American Verismo?: insights into The Padrone, and opera by George Whitefield Chadwick (13 November 1854 - 4 April 1931)

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AMERICAN *VERISMO*?
INSIGHTS INTO *THE PADRONE*, AN OPERA
BY GEORGE WHITEFIELD CHADWICK
(13 NOVEMBER 1854 – 4 APRIL 1931)

A Written Document

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by
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B.M., Baylor University, 1996
M.M., Baylor University, 1999
May 2004
AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the members of my committee: Dr. Lori Bade, Professor Robert Grayson, and Dr. Robert Peck for their support. I especially thank my major professor and the chair of my committee, Dr. Kyle Marrero, for his support and encouragement throughout my degree program. Thanks are also due to Dr. Wallace McKenzie for first revealing to me that *The Padrone* even existed and giving it the intriguing label “verismo”. Thanks to my family and friends, specifically John Bostic and my life-long mentor Dr. John Van Cura, who have supported and encouraged me. Finally, thank you to my wife, Beth, who has been there through the many long days and nights of this degree, giving her steadfast love and support.
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ABSTRACT

The contribution of George Whitefield Chadwick (13 November 1854 – 4 April 1931) to American music comes in many forms: composer, teacher, conductor, pianist and organist. A leading figure of the Second School of New England composers, Chadwick was also largely responsible for the effective reorganization of the New England Conservatory. He was arguably one of the most influential teachers in American music in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

This study deals with Chadwick’s last opera intended for professional production, The Padrone. The opera, an American example of Italian verismo, is a two act drama depicting the lives of exploited Italians in a north-eastern American city in 1912. The study of the opera has been presented from the performer’s perspective, as prepared for a performance such as a lecture/recital.

Conclusions drawn from the study include the following: (1) Verismo can be described in specific terms by the application of the definitions of literary and musical verismo. (2) The Padrone can be labeled as an example of verismo when the specific definition is applied. (3) Through analysis that includes the labeling of The Padrone as a verismo work, an informed performance of the opera may be undertaken.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION, BIOGRAPHY, AND THEATRICAL WORKS

Introduction

The contribution of George Whitefield Chadwick (13 November 1854 – 4 April 1931) to American music comes in many forms: composer, teacher, conductor, pianist and organist. A leading figure of the Second School of New England composers, Chadwick was also largely responsible for the effective reorganization of the New England Conservatory. He was arguably one of the most influential teachers in American music in the latter half of the nineteenth century through the beginning of the twentieth century. Although Chadwick’s works did not become a main part of the operatic repertory, several of his compositions for the opera stage are worthy of study and performance. His last opera composed with the intent for professional production was *The Padrone*. Chadwick fashioned the opera on the then-modern French and Italian models of realism with the characteristics of Italian *verismo* taking particular precedence in the work. The purpose of this document is to familiarize singers and teachers with George Whitefield Chadwick and specifically his *verismo* opera *The Padrone*.

This document will begin by reviewing the important events of Chadwick’s life. These will include important musical and social influences, educational experiences, the premieres of important works, and various awards and honors. All of Chadwick’s works written for theatrical performance will be reviewed with specific attention given to the composition history of *The Padrone*. 
The second chapter of this document will discuss *The Padrone* with particular reference to its adherence to the characteristics of Italian *verismo*. After the term *verismo* is precisely defined, it will be rigorously applied to *The Padrone*. The information gleaned from applying the definition will be used to discuss an informed performance of *The Padrone*. This analysis will include the plot, literary quality of the libretto, character study, literary influences, vocal writing, and other issues.

**Biography of George Whitefield Chadwick**

George Whitefield Chadwick was born in Lowell, Massachusetts. His mother (Hannah Fitts Chadwick) died of puerperal fever a week after his birth. Alonzo Calvin Chadwick, George’s father, remarried a few months later, sending him to live with relatives for the next three years. He was brought back to join his father and stepmother in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1857. The formative experience of losing their mother, and their father's somewhat hasty remarriage has been thought to have a profound effect on both George and his elder brother, Fitts. This influence can be seen in that they both turned down the opportunity to run the successful family insurance business, choosing instead to leave home. Fitts went on to work as an accountant, something he could have easily done in his father's business.¹ Later, George would not return from Europe to attend his father's funeral in 1878.²

Chadwick’s earliest exposure to music came from his brother, Fitts. He began receiving instruction in the new public school system at age eight. At age 15, Chadwick was already active as a professional organist. This was necessary because his businessman father, while approving


2Ibid., 34.
of music in a church or amateur setting, dissapproved of Chadwick's professional musical pursuits and would not pay for private instruction. Chadwick did not complete high school, instead leaving at age sixteen to work as a clerk in his father’s insurance business. By 1872, he was studying at the New England Conservatory while serving as the primary organist at a Congregational church. At the conservatory he was a student of Dudley Buck and Eugene Thayer. With the help of lifelong friend Theodore Presser (1848-1925), Chadwick was hired to a temporary post as professor of music at Olivet College in Michigan in 1876. He taught a variety of music classes, including voice, a subject in which he had absolutely no instruction. While serving on faculty at Olivet, Chadwick became a founding member of the Music Teachers National Association and presented a controversial paper, "Popular Music – Wherein Reform Is Necessary," at its first convention. In his lecture, the twenty-two year old professor revealed what he thought was wrong with American music - “Everything.” The audience for the convention included successful American popular composer George Root. Chadwick urged "I do not ask you to make popular music classical, I ask you to make classical music popular.”

After a brief and unfruitful attempt at study in Berlin, Chadwick traveled to Leipzig in search of further instruction in the fall of 1877. Upon arrival he studied privately with Salomon Jadasohn (1831-1907) for three months before enrolling in the conservatory, where he remained a student until 1879. Jadasohn, a student of Liszt, would later go on to publish noted texts on


4Yellin, Yankee Composer, 23.

5Ibid., 23.
composition and music theory. The first and second movements of Chadwick's String Quartet no.1 were played in a concert of student works in May, and were well received. In the spring of 1879, Chadwick's String Quartet no.2 and the concert overture Rip Van Winkle were judged the best compositions at the annual conservatory concerts. Critics of Rip Van Winkle declared "Uncontestably this is the best of this year's compositions" (this review is pasted on the back of the manuscript now housed at the New England Conservatory and dated in Chadwick's own hand) and others stated that Chadwick "had his own poetic intentions" and his music "[has] both color and a physiognomy." Rip Van Winkle quickly received further performances in Dresden and Boston. The Boston premiere in December 1879 was hailed as "...a treat. The work is quite melodious, and is remarkable for its rich and full instrumentation." Following his studies at Leipzig, Chadwick joined a group of young, vagabond American painters under the informal tutelage of Frank Duveneck (1848–1919). He journeyed with the “Duveneck boys” to Giverny, France for a summer before moving on to additional instruction in Munich with Rheinberger at the Königliche Musikschule (1879–80).

Chadwick returned to Boston in May of 1880 and began a career as a teacher, organist, and conductor, and began to successfully compose in virtually every genre. His success can be measured by his inclusion in a lithograph depicting "Musical Boston" only two years after his return to the city. The young composer’s image was in the painting along with great Boston

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6Yellin, Yankee Composer, 29.
7Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.
8Yellin, Yankee Composer, 33.
10Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.
composer John Knowles Paine. During this time, Chadwick made his living, according to an advertisement in *Dwight's Journal of Music*, as a "Conductor and Solo Organist…who will receive pupils in pianoforte and composition." Chadwick also composed a number of choral works for Boston's many active choral organizations, including *The Viking’s Last Voyage* for the Apollo Club. For several years, he also directed the Arlington Club men’s chorus and an amateur orchestral ensemble, the Boston Orchestral Club. The Philharmonic Society played his waltz *Beautiful Munich* in 1881 and the Harvard Musical Association orchestra performed the *Symphony no. 1* in 1882.

In the spring of 1882, Chadwick joined the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music, an institution with which he would remain affiliated until his death. Originally not much more than a school of piano for training teachers, Chadwick gradually turned the New England Conservatory into a fully-fledged institution on the European model. While on faculty, Chadwick innovated ideas including an opera workshop class, a student repertory orchestra, and courses in orchestration and harmony based on the study of actual music rather than abstract principles. His textbook *Harmony: a Course of Study* (1897/R) was printed in many editions and became a standard text.

Also in 1882, Chadwick accepted an invitation to conduct John Knowles Paine’s music for the Greek production of *Oedipus ipus Tyrannus* at Sander’s Theatre in Cambridge. The *Musical Record*, in its review of this appearance, reported that Chadwick “has few equals as an orchestral conductor.” That same year, Chadwick became the organist of the Park Street Church for the sum of three hundred dollars a year, plus use of a small room. He would maintain organ

11Yellin, *Yankee Composer*, 43.

positions for much of his life. He married Ida May Crocker in June of 1885. Their lifelong marriage produced two sons, Theodore and Noel.

Chadwick's works continued to receive performances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra throughout the 1880s. These performances include the “overture to an imaginary comedy” *Thalia* in 1883, and the first performance of the Scherzo from the as yet incomplete Symphony no.2 in March of 1884. The critic of the *Boston Evening Transcript* called the Scherzo “a gem.” The audience enjoyed the movement so much that they demanded an immediate repetition, the first ever granted in the history of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Further performances include Symphony No. 2 in 1886, and the “overture to an imaginary tragedy” *Melpomene* in 1887. Other works composed during the 1880s include two choral works: *The Viking’s Last Voyage* (1881) and *Lovely Rosabelle* (1889); and two chamber works: String Quartet No. 3 in D Major and Piano Quintet in Eb Major (1887). *The Peer and the Pauper*, composed in 1884, will be discussed along with all other theatrical works in the body of this paper. He composed numerous songs on texts by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Arlo Bates, and Thomas Bailey Aldrich, as well as several pieces for organ and piano.

By the early 1890s Chadwick had become a prominent figure in American music. In 1892, he was commissioned to compose an ode for the opening festivities of the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. His immense score in three movements, for large chorus and orchestra with three additional brass bands, was performed by instrumentalists totalling 500 and a chorus of 5000. The same year, in stark contrast, he composed the stage satire *A Quiet Lodging*. In 1893, an amateur troupe commissioned his burlesque opera *Tabasco* for a fund-raising benefit. This work was inspired by the Gilbert and Sullivan works which were just making their way to the

13 *Boston Evening Transcript*, March 4, 1884.
American shores. Following its amateur debut, the opera was professionally produced by the Seabrooke Opera Company and toured extensively. In 1894, Chadwick's third symphony was awarded a prize by the National Conservatory of Music.

During the 1890s, Chadwick also served as the director and conductor of the Springfield Festival (1890-99) and the Worcester Festival (1897-1901) where he championed such composers as Berlioz, Glazunov, and Saint-Saëns. These experiences led to the composition of the cantata *Phoenix expirans*, a setting of Scott’s *Lochinvar* for baritone and orchestra (Springfield Festival), and his largest composition to date, the lyric drama *Judith*, based on his own scenario adapted from the Apocrypha (Worcester Festival). It was also during this period of the 1890s that Chadwick biographer Victor Yellin claims that he began to create his own unique style. Yellin refers to this style as “populist realism.” Compositional features included the assimilation of French and Italian melodic and harmonic elements into his previously Wagnerian techniques and the use of American idioms and motivic material.¹⁴

After assuming the directorship of the New England Conservatory in 1897, Chadwick found the demands of the institution forced him to limit his composing largely to the summer months, usually spent on Martha’s Vineyard. Chadwick’s influence as an educator grew to match his influence as a composer from this time until he retired from the Conservatory at the end of World War I.¹⁵ As time passed, Chadwick devoted more and more of his time to supervising advanced composition students such as Horatio Parker, Frederick Converse, Edward Burlingame Hill, Daniel Gregory Mason, Arthur Shepherd and William Grant Still. Beyond the instruction of these future luminaries of American music, Chadwick also transformed the Conservatory into a

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¹⁵Ibid., 67.
premiere institution of musical instruction.\textsuperscript{16} He paid close attention to the progress of all conservatory students, attended every recital, and frequently directed the conservatory's orchestra. Overall, Chadwick's compositional output greatly declined after the turn of the century, due to his teaching duties and to a shipboard injury that never healed properly. In addition, the composer often suffered from painful gout.\textsuperscript{17}

Chadwick's multi-movement orchestral works tended to be lighter in character after 1900. He continued to produce works with programmatic features, such as concert overtures, symphonic poems, the \textit{Symphonic Sketches}, which received many performances at the time, and \textit{Suite Symphonique}, which won a National Federation of Women’s Clubs prize.\textsuperscript{18} He also lived up to his reputation as a "Boston Classicist" by giving many works classical titles, for example \textit{Euterpe} (1903), \textit{Cleopatra} (1904), and \textit{Aphrodite} (1910–11). The classically titled \textit{Adonais} (1899) was written in honor of pianist Frank Fay Marshall. Another important work of this time was the \textit{Elegy} for Horatio Parker (1920). Chadwick was honored during this period with election to the National Institute in 1898 and to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1909.

In 1912, Chadwick composed \textit{The Padrone}, a work on which the composer had pinned great hopes of a Metropolitan premiere. To his regret, \textit{The Padrone} was never to receive a professional or amateur performance in the composer's lifetime.\textsuperscript{19} The compositional history of \textit{the Padrone} will be discussed in greater detail within the body of this paper. Most of Chadwick's major works during the years 1909–18 were composed for the Norfolk Festival. These include the Christmas

\textsuperscript{16}Yellin, \textit{Yankee Composer}, 67.

\textsuperscript{17}Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., online.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., online.
oratorio Noël (1907–8), the symphonic fantasy Aphrodite (1910–11), Tam O'Shanter (1914–15) and Anniversary Overture (1922). Chadwick composed little during the 1920s beyond a reworking of Rip Van Winkle for publication and the opera Love's Sacrifice for a school performance in 1923. In 1928 he was awarded the American Academy of Arts and Letters medal. Until his death in Boston on 4 April 1931 at seventy-six, Chadwick was frequently honored with concerts featuring his music and celebrating his legacy. His New York Times obituary stated that “When all is said and done, he more than any other one man gives his creative period its stamp and character and represents most completely the body of serious American music.”20

Theatrical Works

Though known primarily as a symphonist and composer of instrumental works, Chadwick wrote seven works for the stage throughout his long career. These works add up to fifteen hours of music, easily the largest category of Chadwick’s output when considered for its sheer length.21 It is important to have a cursory understanding of these works in order to place a study of The Padrone in proper context with Chadwick’s other theatrical compositions.

Chadwick’s first exposure to opera came in 1873 when his brother took him to hear Faust and Don Giovanni. Through his life, the composer frequented all types of theatrical performance, from opera to lighter fare. He also took many opportunities to see operatic performances while in Europe as a student and on subsequent return trips.22

21 Yellin, Yankee Composer, 175.
22 Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.
Chadwick’s first theatrical composition, *The Peer and the Pauper*, was modeled on the works of Gilbert and Sullivan that were enjoying great success in the United States. This work was never produced for the stage. Chadwick’s next theatrical work was *A Quiet Lodging*, a satire on local musical life. Composed and put on stage in a month, *A Quiet Lodging* was produced for an April Fool’s evening at a private Boston club in 1892.23

Chadwick was next commissioned to write the music for *Tabasco*, a “burlesque opera,” as a fundraiser for a new armory for the Boston Corps of Cadets.24 Though written for amateur performance, the work was a success and spawned a professional tour by the Thomas Q. Seabrooke company. The tour opened in Boston on 9 April 1894, was taken to New York, and then toured the United States for the better part of the following year. Additionally, one of the selections from the opera, the “March of the Pasha’s Guard,” sold 100,000 copies in separate publication.25

The plot of *Tabasco* is devoted to the search for the “ultimate in gastronomic excitement” by the Bey of Tangier. His search results in the introduction of “Tabasco” by an Irish-American drifter, who then becomes the house’s “French” chef. The young man soon is in danger when the sauce runs out. His life is spared when more of the sauce is located. There are romantic subplots involving girls from the Bey’s harem.26 Chadwick assimilates a number of styles, from a Spanish

23 Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.

24 Yellin, *Yankee Composer*, 176.

25 Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.

26 Yellin, *Yankee Composer*, 178.
“Bolero” to a French “Rigaudon,” as well as demonstrating a mastery of an Arthur Sullivan-style extended finale.\(^{27}\)

Beyond its financial success (the play raised $26,000 for the Cadets in a week’s run), *Tabasco* was also well received by critics.\(^{28}\) The *Boston Transcript* singled Chadwick out for praise, declaring that he would rival the French *opera-comique* if provided with the proper text.\(^{29}\) The *Boston Gazette* lauded Chadwick for achieving popular appeal without sacrificing artistic quality.\(^{30}\) The work was financially successful enough that Chadwick and Seabrooke had a dispute over the work’s royalties. Seabrooke tried to avoid paying royalties by switching the tabasco sauce to whiskey and changing the title to *The Grand Vizier*, forcing Chadwick to threaten a lawsuit. Despite its early success, *Tabasco* was performed infrequently after its initial tour ended.\(^{31}\)

For his next stage composition, Chadwick turned to more serious fare with the lyric drama *Judith*. The opera was based on the story of Judith and Holofernes from the biblical Apocrypha. Chadwick composed the work in 1900 for a staged performance for the Worchester choral festival during his directorship.\(^{32}\) It would receive only a concert performance, a hybrid

\(^{27}\) Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.

\(^{28}\) Yellin, *Yankee Composer*, 177.

\(^{29}\) *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 30, 1894.

\(^{30}\) *Boston Gazette*, February 4, 1894.

\(^{31}\) Yellin, *Yankee Composer*, 177.

\(^{32}\) Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.
oratorio/opera performance featuring elaborate choral numbers and an extended seduction scene as highlights, or what might now be called “semi-staged.”

Using a libretto by William Chauncy Langdon, Chadwick modeled *Judith* on French grand opera and, somewhat incongruously, American hymnody. This mix of styles matches the work’s alternate use of choral numbers and passionate intimate scenes. Chadwick biographer Victor Yellin emphasizes four elements of *Judith*: Chadwick’s use of English speech rhythms in text setting, the American sound created by Chadwick’s use of gapped tetrachords in melodies, exotic and erotic orchestral sonorities, and the depiction of personality through music.

Reviews of *Judith* were somewhat mixed. The *Boston Transcript* and the *New York Times* both thought the compromise of semi-staging didn’t work. Though hampered by its amateur cast, the reviews were favorable toward the music itself.

Chadwick’s next theatrical work was a departure from the operatic stage. Produced in Lew Field’s Herald Square Theatre in New York, *Everywoman: Her Pilgrimage in Quest of Love* was a then-modern Broadway extravaganza for which Chadwick was paid ten thousand dollars. Composed in 1911, *Everywoman* was a morality drama on the new role of the modern woman. The intellectual content of the play was softened by Chadwick’s music (some of which was repeated from earlier scores) and Broadway dance and spectacle. Chadwick biographer Yellin declares that *Everywoman* is “the most artistic and technologically marvelous theatrical presentation to date on the American stage.” Contemporary reviewers were less enthusiastic,

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33 Yellin, *Yankee Composer*, 185.

34 Yellin, *Yankee Composer*, 186-190.

commenting positively on Chadwick’s score but overall calling the musical dull and tame.\textsuperscript{37} After its initial run in New York, the show went to Boston and then toured the West Coast.\textsuperscript{38}

Shortly following \textit{Everywoman}, Chadwick composed \textit{The Padrone}. The first mention of the opera appears in Chadwick’s diary on 26 November 1911 where he mentions a “one-act opera.”\textsuperscript{39} The four principal parts were to be in Italian and the others in English (this scheme would be abandoned later).\textsuperscript{40} The next reference to the work appears on 18 February 1912, indicating that Chadwick had received the libretto from its author, David Kilburn Stevens.\textsuperscript{41}

David Kilburn Stevens was born in Fitchburg, Massachusetts on 12 August 1860. Stevens, a member of the bar, gave up law practice to join the Boston music publishing firm of C. C. Birchard and Company. Stevens’ early works were for the First Corps of Cadets in Boston, of which he was a member. This is the group for whom Chadwick wrote his opera \textit{Tabasco}.\textsuperscript{42} In addition to \textit{The Padrone}, which was his first libretto,\textsuperscript{43} Stevens was also the librettist for

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Yellin, \textit{Yankee Composer}, 199.
  \item \textsuperscript{37} Westminster Gazette, September 13, 1912.
  \item \textsuperscript{38} Yellin, \textit{Yankee Composer}, 201.
  \item \textsuperscript{39} Victor Yellin, “The Life and Operatic Works of George Whitfield Chadwick” (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 1957), 241. Yellin attributes diary notes to excerpts provided by Chadwick’s son Theodore.
  \item \textsuperscript{40} Marianne Betz, “New Light on George Whitefield Chadwick: Recent Discoveries of Unknown Material,” \textit{The Bulletin of the Society for American Music} Vol. XXVII, No. 3 (Fall 2001): 4. This is also mentioned in Yellin, \textit{Yankee Composer}, 210.
  \item \textsuperscript{41} Yellin, “Life and Operatic Works,” 241.
  \item \textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 245-246.
\end{itemize}
Chadwick’s last work *Love’s Sacrifice*, as well as Victor Herbert’s *The Madcap Duchess* (Rochester 1913) and Henry Hadley’s *Azora, Daughter of Montezuma* (Chicago Opera 1917). Although Chadwick did not attempt to copyright *The Padrone*, Stevens did copyright the libretto in 1912.

The source for the libretto was Chadwick himself; from an idea that the composer had “had in [his] head for a long time”. The concept was very original when placed in the context of other contemporary American operatic compositions. Most of their subjects favored the exotic and fantastic from the Indians and Spaniards of Victor Herbert’s *Natoma* to the druids and Roman soldiers of Horatio Parker’s *Mona* to the fantastic quality of Frederick Converse’s *The Pipe of Desire* (though Converse’s *The Immigrants* is a realistic work). He sent the scenario to Stevens to turn into a libretto on 26 November 1911 and received the finished book with the title “The Padrone” provided by Stevens on 18 February 1912.

It is interesting that Chadwick notes in his own diary a sense of hesitation at beginning work on the music for the opera.

This day D.K. Stevens sent me his finished book of “The Padrone” which is the name of the opera that he has built out of the scenario referred to on November 26th. So, at last, I

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43 Charles Spence Freeman, “American Realism and Progressivism in Chadwick's *The Padrone* and Converse's *The Immigrants*” (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1999), 7.


45 Ibid., 249.


47 Freemen, “Realism,” ix.

48 Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.

have a real [Chadwick’s emphasis] book for an opera, for here is action, character, scenic interest and rhythmic lines—all I could ask for. And yet, now that it is here, I feel a strange lack of confidence at tackling it. Is it laziness or?\footnote{Yellin, “Life and Operatic Works,” 240.}

Yellin theorizes that Chadwick is apprehensive about the subject matter of the opera, which was the contemporary (at that time) exploitation of Italian immigrants by Italian-Americans in a Northeastern city.\footnote{Yellin, “Life and Operatic Works,” 242.} This is a valuable observation, though convenient in hindsight when we now know the opera’s ultimate fate in Chadwick’s lifetime. Regardless, it is valuable to have information about the social climate that led Chadwick to produce his scenario.

The social environment of *The Padrone* emerged between 1901 and 1909 when 600,000 Italians landed at East Coast ports.\footnote{Ibid., 243.} These immigrants were motivated by economic concerns, intending to earn enough money working as unskilled labor in the rail, road, and tunnel industries to return home to Italy and purchase land. Criminally minded Americans first, and Italians later, took advantage of this desire by creating a system of indentured service by which an immigrant would work for a number of years for a “padrone” in order to repay the cost of room, board, and passage from Italy to the United States.\footnote{Ibid., 243.} Since immigrants were illiterate and unfamiliar with American law, the padrone could charge high rates for necessities like housing and clothing. This combination of sociological and economic factors left the immigrants in a state of perpetual servitude.\footnote{Freeman, “Realism,” 8.} Some female immigrants were sent to the streets as beggars or as tambourine girls for organ grinders as a means to pay their exorbitant debts to their padrone

\footnote{Yellin, “Life and Operatic Works,” 240.}

\footnote{Yellin, “Life and Operatic Works,” 242.}

\footnote{Ibid., 243.}

\footnote{Ibid., 243.}

\footnote{Freeman, “Realism,” 8.}
masters. These conditions were widespread in Boston at the time of The Padrone’s composition.\textsuperscript{55}

Additional excerpts in Chadwick’s diary indicate that work on the opera progressed rapidly (it took less than ten months from the initial reception of the libretto by Chadwick to its completion), and on 5 December 1912, the composer sent the finished bound copy to the Metropolitan Opera for consideration.\textsuperscript{56} The opera was not received well at the Metropolitan, perhaps because the directors, being Italians themselves, did not care for the tale’s subject matter. Chadwick comments that the general director Giulio Gatti-Casazza “disliked the book” because it was “too true to life” and because the Met accompanist that had played through the work commented unfavorably on it. The fact that American composer Victor Herbert’s new one-act Madelaine was also in consideration was another factor in The Padrone’s rejection.\textsuperscript{57} In addition, the Chairman of the Board of the Metropolitan Opera at the time, Otto Kahn, was a friend of Herbert, which did not aid Chadwick’s case.\textsuperscript{58} Despite a policy of producing a new American work every year at the Metropolitan, Chadwick’s status as the dean of American composers, and the ability to have the opera tested at Boston Opera (which Chadwick helped found),\textsuperscript{59} the opera was never performed in Chadwick’s lifetime. Disappointment with this lack of success might explain why Chadwick never composed for the stage again, with the exception

\textsuperscript{55}Yellin, “Life and Operatic Works,” 243-244.

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., 246-247.

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., 248-249.

\textsuperscript{58}Yellin, Yankee Composer, 211.

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., 209.
of *Love’s Sacrifice*, which was intended for amateur performance.\(^60\) Another possibility might be the composer’s poor health, demonstrated by Chadwick’s use of a cane or leaning on furniture in most photos of him taken at the time.\(^61\)

In addition to the specific challenges facing Chadwick, American opera as an art form faced many obstacles at the beginning of the twentieth century. With the exception of ballad opera and the works of William Henry Fry and George Frederick Bristow, which were no longer actively performed in 1900, American opera was in the hands of leading American composers like John Knowles Paine and Horatio Parker. These men and their colleagues found securing performances of their operas much more difficult than symphonies, songs, or chamber works. The cost of opera was a factor, and the risk associated with that cost made many of the American companies refuse to perform new works by Americans in favor of established Europeans. This relegated many of the American works to obscurity, concert versions, or amateur performance.\(^62\)

*The Padrone* did not receive a performance until it was concertized in Waterbury, Connecticut in September 1995 and was not staged until a performance in Boston in April 1997 at the New England Conservatory.\(^63\) The only known manuscript of the opera is an orchestral score in the composer’s hand in the New England Conservatory Library. Chadwick makes a reference to a piano/vocal score in his diary, but this has never been found.\(^64\) A new piano/vocal score was developed by Lief Bjaland and Manly Romero for the Waterbury performance.\(^65\)

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\(^60\) Yellin, “Life and Operatic Works,” 274.

\(^61\) Yellin, *Yankee Composer*, 209.

\(^62\) Freeman, “Realism,” 1.

\(^63\) Ibid., 3.
After *The Padrone*’s failure to achieve performance, Chadwick composed only one more work for the stage. This composition, entitled *Love’s Sacrifice*, was an educational production for mixed or treble voices. The work is reminiscent of O. Henry’s *The Gift of the Magi*, and has had one professional production by Opera in Our Language in Chicago in 1923.66

Having placed Chadwick’s biography and theatrical works in proper perspective, this study can turn fully to *The Padrone* and its characteristics. Once these characteristics are understood, an informed performance of the opera can be discussed.

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66Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.
CHAPTER TWO

THE PADRONE

Verismo Defined

After a thorough review of the biography and theatrical works of George Chadwick, The Padrone can be discussed in a more informed light. The musical and literary influences which served to inspire this opera will now be discussed and examined. The Padrone has been labeled as a verismo work in different sources. This assertion must be tested with what is known about the verismo movement and the characteristics of other operas that are labeled as verismo.

The definition of any work, regardless of its nation of origin, as an example of verismo is problematic because of the wide range of works that have been given this label. For the purposes of this discussion, verismo will be defined on two fronts: (1) the literary style exemplified by the works of Giuseppe Verga and his contemporaries in the 1880’s, and (2) the musical style of the “giovane scuola,” or “young school,” of Italian composers active in the 1890’s and the turn of the century. The “young school” included Puccini, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Giordano, and others. Using these defining tools, the literary and the musical, the presence of veristic qualities can be precisely discussed.

67 Leif Bjaland, “Pushing American Buttons: A Verismo Opera Comes to Life After 83 Years,” Symphony 47:1 (1996): 7 and Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online, among others. The Padrone is always referred to at least as an example of realism and is often referred to as adhering to the influences of Puccini and Mascagni.
The term *verismo* originally described a literary movement in Italy during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The chief author of this movement was Giovanni Verga, a Sicilian who also lived in northern and central Italy. His most important works include novels and short stories, the most influential of which were set in contemporary Sicily. These include two short story collections, *Vita dei Campi* (which included *Cavalleria Rusticana*) (1880) and *Novella Rusticana* (1883), and two novels, *I Malavoglia* (1881) and *Mastro-don Gesualdo* (1889). Giovanni Verga epitomized the movement’s practices and innovations, serving as the model for future veristi to follow. Therefore, a description of the characteristics of Verga’s works will serve to define literary *verismo*.

All writers of *verismo* approached it differently, but all “were convinced that an objective, faithful reproduction of reality or any part of it could never be accomplished without eliminating the exaggerations, the vagaries and distortions, of romanticism, which viewed the world with the heart and not with the intellect.” As the verists, and Verga specifically, sought to eliminate what they viewed to be the extravagances of romanticism, they took on a quality of objectivity, restraint, and distance that can be said to define their works. The principled restraint from romantic tendencies is not only felt in the depiction of the passion and emotion of Sicilian peasantry, it is also felt in the prose style. In a terse, non-florid manner, Verga allows the story to

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71 Ibid., xvii.
progress without any commentary or intrusion from the author, no matter how shocking or
violent the subject matter.  

Verismo characters are almost always from the poorest elements of society. They are
contemporary to the time of the author, therefore speaking in a manner appropriate to their time
and social position, not in an elevated, literary fashion. The characters are profoundly regional
in their language, social hierarchy, and behavior. Verga is not describing a peasant “everyman,”
he is cataloging the life of a specific region of Italy. A sense of pessimism seems apparent as
we watch the unsuccessful efforts of characters attempting to escape their station in Verga’s
novel *I Malavoglia*. The characters in Verga’s novel are motivated to rise from their current
socio-economic position by materialism, not by some high sense of moral purpose. Despite their
best efforts, they are slapped down by forces beyond their control. In this way, the veristic
character is not free to act as he or she chooses, but rather is influenced to act by his or her
environment.  

The narrative distance and pessimism of literary verismo can be attributed to its earlier
ancestor, French naturalism. Naturalism’s proponent Émile Zola (1840-1902) saw the author as
an anatomist, merely recording events as observed in a scientific fashion. His sense of pessimism
came from a Darwinian view of man’s place in the natural order as an animal without hope or

72 Sansone, “Literature to Opera,” 5-7.

73 Ibid., 5-7.


75 Gregory L. Lucente, *The Narrative of Realism and Myth: Verga, Lawrence, Faulkner,
help. Verga assimilated these qualities and made them his own, eschewing the research and documentation of Zola’s work for keen personal observation of the lives, speech, mannerisms, and society of his characters. While Zola’s characters were crushed by heredity and societal forces, Verga’s were simple victims of chance. In France, realism and naturalism were “new ways to express the new reality of the times.” In Italy, verismo had an emphasis on the economic problems and passions of the exploited peasantry and working class that served as its subjects.

In his novel *I Malavoglia*, Verga does not make a judgment about the morality of the situation in which the Malavoglia family find themselves. He does not comment on the fairness or unfairness of their treatment by the government or other members of their community, nor does he make a value judgment on the family’s seemingly inevitable financial collapse as a result of a failed business venture. As in Verga’s other works, the events flow naturally toward their unavoidable conclusion. By dispassionately recording the facts of a story in a terse style, Verga eliminated not only the viewpoint but also the style and personality of the author. Verga is not writing to comment on the peasant’s exploitation, merely to document it. Narrative distance allows the verist the freedom to choose any aspect of society, however distasteful, as a fitting subject for artistic expression.

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76 Wright, “Musico-Dramatic Techniques,” 4-5.

77 Ibid., 10.


79 Wright, “Musico-Dramatic Techniques,” 5.

80 Ibid., 12.

A *verismo* plot has several general characteristics. Due to the regional character inherent in their dramaturgy, *verismo* works are generally physically located in a confined setting. Similarly, they are usually contemporary in their place in time, as fits their description of current social problems. Though novels like *I Malavoglia* cover a time period of several months, *verismo* short stories such as *Cavalleria Rusticana* tend to offer a “slice of life” and depict a limited passage of time.\(^8\) Rather than depicting a significant or universal theme, the dispassionate verist is showing his audience a snapshot of his subject matter.\(^8\) The content of *verismo* works is often violent in character, but this is only natural, as violence is often a real part of life for the extremely poor. In keeping with the rejection of romantic excess, veristic plots tend to drive toward their conclusion, absent of extraneous dramatic details.\(^8\)

The great success of Verga’s short story *Cavalleria Rusticana* led to a staged one-act play in 1883. The subsequent success of the play initiated the *verismo* movement in Italian theatre, which would last until 1900. Pietro Mascagni’s opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890) began a similar trend in the operatic theatre. In this way, the performance history of *Cavalleria Rusticana* demonstrates how *verismo* grew from a literary movement to an operatic movement in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century. The connection between the arch-typal veristic play and Mascagni’s opera is most likely the reason for the association of the term *verismo* with the operas of Mascagni and his contemporaries.\(^8\)

\(^8\) Sansone, “Verismo,” online.


\(^8\) Carner, *Puccini*, 241.

\(^8\) Sansone, “Literature to Opera,” 4.
It is the loose association with the more definable *literary verismo* that makes the association of the term *verismo* with opera problematic. The term has been applied to such a wide variety of operas as to become completely ambiguous. *Verismo* can be used to mean little more than “turn of the century,” “sensational,” or simply “violent”. Operas included in this category are as diverse as *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *La Traviata*, and *Turandot*. One could even suggest that all operas with libretti that are realistic are *verismo*. The lack of specificity in defining *verismo* creates the problem of placing operas in this realm that have no association with the literary movement, its time period, or style. A better solution might be found in determining characteristics that are found in the works of Puccini, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, and their contemporaries (often referred to as the “giovane scuola” or “young school”) and labeling these as *musical verismo*. One then could use the two definitions of *literary* and *musical verismo* to determine a work’s relative veristic merits. To this end, a description of the characteristics of the music of the “giovane scuola” is required.

The characteristics of *musical verismo* are not new but appear already in the works of Verdi, Ponchielli, and other predecessors. However, these characteristics appear to a degree not seen before. Musical verists make use of natural sounds like whips and bells, folk music, and music from real life such as drinking songs and street songs, all of which serve to enhance the atmosphere of realism. In regard to non-lyrical text setting, several techniques can be associated with *musical verismo*. In recitative-like music, the use of repeated notes and a “quasi-parlato” style mimics speech. Musical verists also make use of exclamations with no assigned pitch. There is also a technique described by Peter Wright in his dissertation “The Musico-Dramatic Techniques of the Italian Verists” as “orchestrated silence” in which the vocal line is

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86 Sansone, “Verismo,” online.
accompanied by a single sustained bass note or octave. This technique is often inserted into the middle of aria passages. Flamboyant non-lyrical passages are also observed in which short melodic fragments rocket upward or surge downward. These passages are often alternated with the recitative described above. The combination of these two techniques makes up the majority of the music in verismo opera that is not sustained lyricism.87

Many other techniques can be observed in the sustained lyricism of musical verismo. There is a use of vocal lines that "glide in" to coincide with a melodic phrase started by the orchestra.88 Orchestral music tends to be descriptive of the action. Themes are often used for dramatic references, but not as structural devices. These themes can refer to characters, emotions such as “jealousy” or “love,” or to actions in the narrative like frenzied activity. There is a trend towards formal continuity and a less obvious separation between numbers than is seen in earlier opera. Set numbers such as duets and ensembles also appear less frequently. Another pervasive technique of musical verismo is the juxtaposition of diverse musical expressions. A verismo composer often makes use of excitement, surprise, or shock achieved by sudden dynamic changes or frequent tempo changes. Syncopated accompaniment patterns are frequently used to generate this excitement.89

Many of the lyric techniques of musical verismo can be summed up in the works of Puccini, who has been called its “greatest exponent”.90 The melodic content is primarily diatonic in

87 Wright, “Musico-Dramatic Techniques,” 48-61.

88 Carner, Puccini, 273.

89 Wright, “Musico-Dramatic Techniques,” 48-61.

character, consisting primarily of motion by step. Outer parts are frequently doubled, with the harmony occurring in inner voices. Successions of parallel, often unrelated, chords are used, as well as sequences with a heavy subdominant bias. Added notes are utilized, as are unresolved dissonances, and climaxes are built by alternating progressions of chords. All of these techniques take place in the context of Puccini’s deep roots in the Italian tradition of his predecessors Verdi and Ponchielli. He assimilates the pregnant intensity of Verdi’s phrases, but while Verdi used this effect more sparingly, the verist Puccini sought to keep his audience in a perpetual state of “feverish excitement”. The use of sad falling fifths, assimilated from Bellini and Donizetti, is also increased in intensity and frequency. Puccini’s penchant for exoticism is interestingly not out of character with veristic literature. To the average Italian reader, the passionate and violent lives of poor Sicilian peasants must have seemed quite different from their own. In fact, his ability to establish atmosphere and build musical worlds for characters to inhabit is perhaps Puccini’s most veristic characteristic.

**Verismo and The Padrone**

With a more concrete definition of *verismo* in hand, one which addresses the characteristics of both literary and musical *verismo*, *The Padrone* can now be approached from this vantage point. By applying the *verismo* definition with rigor, it can be discovered if this opera, often


92 Budden, “Puccini,” online.


94 Ibid., 277.

labeled as a *verismo* work, can be justly identified. This discovery, in turn, can offer insight for performance study and preparation.

It is impossible in historical hindsight to ascertain Chadwick’s intent when writing *The Padrone*. However, one can look at clues from his life that point to his modeling of the work on the Italian *verismo* model. As noted earlier, Chadwick’s works were influenced often by European models. Examples include the Gilbert and Sullivan influence on *The Peer and the Pauper* and *Tabasco* and the influence of French Grand Opera on *Judith*. As previously mentioned, *Tabasco* also assimilated the characteristics of many other styles.96 Chadwick was obviously aware of important events in music and would have known about the *verismo* movement. The dean of American composers could hardly have missed hearing of the premiere of Puccini’s *La fanciulla del West*, a work with at least some veristic influence, in New York two years before he wrote *The Padrone*. He was, after all, a founder of Boston Opera and an active music educator. More importantly, he served on a panel at the Metropolitan that chose an American work for performance in 1911, only one year before submitting *The Padrone*.97 It is natural that Chadwick, when turning to realistic subject matter, would turn to the most successful genre dealing with realistic subjects: Italian *verismo*. The Wagnerian and French influences on the Italian genre would have resonated with Chadwick.98 Knowing that it is at least plausible for Chadwick to have modeled his work on Italian *verismo*, we can turn to *The Padrone* itself for further evidence. Through examining the opera from the viewpoints of literary and musical

96 Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.


verismo, we can further determine its adherence to the movements’ characteristics. Once the opera’s verismo pedigree is established, valuable information will be available for performance of the work.

To begin a study of The Padrone as an example of literary verismo, it is helpful to examine the plot. As in literary verismo, the plot of The Padrone is straightforward, with the action unfolding in a natural way. The setting is presumed to be Boston’s North End (or a similar northeastern city, this is not spelled out in the libretto), in the “Summer of the Present Day.” Act I of The Padrone begins in an Italian restaurant owned by the title character, the padrone Catani. There is a lively group of customers, and a game of dominos is being played at one table. Dino, a customer, tells Francesca, a waitress, he has already won three games. Marta, the restaurant manager and Francesca’s mother, reprimands him. Francesca tells Dino that her sister, Marietta, is engaged. Dino, intrigued by the news, learns from Marta that Marietta’s betrothed is Marco, her lover in Italy before she came to America. It is also revealed that his ship is to arrive the following day. Francesca tells everyone to wait for Marietta’s arrival so they can wish her well. When Dino questions her about Marco, Francesca reveals that she, too, had been Marco’s lover at one time, before his relationship with Marietta. She is interrupted by Marietta’s arrival.

Marietta, a tambourine girl indentured to the service of Catani, arrives with a flourish of tambourine music. Unknown to Catani, she has been saving the money she earned working with the organ grinder Giuseppe. These earnings will allow her to bring Marco to the United States, clear of any obligation to Catani. Marco, in turn, would then be able to help pay off Marietta’s debts.

Marietta sings of her day’s labor and tells everyone that it is her last ever. She shrugs off her mother’s scolding, obsessed with the wedding she hopes will happen the next day. She
announces the wedding to the gathered customers, who receive the news with a toast. As Catani enters, Marta gathers up Marietta’s wages for the day.

Catani is shocked to hear of the wedding, having been completely unaware of Marietta’s plans. He had been planning to claim Marietta as his own. He flies into a rage when Marta finally reveals Marietta’s plans. Gathering himself, he orders everyone out of the restaurant so he can speak with Marietta alone.

Marietta refuses Catani’s advances, declaring that she will have vengeance if he thwarts her marriage plans in any way. After Marietta leaves, Catani is determined to have her as his own. Having discovered that Francesca, Marietta’s older sister, still loves Marco, Catani persuades the jealous Francesca to denounce Marco to the immigration officials. Marco, who was jailed briefly in Italy, is traveling under an assumed name because of his prison record. This record would prevent his entrance into the country if the immigration officials at the dock knew about it. Once exposed, Marco would be returned to Italy and Marietta would be free for Catani to pursue. If Francesca aids him in his scheme, Catani promises her he will pay for her return to Trapani, the immigrants’ home town, so that she can pursue Marco.

The second act takes place on the dock as passengers disembark from a transatlantic steamer. On the steerage deck the immigrants shout to those waiting for them and sing joyfully while, on the upper decks, American tourists and a group of students sing the nostalgic American tune “Home Again.” Marietta searches for Marco, and Catani, claiming to have accepted her decision, offers his assistance. When Marco finally appears, the couple sing joyously together. Catani privately reminds Francesca of her wounded pride. He urges her to denounce Marco as she promised and to remember the satisfaction she will have at her revenge. Francesca informs the immigration authorities that Marco is an ex-convict, traveling under an assumed name.
Marco is forced back on board the ship. When Marietta learns from Francesca that Catani was responsible for her betrayal, she grabs a knife and stabs him in a fit of passion. He dies, calling for a priest. As a crowd of well-wishers arrives to accompany the bride and groom to the church, Marietta is seized by the police. The crowd cries out in horror at the scene as the curtain falls.

Several qualities of Chadwick’s plot conform to the characteristics of literary verismo. First, the setting and time contained in the piece are very limited and compact, with the setting occupying a small part of Boston and the entire action occurring in a period of twenty-four hours. The plot is also contemporary, for, as the description attests, the opera is set “in the present day.” As in Cavalleria Rusticana, the plot is divided into two acts with an orchestral interlude. The action is swift and lacking in excessive use of dramatic detail, and the audience only learns the facts that are necessary. We learn that Marietta is engaged to a man with a previous relationship to her sister with very little additional detail, such as how long Francesca and Marco were involved and how long ago. These facts simply are not relevant to the main thrust of the story. The violent ending of the piece, the depiction of a situation that the lower classes are unable to escape, and the plot’s overall sense of pessimism are definite veristic characteristics as well. This pessimism is seen in Marietta’s curse of Catani at the end of their duet, as if she knows that fortune will prevent her reunion with Marco. Though describing a contemporary social problem, the plot does not moralize or even truly focus upon it. Rather, the social issue of immigrant exploitation by the padrone system is a background to Catani and Marietta’s passionate story. Details are used to provide atmosphere, such as the working conditions, the social structure, and the legal obstacle to Marco’s immigration. These serve primarily to establish the setting and advance the plot, rather than to make a universal or thematic comment. At the same time, one can imagine that a contemporary audience observing a
performance of *The Padrone* would have been struck by the bleak condition of its characters. This depiction of unpleasant subject matter as fodder for artistic expression is typical of literary *verismo*. By avoiding heavy-handed moralizing, the uncomfortable subject can become palatable. All of these qualities, when taken as a whole, conform to the characteristics of literary *verismo*.

In his dissertation on *The Padrone* and a contemporary realist opera *The Immigrants* (1914) by Frederick Converse, Charles Freeman makes the case that both works are influenced by the Progressive movement and American realism. The two composers were well aware of each other, as Chadwick had been Converse’s composition teacher. Also, it is likely that an educated man like Chadwick would have been aware of American realist authors like William Howells, Stephen Crane, Henry James, and Frank Norris. However, there are differences between *The Padrone* and the works of Howells and “savage realists” like Crane. Howells’ works contrast with veristic ideals in several ways, particularly in the area of narrative distance. Howells writes of clean neighborhoods that "wore an air of encouraging reform and suggested a future of greater and greater domesticity,"99 a turn of phrase typical of Howells and quite different from the works of the Italian verists. Howells’ excessive attention to detail is not present in Chadwick’s plot. Crane’s most well known work, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), differs with *The Padrone* several ways. It is set in the Civil War rather than in the present. It also deals with large themes like war and its effects on average soldiers. The contemporary *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* (1893) deals with the exploited lower class, but this exploitation is at the center of the story.

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99Freeman, “Realism,” 63.
rather than serving as a backdrop for it. These characteristics are why Freeman correctly places these works in the vein of Progressive literature.\(^{100}\)

Converse’s *The Immigrants*, which stands along with *The Padrone* as the only examples of American operatic realism at the time, differs from Chadwick’s opera in the area of plot and setting. Like the works of Howells and Crane, *The Immigrants* is “expansive in scope and highly detailed.” The plot takes place on two continents and describes several aspects of immigrant social problems in exacting detail. The sprawling three act opera stands in stark contrast to Chadwick’s tightly drawn tale of violence and lust. While *The Immigrants* lingers on detailed descriptions of society, *The Padrone* proceeds with little overt comment.\(^{101}\) The narrative viewpoint is uninvolved and remains distant from the characters’ plight.\(^{102}\) While not written in isolation from the influence of American realism, *The Padrone*, particularly when seen alongside *The Immigrants*, seems to adhere more to the Italian veristic model.

When attention turns from *The Padrone*’s veristic plot to its libretto, the characteristics of literary verismo are less pronounced. Librettist David Stevens makes use of florid and archaic language rather than a natural vernacular.\(^{103}\) This use of language can be seen in several examples from the text:

Act I, mm. 59-70:

Dino: ...and tell me now what means Francesca’s noisy chat; does Marietta give a thought to any man?

\(^{100}\)Freeman, “Realism,” 61-66.

\(^{101}\)Charles Freeman, “‘A Progressive Opera?’ Frederick Converse’s *The Immigrants*,” *The Opera Journal* 32 (March 1999): 5-6.

\(^{102}\)Freeman, “Realism,” 86.

\(^{103}\)Ibid., 11.
Marta: One man at least she weds tomorrow: Marco, as soon as he sets foot on land. That ship now brings him hither.

Act I, mm. 211-227:
Marietta: I loved my love when skies were blue, and green was the dimsy glade. Where deep in shadowed gardens grew white lilies for the maid. I loved my love on the em’rald hill where blows the eglandine. In sunlit meads where in beauty shine the iris and the columbine...

Act I, mm. 348-357:
Marietta: Tell you what? You’ve heard but now enough and more than well concerns you. But ‘tis no more a secret. Tomorrow I wed Marco...

Act I, mm. 400-407:
Marietta: Well have I seen your crafty snare to make my soul your own, My girdle on your sleeve to wear to reap what you have sown. But Marco comes and side by side our vows shall be proclaimed. He finds a bride by Mary’s grace whose eyes are unashamed!104

While it can be recognized that the vernacular can be bent somewhat to fit the needs of lyric drama, Stevens’ libretto does not strive to be consistently natural in its declamation.105 The text is often spoken in an awkward syntax for the dubious goal of rhyme, an affect easy to achieve in Italian but more difficult in English. The failings of the libretto in this area could possibly be attributed to Stevens’ lack of experience (The Padrone was his first libretto).106

The Padrone’s flowery libretto is a direct violation of the principles of literary verismo. However, it should be noted that librettists Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci, like Stevens, infused the text of Cavalleria Rusticana with similar florid literary language.107 Thus, the opera, while still maintaining the terse story telling and rapid pace of Verga’s original story,
betrays its roots in literary verismo by abandoning the idiomatic speech of the story’s characters. Perhaps Targioni-Tozzetti and Menasci, followed by Stevens twenty-two years later, wrote an operatic libretto similar to what they were accustomed to hearing, rather than adhering to the original author’s principles. In any case, the florid libretto of *The Padrone* alone does not disqualify it as a veristic work.

In contrast to the flowery content of Stevens’ libretto, Chadwick’s setting of the text is idiomatic and natural in its declamation. Throughout the opera Chadwick demonstrates his particular attention to accurate prosody. For example, Francesca’s early statement in Act I features such words as “money” and “dominos” (Figure 1).

![Fig. 1 Act I, mm. 23-30. Idiomatic text setting](image)

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109 George Whitefield Chadwick, *The Padrone*, copyright 1912. All excerpts are taken from the unpublished Bjaland/Romero piano vocal score. Additionally, excerpts are given according to measures from each Act. The numbering starts over at the beginning of Act II, rather than continuing with Act I measure numbers.
Also, bisyllabic words such as “never,” “threatens,” “welcome,” and “foreign” are generally set with an eighth note followed by a dotted quarter note. This reflects the natural declamation of English speech. The use of natural declamation is particularly prevalent in non-lyric passages, becoming less prominent in more lyrical sections of arias and duets. The declamatory shift is common for realistic opera, as non-lyric passages are more rhythmic in character and allow for more accurate speech rhythms. Even in lyrical passages, though, Chadwick occasionally emphasizes declamation (Figure 2).

![Fig. 2. Act I, mm. 218-219. Emphasis of declamation](image)

In this section of Marietta’s aria, it can be seen that Chadwick superimposes a duple rhythm for the line “white lilies for the maid” over the aria’s triple meter in order to accurately reflect the prosody of the English text.

The characters of *The Padrone* exhibit many of the qualities of literary *verismo* with the exception of vernacular dialogue. They are driven by personal motivations and not by higher
ideals. Though they do not speak in the manner one would associate with Italian immigrants, the characters in *The Padrone* do exhibit behaviors and social structures that are explicitly regional in character. They are also trapped in the environment in which they have been placed. Caught in a cycle of poverty and exploitation, the characters of *The Padrone*, with the exception of the title character, are helpless to act free of their environment’s control. The characters that try most obviously to change their plight, Marco and Marietta, suffer for it: Marietta is taken to prison and Marco is deported.

Catani, a baritone (A♭2 to A4), is a padrone, an Italian who exploits other Italian immigrants through economic means, and loves Marietta. Catani’s love for Marietta is well known before the plot of *The Padrone* begins, as is seen in the fact that Marietta has kept her engagement to Marco secret from him. Catani believes that Marietta belongs to him (he literally tells her “you are mine”). When she tells him of her plan to marry Marco, he shouts: “You dare!” The character is perhaps most precisely defined when he declares “There is no spot beneath the sun for him who thinks to take from me the thing I want.” Though awkward in declamation, Catani’s meaning is clear: he sees the power given to him by the social structure to be absolute. When he cannot achieve his goals through brute force, Catani turns to manipulation of Francesca. Though Catani is killed at the end of the opera, there is little doubt that another man will step into the power vacuum, leaving the social strata of the opera unchanged.

Marietta, a soprano (B3 to C6), is a tambourine girl in the employ of the padrone Catani. Marietta is also the daughter of Marta, sister of Francesca, and fiancée/lover of Marco. In order to pay off Catani’s usurious interest, Marietta must work long hours as a tambourine player on the street (presumably for men who want to see a pretty girl dance for them). However, unknown to Catani, Marietta has saved her money in order to buy passage for her fiancé Marco. This offers a
promise of escape from Catani for Marietta, as Marco (who will arrive outside of a Padrone’s influence) will be able to help pay off her debt.

Events associated with Marietta’s murder of Catani at the end of the opera offer important insights into her character. Chadwick revised Stevens’ original depiction of the murder, adding comments from the Inspectors about a knife in order to establish its presence on stage separate from Marietta. In the original version, she would have had to bring the knife with her, thus establishing premeditation. In the revised version, Marietta’s crime is one of passion, not cruel calculation. However, her curse of Catani in Act I shows that she is a woman capable of contemplating violence. The curse could also be seen to show her provincial Italian heritage. It is also interesting that she commits the crime when Marco is deported. After all, he is not dead, merely separated from her. However, Francesca comments in Act I that all of Marietta’s money has gone to pay for Marco’s passage, a sum that would have taken years to acquire. This bold gamble on her future happiness is reminiscent of the business deal in *I Malavoglia*. It would be impossible for Marietta to secretly save a large enough sum to pay for Marco’s passage again. Thus, Marietta is helpless against the dictates of her environment.

Marietta’s view of herself and the way others describe her is quite different. She stubbornly refers to herself as a maid or maiden, perhaps to insist that she has remained pure for Marco, despite Catani’s advances. Catani often refers to her as a “girl” to signify his dominance over her, and calls her a “jade” and a “hussy” when she angers him. The community most often refers to her as a “bride,” for obvious reasons, and her sister calls her a “cunning minx.” It could be that

Francesca, a waitress, is mocking Marietta’s work as a tambourine girl and implying that she is selling more than music.111

Marco, a tenor (E3 to Bb4), is not as precisely drawn as other major characters in the plot. One could correctly assume that the addition of details is unnecessary: he primarily represents the happiness that Marietta is denied. Other than his prior romance with Francesca and his previous prison term, we know nothing else of Marco beyond his love for Marietta. These two details of Marco’s past are known solely for their value in advancing the plot. In this way, The Padrone exhibits a chief characteristic of literary verismo, the excision of extraneous dramatic detail.

Francesca, a mezzo-soprano (Ab3 to A5), is more central to the story, and therefore more details about her character are revealed than we learn of Marco. Though the depth of her feelings toward Marco is not spelled out, they are at least stronger than her loyalty to her sister. This betrayal is primarily motivated by self-interest: the promise of a life with Marco and an escape from her circumstances. It is noted that this attempt to escape her station results in the end of any hope of ever reconciling with Marco or rising above her social status. Again, we see the veristic characteristic of environmental forces dominating free will.

The other characters exist almost solely for plot advancement. Dino, a character tenor (F3 to G4), is present to display Marietta’s place in the social structure and reveal expositional details, as when he is told of Marietta’s plans to marry Marco. Similarly, Marta, a contralto (Ab3 to F5), reveals Marietta’s plans to Catani, though she does have more musical material than Dino. In the Act II quartet, she also advances the plot by convincing Marietta to trust Catani’s offer of help. The various officials and chorus roles are standard comprimario parts, existing only to reveal

111Freeman, “Realism,” 24.
expositional information such as the placement of the knife on stage or the arrival of Marco’s ship.

*The Padrone* can be seen to reflect many of the characteristics of literary verismo. In its use of rapid pacing, characters, and lack of excessive detail, it can be said to exhibit many qualities associated with Verga and his contemporaries. However, before it can be said to represent an example of a verismo opera, its musical characteristics must also be examined.

In the eyes of some scholars, *The Padrone* is directly associated with musical verismo. Victor Yellin, in his dissertation “The Life and Operatic Works of George Chadwick,” declares that “the method followed in *The Padrone* is based on [Chadwick’s] union of Wagner’s symphonic-recitative and Italian lyricism first used extensively by Verdi in *Otello*.”112 This description, for many, would serve as a brief definition of musical verismo. In his definitive biography of Chadwick, *Chadwick: Yankee Composer*, Yellin points out that Puccini, Mascagni, and Leoncavallo, were “obvious models” for *The Padrone*.113 Similarly, another Chadwick scholar, Steven Ledbetter, writes that Chadwick’s scenario was “clearly similar” to then-recent Italian verismo works and that Chadwick was influenced in his approach by Verdi, Puccini, Mascagni, and Leoncavallo.114 With the opinions of these scholars pointing to the influence of musical verismo on *The Padrone*, we can look specifically to the opera to support this claim.

The first area of examination is in the realm of non-lyrical techniques. *The Padrone* can be seen to make use of the “quasi-parlato” technique mentioned above in Figure 3 and Figure 4.


113Yellin, *Yankee Composer*, 213.

114Ledbetter, “Chadwick,” online.
Other examples of the quasi-parlato technique include mm. 258-268 of Act I and mm. 130-137, 274-277, 622-628, 797-798 of Act II.

Fig. 3. Act I, mm. 90-95. Use of the “quasi-parlato” technique

Fig. 4. Act I, mm. 158-165. Use of the “quasi-parlato” technique
In addition, there are several instances of the use of exclamations with no assigned pitch (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

Fig. 5. Act I, m. 71. Use of exclamations with no assigned pitch

Fig. 6. Act I, mm. 392-395. Use of exclamations with no assigned pitch

In Figure 6 we even see the effect used by two different characters within a short period of time: first by Marietta in m. 392, and then by Catani in m. 395. Other uses of non-pitched exclamation are m. 743 of Act I and mm. 391, 954, and 1011 of Act II.

Chadwick uses the orchestra for non-musical effects in the opening of Act I, depicting sounds of a donkey engine and hoisting tackle. In addition, there is a small use of Wright’s “orchestrated silence” (Figure 7 and Figure 8). Other examples of this technique include mm. 130-131 and 585-586 of Act II. Flamboyant non-lyrical passages are also used in alternation with

\[\text{\footnotesize Yellin, Yankee Composer, 215.}\]
parlato recitative. As discussed above, these short melodic fragments rocket upward or downward in Figure 9 and Figure 10.

Fig. 7. Act I, mm. 321-322. Use of Wright’s “orchestrated silence”

Fig. 8. Act I, mm. 347-348. Use of Wright’s “orchestrated silence”

Fig. 9 Act I, mm. 453-454. Melodic fragment
This technique is also used in mm. 357-358, 794-796, 875-880, and 944-948 of Act I.

In addition to the use of non-lyrical techniques, *The Padrone* makes use of many other characteristics associated with *musical verismo*. There are examples of vocal lines “gliding in” to coincide with melodic phrases begun in the orchestra in Figure 11 and Figure 12.
Other examples of melodies “gliding in” include mm. 722-723 of Act I and mm. 427-428, and 629-632 of Act II.

Chadwick makes use of several character motives in *The Padrone* as dramatic devices. As is usually the case in *musical verismo*, these motives do not have a structural function. These motives include, for example, the association of staccato fourths with the character Francesca (Figure 13 and Figure 14).

Fig. 12 Act II, mm. 467-470. Vocal line “gliding in”

Fig. 13 Act I, mm. 23-30. Staccato fourths associated with Francesca
Marietta is associated with the tambourine, the melody of her aria and the rising 6th that marks its opening phrase, and a vengeance motive that accompanies her curse of Catani. Catani, in turn, is associated with the repeated major 2nd first in lower winds simultaneously, then melodically, and later combined to form a whole tone scale.\textsuperscript{116} Catani is also associated with trombones and low winds without the major 2nd. His first entrance is marked by a trombone chord progression, and trombones mark his declaration “You are mine!” The opening statement of his aria, "She stifles me" is accompanied only by clarinet in low range, bass clarinet and contra bassoon. In Act II, low winds symbolize the plot to deport Marco. When Catani makes his false promise to Marietta, the bassoon, low clarinet and horn return. Also, the bass clarinet and bassoon appear when he convinces Francesca to betray Marco.\textsuperscript{117} Other motives are not associated with characters per se, such as a motive that relates to law or fate (Figure 15 and Figure 16).


\textsuperscript{117}Freeman, “Realism,” 47.
The veristic trend toward continuity and away from obvious separate numbers is also present in *The Padrone*.\(^{118}\) Though there are examples of excerptable arias and duets and an ensemble quartet, these are melded into the flow of the action and not abruptly set apart from the narrative. Already accomplished at writing for the orchestra, Chadwick’s natural flair for this continuity allowed him to meld numbers in the opera into the narrative with ease.\(^{119}\) Chadwick also


\(^{119}\)Yellin, *Yankee Composer*, 213.
maintains the juxtaposition of diverse musical expressions found often in *musical verismo* (Figure 17).

![Fig. 17 Act I, mm. 356-360. Juxtaposition of musical expressions](https://example.com/musical-verismo-fig17.png)

*The Padrone* has many features of the sustained lyricism of *musical verismo*. The melodies are primarily tuneful and diatonic. The continuity of melody is reminiscent of Wagner, while the melodic style is reminiscent of Puccini and Massenet.\(^\text{120}\) There is also use of parallel chords in the score, particularly when most appropriate to support the action. In the following excerpt, Chadwick uses the technique to evoke Marietta’s love for Marco (Figure 18).

\(^{120}\)Freeman, “Realism,” 44.
Chadwick makes use of octave doubling and non-functional chord relationships. The composer often avoided the use of dominant-tonic resolutions for more subdominant relations. Chadwick utilized eleventh and thirteenth chords, progressions of non-related chords, suspensions and non-harmonic tones in fundamental harmonies, and eliminated the sense of fixed tonality. The whole tone scale is used as an harmonic basis, and enharmonic equivalents are used frequently, especially for modulation. The Act II quartet makes partial use of another Puccini characteristic: the ostinato. While not melodically repetitive, the repetition of rhythm and text

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achieves a similar effect. Another Puccini characteristic, the “exotic” element, assimilated into the score is Americana, a subject Chadwick knew well. The nostalgic song “Home Again” is quoted in the chorus of Act II, as is “Yankee Doodle” in a flute obbligato. Throughout the work, Chadwick blends the European techniques discussed with an American melodic flavor.

Chadwick has used both lyrical and non-lyrical techniques of musical verismo to match the emotional narrative of The Padrone. In this way, the natural flow of the music heightens the flow of events in the plot. Rather than slavishly copying the works of Puccini, Mascagni, and their contemporaries, he assimilated characteristics of musical verismo into his own personal style resulting in an opera that is both American and verismo in quality.

When compared to the characteristics of literary and musical verismo, The Padrone can certainly be characterized to be in the verismo tradition. This information can then be used as an aid in study and preparation for performance of the opera.

**Analysis for Performance**

With the knowledge of The Padrone’s verismo influence, the performers of each role, the conductor, and the stage director have a clear starting point for interpretation. As one examines the work, several issues of performance practice can be assumed. In any verismo opera there should be idiomatic use of rubato, portamento, and other romantic mannerisms assimilated from the Italian repertoire. The exploitation of “pregnant” phrasing is paramount. With the lack of subplotting and extraneous action, each phrase rises to a higher level of importance and meaning,

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125 Ibid., 214.
requiring a greater level of intensity. Virtuosity is somewhat sacrificed for the sake of maintaining a sense of realism. While the singer can and should make good use of the voice at particularly poignant or passionate moments, in a verismo work the reality of the moment should take precedence over vocal demonstration. Despite the opera’s overly literate libretto, the singer-actors should strive to portray their characters as poor peasants in a real situation, as opposed to heroic operatic characters. Their passions should be extreme and powerful, conveying realistically the situation of the drama. As we begin a score study of The Padrone, the issues of performance will be discussed specifically, along with a commentary on Chadwick’s orchestral accompaniment.

The action of The Padrone starts immediately, with no overture. The opening pedal of F - C and C - G diads is joined above by an Eb major triad. These pitches outline the initial tones of the harmonic series beginning with the third harmonic. Chadwick uses a similar technique at the beginning of other works such as the tone poem The Lily Nymph and the opening of Act III of Judith. The animated quality of the following material, which mimics the hustle and bustle of the restaurant scene, comes crashing down to silence in time for Dino’s first lines.

Dino, a tenor (F3 to G4), is a character role with a limited range of little more than an octave. The chief challenge for the portrayal of Dino is revealing expositional information clearly. The rapid pace of action and lack of expositional detail in the libretto make his statements and questions crucial to following the plot. Chadwick makes this easier by limiting the orchestration when Dino speaks. The bustling motive of the opening bars returns when Dino calls out “Pay up!” to his fellow domino players. These early lines should be almost spoken in quality because they exist to establish a realistic atmosphere. In addition, as one of the few examples of

vernacular text in the opera, emphasis on these lines may help to compensate for overly poetic text which appears later in the opera.

Francesca, a mezzo-soprano (Ab\textsuperscript{3} to A\textsuperscript{5}), who has been roaming about serving customers, responds to Dino, accompanied by her signature motive of staccato fourths. Marta, a contralto (Ab\textsuperscript{3} to F\textsuperscript{5}), chimes in with a “chatter” motive in the orchestra as she scolds Francesca’s flirting. The close juxtaposition of these two lower female voices highlights a challenge for both roles: maintaining individuality of color in the fabric of the opera. Marta must have a dark enough color in relation to Francesca in order to make this scene and the later quartet effective. When Marta mentions Marietta’s impending wedding, a first example of Marietta’s tambourine motive is heard. Their conversation ends with another flurry of “bustling restaurant” music.

After Dino slips over to Marta on the pretense of purchasing cigarettes, he quizzes her about Marietta’s upcoming wedding plans. Marta sings a brief arioso about Marco’s impending arrival, accompanied by some of the music from Marco’s aria “O sweet, how sweet the summer day.”\textsuperscript{127} After Dino exclaims “So!” at the news of Marietta’s secret fiancé, the “fate” or “law” motive appears for the first time. The appearance of this material could be interpreted to mean that Dino has drawn the crowd’s attention. This simple act has revealed that Marietta plans to marry, setting in motion the eventual return of Marco to Italy. It is here that we see Chadwick’s first use of a motive in a dramatic context beyond a simple character reference. The law/fate motive and others will be used by Chadwick to comment upon the story as the opera progresses.

Marta quickly changes the subject, which briefly brings back the restaurant motive. Francesca, initially accompanied by her motive, sings a brief section of parlando followed by more sustained lyricism. Rapid parlando occurs when she asks the others to wait for Marietta’s

\textsuperscript{127}Yellin, “Life and Operatic Works,” 257.
arrival so that they can wish her well. The passion displayed when she says Marco’s name leads Dino to ask if she knows him. Francesca begins to sing in a more lyrical melody about her previous relationship with Marco, but is interrupted by the arrival of Marietta.

Marietta, a soprano (B3 to C6), arrives amid an extended version of the tambourine motive, a pentatonic melody in a skipping rhythm. Her initial music is made up of short breathless phrases, depicting her exhaustion at the end of the day. The tambourine motive continues as Marietta invites everyone to observe the instrument’s final performance. With this statement Marietta is dangerously flaunting the secret of her upcoming marriage, which should greatly disturb Marta and Francesca. Marta should be worried that Marietta is taking too large a risk, and Francesca should be jealous of Marietta’s love. Rhythmic passages of tambourine music are alternated with expansive lyricism as Marietta speaks of Marco and her plans. A challenge for Marietta in this passage is a wide tessitura, covering almost two octaves at one point in the space of four measures.

Marta interrupts the party, scolding Marietta’s recklessness. She asks Francesca to bring Marietta some food. The orchestral texture changes again as Marietta sings, making use of shimmering parallel treble chords to reflect her dreams. She breaks from her reverie, urging the crowd to toast her upcoming marriage. The crowd responds with a largely homophonic chorus toasting her future nuptials. This is followed by the restaurant motive lyrically intertwined with some of Marietta’s love music, gradually giving way to Marietta’s aria “I Loved My Love.”

The aria is the first set piece of the work, occurring two hundred and ten measures into the opera. It is fairly simple in structure, consisting of forty-eights bars mostly organized into equal periods. The structure matches the purity and simplicity of the emotion described in the text.

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There is a deep sense of nostalgia in the melody as Marietta reflects on the good times before her current servitude. She can almost touch these feelings now, as she believes they are close to returning. The challenge of this aria is to maintain the appropriate simplicity and avoid an overly romanticized performance. In character with the *verismo* tradition, the section should be honest and very passionate. An additional challenge is to make the non-vernacular text seem appropriate when sung by a peasant girl. Another interpretive option for the aria would be that Marietta is singing an older song that the restaurant crowd knows well. Rather than making the text up on the spot, she sings a popular nostalgic tune that fits the situation she is describing. This would make the libretto’s florid quality make more sense and also explain the crowd’s singing of the piece later as they leave. The opening leap of the aria should have a portamento, as the use of the phrase/slur marking would indicate. All duple patterns in the 9/8 framework should receive accurate attention, as they are present for proper text emphasis. The tessitura of the aria is relatively limited, lying mostly in the staff, with a high B near the end. The aria trails off at the conclusion into a quasi-parlato repetition of the line “red roses for the wife.” This is reminiscent of the *verismo* quality of ending arias in a quasi-parlato style.129

After a fermata (for applause) at the end of the aria, Marta jolts the plot back into action by scolding Marietta once more. She tells Marietta to gather up her money before Catani arrives. Marta responds: “Marco pays in gold!” Catani enters just in time to hear this amid a powerful statement in the lower brass with repeated major 2nds. After he inquires about the “gold,” we hear more “Catani” motivic material.

As with most first entrances in theatrical works, this one is important. Catani must arrive with a level of presence and menace to evoke the music that accompanies him. His ad libidum

parlando lines should be broad and cruel. Interestingly, Marietta and Francesca’s motives blend when Catani mentions Marietta’s name and Francesca responds. When she reveals Marietta’s secret wedding, there is a flurry of angry music as Catani assimilates this information. The phrase “you kept me in the dark” presents a tessitura challenge as it descends to an A# while some of the angry music occurs (ms. 307-311). The passage in the orchestra is marked piano with a crescendo, but a verismo read of the score would have a dramatic swell already underway when the A# is sounding. A passage like this indicates the need for a baritone with a strong lower register for the role.

The passage ends with Catani’s almost whispered order for everyone to leave: “This is a time to be alone.” Dino, accompanied by a contrasting dancing motive, declares that everyone should leave to prepare for the wedding. The restaurant crowd leaves, singing Marietta’s aria in a four-part chorus. The women’s and men’s parts are sung homophonically. Once the crowd is dispersed, another large section begins with the duet between Marietta and Catani. The duet, in turn, leads to Catani’s aria, followed by a duet between Francesca and Catani.

As Catani and Marietta begin their duet, church bells are heard in the orchestra, chiming the hour of six. This is a tranquil moment in the orchestra that should be used to focus the audience’s attention on the intimate scene after the departure of the chorus. The duet that follows features many changes in texture, key, and dynamics, to fit the flow of the dialogue. Consisting of standard issue verismo arioso singing, the duet features strong sustained phrases lying in a medium to high tessitura. Full lyric voices from the Puccini, Mascagni, or Leoncavallo repertoire are required in order to maintain the legato and to cut over Chadwick’s large orchestration.130 Highlights include the agitated accented triplets of Catani’s motive when he shouts: “You dare!”

and the transformation of the tambourine motive during Marietta’s response. The early interplay
of the duet gives way to longer arioso declarations, first by Marietta (“Well have I seen your
crafty snare”) and then Catani (“But, listen girl”). Marietta comments on Catani’s words briefly,
and then he continues with a strong character statement: he is accustomed to getting what he
wants and this situation is no different.

Marietta’s response to Catani’s declaration is one of the more musically interesting moments
in the opera. The agitato of the previous music gradually slows down rhythmically, like a beating
heart, until finally arriving at a complete pause. Then, accompanied by an exotic oboe motive,
Marietta puts a curse on Catani. Singing in sinuous half steps, she declares that should he do
anything to thwart her happiness she will have vengeance. As the statement grows in intensity
the music becomes more agitated with rising scales in the bass and the first appearance of the
“knife,” or “Catani’s death” motive. Marietta ends her violent declaration on a high Bb and
storms out, accompanied again by the knife motive, now in broad treble chords. The sustained
building of this section is some of Marietta’s most difficult singing and definitely requires a
larger instrument to carry over the orchestra.

As the power of Marietta’s curse diminishes in the orchestration, Catani reflects. Over
silence, he begins his aria with the words “She stifles me!” The aria, reminiscent of a Verdi
monologue aria like Iago’s Credo or Ford’s Dream, begins with short, stifled phrases and then
proceeds with sustained lyricism. The tessitura of the aria is generally friendly, moving
alternately up into the higher range and then back down into the upper parts of the bass staff. The
descent to Bb on the phrase “Though all the flames of Aetna” could be overshadowed if the
orchestra fails to observe the piano marking in the score. Beyond this, however, the aria is
accessible to baritones from the Puccini or Leoncavallo repertoire. A lyric baritone in the part can take advantage of the optional high A at the end of the aria.

Sustained instrumental music follows the section, providing Catani with dramatic time to gather himself and make his plans. When the staccato fourths reappear, Francesca enters a few measures later. A stage director should either have Catani see or hear Francesca coming when her motive reappears, so he can prepare for her entrance.

In contrast to the fiery nature of the Marietta/Catani duet, the following duet is more sensual, to reflect Catani’s seduction of Francesca into his plans. The initial music is a blend of Catani and Francesca’s motives. As Francesca passionately sings of her love for Marco, Catani responds in gentle prodding tones. In the midst of the duet, Francesca sings “The wind in the orchard,” a small aria which has many similarities to Marietta’s “I loved my love.” Speaking in similar metaphors of trees and flowers, Francesca tells of how her relationship with Marco withered and died. The difficulty in the aria lies purely in the dramatic vein, as range and tessitura are not challenging. A poignant staging would perhaps have Francesca physically echo Marietta’s placement on stage for her aria. After the aria is over, Catani manipulates Francesca into revealing that Marco is a criminal, and thus legally prevented from immigrating. Catani’s phrase “it is the law” is punctuated by a strong statement of the law/fate music heard earlier. A doubtful Francesca asks “And Marietta?”, to which Catani responds that Francesca would then have Marco for herself. Their plan unfolds: Francesca will reveal that Marco is a convict traveling under a false name and Catani will make sure that the immigration officials deport him. Catani responds to all of Francesca’s objections, convincing her to betray Marco.

The demands for Catani in this second duet are quite different than for the duet with Marietta. While the first duet is characterized by power and brute force, the second is warm,
seductive, and sensual. The tone must be inviting and not threatening. Here the role favors a more lyric sound, a contrast to the earlier passages that leaned toward a dramatic voice. When the two duets are compared, it is clear that vocal color is one of the role’s chief challenges.

The restaurant crowd returns to toast Marietta’s wedding just as the duet concludes. While they sing, Catani appears to join in, but then declares ominously that he will see them all tomorrow night. Marietta appears, joyfully telling Francesca how their friends wish her well. She waves to the departing crowd out the window, thanking them all for their toast. As the crowd fades into the distance, the music of the scene also fades, gradually slowing down to a long final group of sustained chords. This ending offers an interesting challenge to the realistic director in that the action must necessarily fade in intensity with the music, which belies Marietta’s feelings. One option would be for Marietta to leave again after the crowd departs, leaving Francesca alone on stage to reflect on her decision to betray her sister. This would make the ending of the act particularly ominous in quality, while maintaining the reality that verismo requires.

The orchestral interlude, reminiscent of Cavalleria Rusticana, is a tone poem made up of motivic material from both acts of the opera. Only about four minutes in length, the interlude begins with soft strings playing slow impressionistic chords. As intensity builds, the orchestra swells into a grand restatement of Marietta's aria in strings with brass (particularly horn) also playing important parts. Transitional music then leads to material from the Act II duet of Marco and Marietta. Finally, the section recedes again to its initial soft strings. Many interpretations of the passage present themselves, but one interesting slant would be that the music represents Marietta's dreams as she awaits Marco's arrival. She begins by thinking back nostalgically, and then fantasizes about their anticipated reunion. In any case, this section could be staged in
pantomime, but probably to the detriment of the reality achieved in Act I. A better choice would be to let the music stand on its own without a visual counterpart.

Act II occurs on a dock where ships are landing and unloading their passengers. A chorus is welcoming tourists and immigrants alike to America. The music bursts instantly into the boisterous scene, with a grander quality than the opening of Act I to reflect the larger events. A group of tourists onboard sings the old American song "Home Again," celebrating their return "from a foreign shore," while those on the dock shout the names of friends and family. The names shouted are Italian, indicating those called for are immigrants. As the immigrants disembark, they sing of America as a land of milk and honey – and endless money. The cacophony continues until a messenger arrives with a package for the Chief Inspector. The role of the messenger, consisting only of a small melody of two pitches, is written for a tenor but could easily be sung by a baritone. The Chief Inspector is a character bass. After their conversation, the First Officer shouts instructions to the Boatswain and the crew. Their presence is mostly atmospheric, establishing the scene of a busy dock.

The Chief Inspector then asks the Second Inspector for a knife to cut the string on the passage. The knife/Catani death motive is heard when the Second Inspector mentions that the knife would "kill a man." After this important exposition is finished, the members of the crowd resume their celebrations, perhaps as new waves of immigrants and well-wishers arrive on the scene. The music grows increasingly complex, with the various melodies heard earlier now sung simultaneously. The craftsmanship and excitement of this passage far exceeds the simple homophony heard in the choral music of Act I.

Francesca enters and asks Dino, who is already on stage, if Catani has arrived. Dino responds by shouting to disembarking friends, leading to a final burst of sound from the chorus as they
join in. Marietta and Marta arrive, with Catani soon after, accompanied by his major 2nd motive. He greets them warmly, which makes Marietta suspicious. He responds by declaring he has no ill will. To prove it, Catani shows a paper that will allow them to see Marco immediately, without waiting with the others on the dock. Marietta is still suspicious, so Catani sings an arioso explaining that he can lose with dignity. This music, like the duet with Francesca, must be sung with warmth and gentility in order to be effective.

The arioso gives way to the largest principal ensemble of the piece, a quartet with Catani, Marietta, Francesca, and Marta. The presence of three lower voice types gives the piece a dark color that is unique and interesting, and the rhythmic and melodic repetition is reminiscent of Puccini’s use of ostinato. As the quartet begins, Catani’s focus changes from the group to an aside where he declares that if he can gain Marietta’s trust now, he can have her love later. Francesca and Marta urge Marietta to trust Catani, while Marietta speaks in an aside of her desire for Marco.

After a fermata (for applause) at the end of the quartet, Dino cries out that more immigrants are coming, with Marco surely in the lot. The crowd sings a greeting to Marietta’s bridegroom, shouting “Ah!” when he appears. As the crowd joyfully welcomes him, Marietta first, then Marco, sing ecstatically over the shouts of the chorus.

Marco rushes to Marietta, and sings the opening arioso of their duet, “O sweet, how sweet, the summer day.” The role of Marco, though brief, is challenging. In his review of the premiere stage performance of The Padrone on 11 April 1997, Richard Dyer comments that “Marco isn’t around very long, and has to work very hard when he’s there.” Though not reaching higher than Bb4, the tessitura of the role is demanding, requiring a skilled spinto tenor. Much of the

131Freeman, “Realism,” 51.
duet is sung in unison, as reminiscent of Puccini. It is notable that this love duet uses nature as a metaphor, which is similar to Marietta and Francesca’s earlier arias. The passion between Marietta and Marco must be quite extreme for this scene to work. Because we have not seen Marco until now and we know what Marietta has risked to bring him to America, their relationship cannot be depicted as a simple love affair. In order for the tragedy of the denouement to properly affect the audience, Marco and Marietta’s love must seem deep and valuable.

After the passionate accompaniment in the orchestra winds down, Catani whispers to Francesca that Marco has not even noticed her. She responds that he will soon enough. Marco calls Marietta his wife, and she playfully says “almost” while showing him their marriage certificate. The certificate has their real names, and we hear Catani’s major 2nd motive when they are read. Marco reveals to Marietta that he has traveled under an assumed name, reminding her (and the audience) of his prison term and explaining that he will be deported if discovered. Naturally, this exposition is accompanied by the law/fate motive and Catani’s major 2nd.

After responding that she will never let Marco be taken from her, Marietta urges haste in a rapid parlando. She concludes her statement by presenting Marco to her mother and sister. Marco calls Francesca “sister,” which makes her very angry. She passionately declares that Marco trod on her feelings, to which he laughingly responds that her feelings toward him, or anyone else, were hardly serious. The passage is interesting in that it leads to the possible conclusion that Francesca’s conflict is jealousy of Marietta in general, rather than a real attachment to Marco. When Marco says that he will be married within the hour, she responds “be not too sure,” accompanied by the law/fate motive.
After the Chief Inspector calls for Marco, Marietta sends Dino to the church to inform the priest that they will arrive soon. The crowd departs with him, singing their best wishes to Marietta. Catani whispers to Francesca that now is the time to act. When she falters, he shouts at her, challenging her love for Marco. He reminds her of the promise of reuniting with Marco in Trapani, paraphrasing her aria to make the point. Convinced, Francesca steps forward, challenges Marco’s identity, and reveals his prison record to the Chief Inspector. Marietta claims that Francesca is lying, and Marco laments that they are lost. To prove her case, Francesca points to Marco’s real name on the wedding certificate in Marietta’s possession.

One of the most poignant moments in the opera occurs when, after a stunned silence, Marietta states softly “my sister.” She asks Catani what he knows of this as the law/fate motive accompanies the dialogue. He truthfully replies that he has never seen Marco before. The Inspector formally challenges Marco, who honorably admits his identity. While the Inspector condemns Marco to deportation, we hear a blending of the law/fate motive with the knife/death motive. Marietta sings a brief passionate arioso, “Farewell my love.” The aria is presented in an easily accessible tessitura, perhaps to allow for ease of emotional expression. The law/fate motive becomes pronounced as the young man is dragged away. Marietta cries out Marco’s name as the law motive gives way to passionate music and the utilization of Catani’s major 2nd motive.

When Marco is finally taken below on the ship, we hear the knife/death motive in a slow progression of thick chords. The music here is slow and dirge-like, gradually growing softer until it dies away. Francesca, now feeling guilty, begs Marietta’s forgiveness. After a crashing descending scale in the orchestra, she reveals that Catani is the mastermind behind her betrayal. Marietta screams his name in shock, having been convinced earlier that Catani was her friend.
She declares that she sees no cunning or ill will in what has happened, and that it is perhaps the will of heaven. Then, with building intensity and animation, she muses that perhaps the little bird struck down by fate can rise up in vengeance. When she refers to a weapon, she presumably takes the Chief Inspector’s knife. Finally, with a final cry of “vengeance” she plunges the knife into Catani’s heart. After he cries out, we hear the knife/death motive in broad long chords. After some twenty measures of death music, Catani calls for a priest and dies. As he lies on the ground, we hear a final pianissimo rendition of the knife/death motivic material in slow chords. The section ends with a pulsing low rhythm of two sixteenth notes and an eight note, played very softly three times like a dying heartbeat.

Immediately following Catani’s death, the chorus returns, singing the earlier toast to Marietta, accapella. The orchestra joins them with a rapid crescendo as they come upon Catani’s body. The crowd of well-wishers cries out in horror at the bloody scene. The orchestra builds to a broad climax of the knife/death motive, then fades to pianissimo. The final gesture of the opera is a tremolo, building over two measures from pianissimo to a short, powerful fortissimo chord.

When viewed as a whole, the challenges for performing *The Padrone* do not lie in particular moments of vocal difficulty. As has been noted, many passages have manageable or limited tessitura. The primary challenge lies in the area of casting roles with artists that are appropriate to the repertoire. With the knowledge that *The Padrone* is of the *verismo* genre, singers should be cast that can maintain appropriate lyricism while being heard over the orchestration. Additionally, the issue of vocal color is important when considering the appropriateness of artists for the principal roles. Once all of these factors have been put into place, an informed performance of *The Padrone* may be undertaken.
Conclusion and Opportunities for Future Research

In his biography of Chadwick, Victor Yellin makes the following statement about *The Padrone*:

As early as 1912, *The Padrone* had already demonstrated its particularly American solution to such problems as idiomatic text setting, balances between orchestra and voice, choice of a socially realist scenario, and the representation of raw, incestuous passion and betrayal. Lacking such a model, the young composer seeking an operatic recipe had to look to Europe or reinvent the wheel...\(^{132}\)

One cannot know what would have happened to the history of American opera if *The Padrone* had received a performance at the Metropolitan Opera or any other important venue within its time. Whatever its faults, libretto or otherwise, the opera could have marked a starting-off point for a school of American *verismo* opera. Young composers at the beginning of the twentieth century, many of whom studied with Chadwick, could have taken this first step and improved upon it. This question, unfortunately, can never be answered.

There are several possibilities for future research on *The Padrone*. A primary avenue would be a scholarly edition of both a piano/vocal score and a full orchestral score. Currently, the orchestral score is a single hand-written copy in the New England Conservatory Library and the original piano/vocal score has been lost. The piano vocal score developed for the 1995 concert production is currently unpublished. Since the work is such a unique part of the American operatic repertoire, it has value at least as a work for performance at educational institutions. The availability of scores would make performances of *The Padrone* more accessible. Another possibility for the scholarly edition would be an alternate libretto that makes use of vernacular text or returns to Chadwick’s original Italian and English scheme.

\(^{132}\)Yellin, *Yankee*, 220-221.
Additionally, recent scholarship has revealed more of Chadwick’s writings. While some of this new scholarship has been assimilated into this document, more can still be learned. For example, as a teacher of opera workshop, did Chadwick leave behind notes or papers that pointed to his ideas about operatic production or staging? What other scholarly documents might provide further insight into Chadwick’s ideas about operatic performance? This kind of documentary study would necessarily require cooperation from Chadwick’s estate, the New England Conservatory, and others.

The purpose of this document has been to familiarized singers and teachers with George Whitefield Chadwick and specifically his verismo opera, *The Padrone*. The illusive term *verismo* has been defined and applied to the opera by addressing the issues of literary and musical *verismo*. Finally, *The Padrone* was discussed in preparation for an informed performance. It is hoped that this document will prove to be a useful guide for future performances of the opera in either an educational or professional setting. With the current trend toward the revival of lesser-known works and the production of operas outside of the main repertoire, *The Padrone* might prove to be an interesting choice for modern production, particularly if paired with an Italian *verismo* piece like *I Pagliacci* or *Cavalleria Rusticana*. In any case, *The Padrone* is certainly worthy of study and interest as a unique American opera.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

THEATRICAL WORKS OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD CHADWICK

*The Peer and The Pauper*, 1884
Librettist: Robert Grant
Unpublished: Manuscript copy at the New England Conservatory of Music
Unperformed

*A Quiet Lodging*, 1892
Librettist: Arlo Bates
Unpublished: Libretto typescript at the New England Conservatory of Music
Performance: Boston, 1 April 1892

*Tabasco*, 1894
Librettist: R. A. Barnet
Published: Boston: B. F. Wood Music Co., 1894.
Performance: Boston, 9 April 1894

*Judith*, 1901
Librettist: William Chauncy Langdon
Performance: Worcester, MA, 23 Sept 1901 (concert performance)

*Everywoman: Her Pilgrimage in Quest of Love*, 1911
Librettist: Walter Brown
Published: New York: T.B. Harms, 1911.
Performance: New York, Herald Square, 1911

*The Padrone*, 1912
Librettist: David Kilburn Stevens
Unpublished: Vocal score lost, manuscript orchestral parts at New England Conservatory
Performance: Waterbury CT, September 1995 (concert); Boston MA, April 1997

*Love’s Sacrifice*, 1916-1917
Librettist: David Kilburn Stevens
Published: Boston: C.C. Birchard, 1917
Performance: Chicago, 1 Feb 1923
VITA

A native of Houston, Texas, Jon Steffen Truitt has received Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in vocal performance from Baylor University in Texas. As an undergraduate, he was the recipient of the Baylor National Merit Scholarship (full tuition), the Baylor Presidential Scholarship, and the IBM Thomas Watson Scholarship. As a master's student, he was the recipient of a full graduate assistantship in voice and opera, and as a doctoral student he was the recipient of Louisiana State University’s prestigious Regent Fellowship.

Mr. Truitt has taught voice, opera, and music appreciation courses at Navarro Community College, the University of Mary Hardin Baylor Conservatory, the University of Evansville, and as a student at Baylor University and Louisiana State University. As an operatic artist, he has sung with professional companies across the United States, such as New Orleans Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Mobile Opera, Pensacola Opera, Jacksonville Opera, and the Jefferson Performing Arts Society. On the concert stage, he has sung with the Jacksonville, Acadiana, Waco, Baylor University, Southeastern Louisiana State University, and Louisiana State University symphonies and in numerous public solo recitals. He is also a two-time apprentice artist with the Des Moines Metro Opera.