepare the transition to Mimi's aria (Example 4-23, page 106). Rodolfo's aria finishes in the key of A flat, then in bar 1 rehearsal figure 35, an E natural played by the first violins anticipates Mimi's aria in the key of D. The tempo designation is *andante lento* with ♩ = 40 (CMM) and the dynamic is *pianissimo* (*pp*) (Example 4-24, page 107).

The fact that Puccini sets the tempo designation (*andante lento* with ♩ = 40) for Mimi's aria right after her entrance "Si. Mi chiamano Mimi" indicates that he desires to connect both Rodolfo's and Mimi's arias in a coherent way by using the fading effect of *dim[inuendo]e allargando sempre* (Example 4-23, page 106). All of this suggests that Puccini provided

[228] "Who are you? Will you tell me?"

Burton D. Fisher, "Puccini's La Bohème," Opera Classics Library Series, Opera Journeys Publishing, 2001.
ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/usyd/detail.action?docID=225698.
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multiple tempo indications to instruct how he wanted his music to be interpreted. In his comments, Ricci also advises against any attempt to execute this passage at a slower tempo than the one indicated by Puccini (Example 4-24, page 107). “The M.M quarter ≂ 40/eight ≂ 80 is very exact. Therefore, those who play these first bars with excessive *lentezza* are wrong.”[229] Toscanini’s rendering does, however, slightly deviate from Puccini’s writing. His recording shows that he prioritised an array of tempo fluctuations that aligned with the dramatic content of the text over maintaining a stable tempo.

[229] Dunstan, “Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci,” 72-73.

Example 4-23 *La Bohème*, Act I "Si. Mi chiamano Mimi" rehearsal figure 35, bar 1.

Toscanini's tempo fluctuations in Mimi's first phrase are closely related to the tempo of Mimi's speech (T. Lg). It is almost a declamation, as if she intends the words to be recited rather than sung (Example 4-24). In bar 2, when Mimi introduces herself, Toscanini proceeds with a rather slow tempo, M.M ♪ = 64 (TTR). By the end of bar 2, the tempo rushes as the vocal line approaches the climactic point on the F natural (F4). Toscanini then slows the tempo towards the end of the phrase "Lucia" in bar 4 (Table 4-16, page 108). In the following bar, the

tempo increases to ♩= 56 (TTR) as Mimi starts to animatedly narrate her story “La storia mia è breve” in bar 6 (Example 4-24).

Example 4-24 ***La Bohème*****, Act I “Si. Mi chiamano Mimi” rehearsal figure 35, bars 2 to 7.**

Table 4-16 *La Bohème*, Act I “Si. Mi chiamano Mimi” rehearsal figure 35, bars 1 to 7, Toscanini’s tempo approach.

Rehearsal Figure	Bar No.	Key	Text	Tempo Marking	Toscanini’s tempo approach
35	1	D		*con semplicita*	TTR. ♪= 58
	2		‘Si. Mi chiamano Mimi'	Andante lento MM ♩= 40	TTR. ♪= 64
	3		‘ma il mio nome e'		T. Fluct./ Accel/ T. Lg
	4				T. Fluct. /Rit
	5		‘Lucia'		T. Fluct. / Accel
	6,7		‘La sotoria mia'		TTR. ♩= 56

The analyses of historical recordings in this chapter provides some insights into the performance practices of key Italian *verismo* opera composers and conductors. It shows how they interpreted tempo indications in the score as well as their sometimes frequent use of un-notated tempo modifications to underscore and enhance the meaning of the text, the dramatic context and the narrative flow. The comparison of sound recordings with the composer’s score markings reveal many discrepancies, even when it was the composer conducting his own works.

Chapter 5. Insights from the Analysis of Historical Sound Recordings

Any attempt to form an historically-informed interpretation of the works of a composer no longer living requires an in-depth study of the performance practices and conditions appropriate to the composer and his time.[230] This research questions the assumption that music scores provide all the required information about how the nineteenth century Italian opera composer envisioned the performance of their operas. To better understand the decisions composers and conductors made in their approach to tempo markings, this chapter draws conclusions from the analysis of the sound recordings discussed in Chapter 4.

As demonstrated in the analysed harmonic sequences in the 1907 recording of *I Pagliacci*, Leoncavallo's approach to tempo modification creates tension in accordance with the disposition of the harmony. This could possibly justify Leoncavallo's interpretation of tempo modifications, even when there are no notated tempo designations to indicate this effect.

Despite what Leoncavallo has written in his score for the *Intermezzo*, not only does the tempo change in the recording, but also the music notation in Canio's leitmotif "Un nido di memorie in fondo a l'anima" (Example 4-16, page 89) to create a dramatic musical effect. This provides crucial insight regarding how the tempo approach is a key element in order to achieve a notion of authenticity in realising the music score. It also raises the question: How far can the interpreter go and still justify the result of the music? Despite the written score, the interpreter is delivering a different reading of the text. In this case, the interpreter goes beyond what is notated, applying conventions such as un-notated tempo modification in response to the tensions in the music and its text.

[230] Lawson and Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction*, 1.

In the excerpts involving vocal lines, the early recordings show that the conductor often reacted to the meaning of the text in choosing tempos and making tempo modifications in order to emulate *verità* (reality). Nevertheless, this feature creates tempo changes that significantly deviate from the notation. It can be concluded then that part of the performance practice of the conductor is to allow the music to be influenced by the direction of the spoken language, as well as the direction of the harmony. This has the effect of amplifying, or even contradicting, the tempo designations indicated by the composer.

Analysis of historic sound recordings has revealed another crucial aspect of the nineteenth-century conductor's performance practice. In the *verismo* operas examined in this thesis, metronome markings (M.M) are usually accompanied by an expression designation or Italian terminology which may affect the interpretation. Analysis of early sound recordings make it clear that *verismo* conductors (interpreters) did not take metronome markings literally. Instead, they created dramatic tension, at the expense of an exact rendering of the composer's metronome markings. This implies a certain degree of subjectivity in the interpretation of tempo designations and delivery.

Although *verismo* composers may have indicated their wishes as accurately as possible, there was nevertheless room for freedom in the *verismo* conductor's approach to the tempo designations, even when the composer was the conductor. This is the case in Leoncavallo's rendering of his *I Pagliacci*, which reveals discrepancies and even inconsistencies when compared with his written score. His interpretation leads to many possible scenarios. Assuming he was the conductor of his 1907 recording of *I Pagliacci,*[231] is Leoncavallo able to deliver a consistent reading of his music? Is he able to describe in his score his musical thoughts? Did he change his mind over the years regarding his vision for his music? Regardless, the conductor is compelled to make the most of the reading of the printed text.

[231] This is discussed in fn 88, 89.

Although Mascagni's conducting career was not as prominent as that of Toscanini's, his reputation as conductor was well recognised during his lifetime. Nevertheless, Mascagni's 1940 interpretation of his *Cavalleria Rusticana* contradicts his own tempo indications. In terms of tempo markings, as seen in the analysis of his 1940 audio recording, Mascagni ignores and even substantially departs from his own initial metronome designations and expression markings. However, his performance still conveys cohesion and unity in his dramaturgic realisation of the work.

A determining element of this research project was studying the veracity of the collaboration between composers and conductors. The three composers Puccini, Mascagni, and Leoncavallo, who were examined in this research, shared a vision and contributed to the establishment of the *verismo* operatic style as an innovative and constantly challenging genre which nurtured and established conducting performance practice. However, on examining the conductor's rendering of the music score, the contrasting approaches of the individual interpreters has led to the conclusion that tempo markings remain an area of subjectivity.

Un-notated performance practices were used by Italian opera conductors throughout the nineteenth century. Performance features such as *tempo rubato* and tempo fluctuation were intrinsic to realigning performances during the nineteenth century.[232] That can be seen in Mascagni's and Leoncavallo's sound recordings. In both cases, tempo modifications not explicitly indicated in their printed texts are nevertheless evident in their interpretations.

Historically-informed performers grounded their interpretations on information retrieved from past traditions, including un-notated conventions. However, given that "our aesthetic tastes and acoustic expectations clearly have changed,"[233] these interpretations are still subject

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[232] Joseph Deanna, "Nineteenth-Century Performance Practice: Reassessing Tradition and Revitalizing Interpretation," *The Choral Journal* 54, no. 9, (2014): 22-14.
[233] Botstein, "History and performance practices," 1.

to modernist aesthetics. Exploring a diverse range of historical sources potentially sheds light on the performance traditions of the Italian opera conductor during the nineteenth century.

In the context of the nineteenth century, the approach to tempo and expression markings is worthy of analysis. However, questions arise when the result of these analyses reveal that tempo and its notation have been treated differently by different opera composers and conductors during the nineteenth century. This includes the use of un-notated devices, although Toscanini himself claimed to be faithful to the text.[234] Unwritten conventions, some of which are supported by so-called tradition, were rejected. However, the analysis of Toscanini's sound recording of *La Bohème* has revealed evidence that contradicts this claim.

Clearly, by this stage in the evolution of Italian opera conductors, whether the conductor was the composer or someone else, they had no compunction in departing from the letter of the score in terms of tempo and tempo modification. Rather, they were expected to do so to achieve the sense of realism that the opera was intended to convey. However, they did this within the confines of a language that had evolved through the course of the nineteenth century, a language that was steadfastly rejected in the modernist upsurge of the twentieth century. Even Toscanini, who today is considered the first of the modern conductors, retained nineteenth-century performance conventions in relation to tempo nuances.[235]

5.1 Considerations on tempo and conducting

One of the most controversial concepts in music is tempo.[236] This is partly because the speed of a piece is determined by different elements, such as the genre of the music and the style in which this is embedded.[237] In searching for ways to convey the composer's mindset, the nineteenth-century opera conductor had to acquaint himself with a series of duties and roles,

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[234] Dunstan, "Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci," Vii.
[235] Stephen Mould, "From bel canto to verismo: How the rise of the conductor influenced the transformation of Italian opera during the long nineteenth century," *The Opera Journal*, Volume LIV, Number 1 (2021): 110.
[236] Brown, *Classical and Romantic performing practice 1750-1900*, 1.
[237] Jackson, "Performance practice: a dictionary-guide for musicians," 381-82.

including audible beating and non-verbal communication, to portray the music.[238] With more complex music scores, precision and accuracy became the main roles of the modern conductor and an array of technical features have become part of their performance practice vocabulary.

Even today, these features are intrinsic to the modern definition of the conductor's role and performance practice. However, the idea that fidelity consists of the ability to keep a composer's spirit alive without imposing external ideas to the score[239] has also been deflated. According to the historical evidence, the role of the mid-nineteenth century opera conductor was primarily limited to beating time to keep the orchestra and singers together.[240] However, there is no direct relation between this claim and strictness of performance tempo. Rather, the conducting tradition during the late nineteenth century reveals that performance practices, such as *tempo rubato* and tempo modification, were an accepted part of the approach to tempo by composer-conductors and interpreters.[241]

Undoubtedly, the *verismo* composer had a clear understanding of their own musical intentions, although what occurred in practice sometimes differed from the score they produced. There is evidence that the composer may not have indicated tempo modifications in the music score and may even have ignored some of their own markings when performing their own works. This leads to a concern that the *verismo* composer failed to communicate their ultimate musical thoughts. It also questions whether it is possible for the composer-conductor to deliver an authentic interpretation of their own music. Puccini's excessive markings are proof of this. When compared to those of his contemporaries, Puccini's markings could be seen as a reaction towards this misconception of performance tradition in his time.

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[238] Siepmann, "The history of direction and conducting," 113-16.
[239] Heinrich Schenker, The Art of Performance. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.
[240] Galkin, *A history of orchestral conducting: in theory and practice*, 195-96.
[241] Nicholas Temperley, "Tempo and Repeats in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Music & Letters* 47, no. 4 (1966): 323.

Yet, despite Puccini's copious markings, he praised conductors such as Toscanini and Mugnone for showing an understanding of his music. Perhaps Puccini was not only pleased with those who could deliver an accurate reading of his tempo markings, but also by those who's overall handcrafting could bring life to his music to ultimately achieve a coherent interpretation.

This research project has revealed a variety of data collected and analysed to reconstruct the historical context in which the figure of the nineteenth century opera conductor emerged. It challenges the assumption that to faithfully honour performance traditions, the interpreter must surrender his labour and abilities to devotedly reproduce the composer's work as notated in the score.[242] In reality, performers in their artistry bring the composer's work to life by all available means of fulfilling the composer's expectations, perhaps most importantly by being aware of un-notated performance traditions that were indispensable in an artistically sophisticated and beautiful performance.

Following the evaluation of the historical evidence presented, it can be concluded that the evolution of the role of the opera conductor and their performance practice is the sum of different factors. One of them, is the response to the composer's demands in terms of the tempo execution. In this regard, the conductor's interpretative role also evolved, not only in contextualising the music score and translating it to the orchestra, but also in personalising his own musical view and interpretation.

5.2 The conductor's fidelity in rendering the composer's writing

The claim that the score is the ultimate source of information and evidence of the composer's expectations has also been questioned here. Toscanini challenged performance

[242] Hunter, "To play as if from the soul of the composer: the idea of the performer in early romantic aesthetics," 357-58.

traditions when he said, "tradition is the last time you played wrong."[243] He proclaimed himself a defender of the composer's original and unique ideas. Nevertheless, Toscanini's approach to tempo of the composers with whom he collaborated depicts a different reality. This is evident in his interpretation of Puccini's tempo designations in the historical sound recordings. Toscanini's approach to tempo reveals similarities to Wagner's interpretative theory in which the melodic character, or *melos*, dictates the direction of the music.[244]

As Puccini stated, "one is not able to write everything."[245] This research concludes that nineteenth-century composers knowingly accepted that when brought to life by performers, their music might be enhanced by the performance practices of the time. However, despite Puccini's statement, his prolific tempo and expression markings do reveal his concern for the interpretation of his music. Testimony of this has been documented by Ricci, through his vast correspondence addressing this matter. This compromises the concept of authenticity to the music score, as it has been vastly argued being the absolute representation of the composer's musical thoughts.[246]

Although not a conductor himself, Puccini collaborated closely with many conductors throughout his career, including Toscanini who conducted the world première of *La Bohème* in 1896 under the composer's supervision.[247] Despite this collaboration, Toscanini's interpretation depicts a contradictory approach to Puccini's tempo designations. How is it that Puccini's metronome markings and tempo indications can be interpreted so differently by one of the most remarkable conductors of his time? Although Toscanini claims to be following

[243] Dunstan, "Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci," vii.
[244] Linda B Fairtile, "Toscanini and the Myth of Textual Fidelity," *Journal of the Conductors Guild* 24, no. 1-2 (2003): 59.
[245] Dunstan, "Performance practices in the music of Giacomo Puccini as observed by Luigi Ricci," xi.
[246] Fairtile, "Toscanini and the Myth of Textual Fidelity," 60.
[247] Neher, "The Complete Toscanini," 650.

Puccini's musical intentions (*come scritto)*, the tempi vary significantly between the interpretation and the printed text.

Fidelity to the music score has become the starting point of modern musicians. *Verismo* conductors used various means to bring the music score to life which was not notated by the composer. On examination of the sound recordings of Toscanini, Mascagni and Leoncavallo, it is clear that the conductor often deviates from the original composer's instructions, a practice that was accepted in his time. Toscanini's tempo approach points in this direction and may have emerged as a result of the performance "tradition" of the mid-nineteenth century opera industry.

Toscanini was immersed in operatic performance practice, from his early stages of music training to his professional life as conductor, including as first desk cello assistant and then as opera chorus conductor, and even as vocal coach.[248] He would have witnessed first-hand the controversies between composers and conductors, allowing him to form an idea of performance practice from living composers and conductors.

Toscanini's notion of *come scritto* clearly refers to an attempt towards an authentic interpretation of the written text. During his time, some of the most remarkable transformations in the opera industry occurred. Not only did Toscanini witness the transformation of the opera conductor, but he was a part of this metamorphosis.

Toscanini's recordings are highly regarded for their robust and vigorous deliveries.[249] However, some criticise his fast tempos. Despite Toscanini's adherence to the written text,[250] the tempo approach in his 1946 recording of Puccini's *La Bohème*[251] displays tempo

[248] David Cairns, "Toscanini, Arturo," (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 11 July 2021, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000028197.
[249] Neher, "The Complete Toscanini," 645-51.
[250] Neher, "The Complete Toscanini," 3.
[251] Neher, "The Complete Toscanini," 5.

fluctuations, tempo modifications and *tempo rubato* that occasionally contradict Puccini's notated indications. Despite this, Puccini praised Toscanini as the best conductor of his time.[252]

As is often seen throughout operatic history, composers have frequently had to amend a tempo marking during the supervision of their own operas. In some cases, these adjustments do not appear to be included in the printed score, such as when Toscanini asked Verdi about a dynamic designation which Verdi himself had requested to be modified. Verdi simply replied, "Who can tell the difference in an opera house?"[253]

Analysis of recordings of *verismo* operas helps establish a clear idea of the conductor's treatment of tempo. The recordings also show how the influence of these musical elements (tempo designations) have shaped the figure of the conductor as an individual character forged by the demands of a developing opera industry and the need to refine their interpretative role.

In cases when the composer acted as interpreter of their own works, we are also able to gain insight into the transformation of the opera conductor. To establish a position in the shifting era between *bel canto* and *verismo*, nineteenth century opera conductors had to adapt the indications in the composer's notation to best suit the text and its needs. An analysis of the recordings has revealed that even when composers such as Puccini were exacting in their score tempo indications, conductors did not always follow these to the letter. In fact, in none of the musical excerpts analysed, has the conductor executed the tempo markings as they appear in the printed text. In some cases, the rendering is completely the opposite.

The study of performance practices in history has continued to attract considerable scholarly interest. It has also, predictably, come through a process of self-examination that has exploded rudimentary claims to authenticity and reliability.[254] This research is no exception,

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[252] Schwartz and Senici, "Giacomo Puccini and His World," 233-34.
[253] Ethan Mordden, "Opera Anecdotes," New York: (Oxford University Press, USA, 1985), 235.
[254] Botstein, "History and Performance Practices," 1-6.

with historical performance practice informing the performance practices of the past, including those of the pre-recording era.

As seen in the evolution of opera, some performance tendencies have proven to be ephemeral as they belonged to aural tradition. Once the connection to the original source is removed, performance tradition is relegated to the past. New trends overtake old, often with no direct relation to those of the past. The opera composer's complex demands to express their musical ideas reshaped the way in which the conductor operated. From their role as time-beater, the modern conductor evolved into the dominant figure we know today. Under the hegemony of the opera industry, even the composer's role shifted along with the evolution of music itself.

The question as to whether the music score is enough for the conductor to accurately render a loyal representation of the composer's musical thoughts has therefore been debunked. Inevitably, the conductor's own thoughts influence the interpretation. This has been proven through the display of un-notated conventions found as integral to the performance standards regarding tempo and expression markings. The conductor's performance practice has developed as a response to what is not included in the printed text, including un-notated historical conventions.

By revealing the relationship between the evolution of the opera industry and the emerging figure of the opera conductor, new areas and redefined performance practices have been uncovered in addition to the concept of historically informed performance. The role of individual music leadership in its historical context in Italy was a result of the need for precision and accuracy in interpreting the composer's music. In response to his concern that performance standards were undermining his music, Verdi took the lead and adopted precise metronome markings from 1846 onwards.[255] This position was shared by Puccini.

[255] Marvin, "Verdi and the Metronome," 6.

Although the notion of fidelity to the music score has been the subject of debate by historical performance practitioners,[256] understanding the performance practice of the opera conductor during the long nineteenth century provides critical insights into the tempo and expressive nuances that graced performances of the era but that are not preserved in the score. Even if the music score contains some ideas of what the composer had in mind, the conductor was expected to imbue the music with many subtleties of expression which the composer simply could not or did not notate. Such subtleties were part and parcel of the language of nineteenth and early twentieth-century expressive interpretation. They were the elements of high artistry that set apart student musicians whose task it was to follow the score markings meticulously from trained musicians who were tasked with adding many expressive nuances not marked in the score.

It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the full score was regularly used in performance. Indeed, the first Italian opera conductor's score ever printed was the one from Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda* (1833).[257] Until then, conductors followed the tradition of conducting from the keyboard, usually using vocal scores when leading the opera performances. This reveals an array of possible indications not included in the score which the composer as interpreter had to teach to singers and the orchestra. There was also no need for further indications. Under these circumstances, what could be a limitation, precisely contributed to shape the performance practice of the nineteenth-century opera conductor. This research concludes that tempo modification was established as performance standard technique in the seventeenth century and prevailed throughout the eighteen and nineteenth centuries.

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[256] Clive Brown, "The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Historical Performance in Music. Ed. by Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell," *Music & letters* 100, no. 3, (2019): 582-83.
[257] Donald Jay Grout, Donald Grout, and Hermine Weigel Williams, *A short history of opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 395.

5.3 Considerations in practice-led research and its applicability

In searching for clues regarding the interpretation standards of the past, performers and scholars have turned their attention to historical evidence beyond the printed score.[258] Historically informed performance has contributed to the revision of musical material during the era when performance practice was in vogue.[259] This historical approach, along with the practice led methodologies, have allowed me to achieve a deeper understanding of the conducting performance practices of the past.

During my musical education, my teachers presented conflicting approaches to tempo and tempo modification. This led me to want to ask why tempo in music performance is such a controversial issue. Whenever I came across a historical sound recording of *verismo* opera, even when these featured renowned artists, I could not avoid feeling overwhelmed by questions regarding the interpretation of the tempo designations. This led me to an investigation as to how the interpretation of tempo designations have been perceived by the Italian opera conductor from the time this figure emerged. The historical review of the early-nineteenth century Italian opera conductor has allowed me to gain knowledge related to the emerging figure of the opera conductor and their performance practices.

The literature review revealed a vast amount of data on the tempo of the music; however, practical insight was also necessary. For months, I immersed myself into historical sound recordings, listening to and emulating the tempo approach of Toscanini, Leoncavallo, and Mascagni, among others. Trying to make sense of their decisions regarding tempo designations was initially challenging, especially as I had always been taught that "the tempo must remain steady." After some effort, I was able to follow the recordings and compare and understand the

[258]Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Historical Performance in Music*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 305.
[259] Lawson and Stowell, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Historical Performance in Music*, 305.

information contained in the sound recordings. This provided me with a clear idea of the conductor's decision-making.

The next challenge was to convey this information to my collaborators, singers and pianists, as part of my lecture-recitals. I had to replicate and share my findings with my assistants who were not used to this approach to tempo. Nevertheless, the experience has been enriching not only for me but for all involved in this process.

In contrast, if I were to follow the metronome and expression markings exactly as written in the music score, the result would have been different from the one contained in the historical sound recordings. The dilemma then is whether to try and understand the decision-making of the Italian opera conductor or simply imitate and emulate the music as heard in the historical sound recordings. Either way, the concept of authenticity remains controversial. However, the possible answer may remain in the historical context in which the composer's creation took place.

As a conductor myself, I aspire to do my absolute best to execute the composer's instructions as they appear in the printed text. Even during the rehearsal process, I carefully instruct the orchestra and singers, and adjust any possible imprecisions. However, the insights revealed in this research have impacted my view of interpretation. As interpreter, they have made me reconsider an interpretation that is based on goodwill but derived totally from historical context.

This research concludes that the composer's writing style has evolved in response to the interaction with performers. As a result, the composer's tempo markings and expression designations have also been approached differently through compositional evolution.[260] The composer's musical taste is no doubt influenced by innovations, such as sophisticated opera houses, concert halls and recording studios. To a certain extent, these developments have

[260] Zhong, "Tempo in Puccini's soprano arias," 182-84.

contributed to define the sonorities of the late-nineteenth century Italian operas, with the conductors having to adapt to the challenges.

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