

2009

The Pasquale Amato correspondence at Louisiana State University

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THE PASQUALE AMATO CORRESPONDENCE AT LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

A Thesis

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
Master of Music

in

The School of Music

by
Sarah Wells Kaufman
B.M., University of Montevallo, 2006
December 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my advisor, Andreas Giger, for his tireless commitment to the entirety of my thesis—from suggesting research in Hill Memorial Library to meticulously proofreading every revision. I cannot thank him enough for teaching me the elements of thorough scholarship. Also, I would like to thank the staff of Hill Memorial Library for its gracious help. Finally, I could never thank enough my husband whose constant love and support have sustained me.

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ABSTRACT

Italian baritone Pasquale Amato (1878-1942), who sang at the Metropolitan Opera in New York from 1908–1921, was regarded by critics and colleagues as a leading baritone of the early twentieth-century. Amato appeared in several United States and world premieres, most notably as Jack Rance in Giacomo Puccini's *La fanciulla del West* (1910), and often performed alongside Enrico Caruso. After leaving the Met in 1921 and touring Europe until 1926, Amato returned to the United States. His struggle to find substantial work eventually led to his pursuing teaching. In 1935, having secured a position as director of the opera department at Louisiana State University (LSU), Amato found success in his twin role as director and teacher at LSU until his death in 1942.

Upon Amato's death, his widow Egeria Amato contacted LSU English professor John Earle Uhler and asked him to write her late husband's biography. Uhler then contacted Amato's family, friends, and colleagues for information. Uhler's collected research materials (accounts from Mrs. Amato, vocal pedagogy articles written by Amato, and personal letters) are now housed in Hill Memorial Library at LSU, along with the manuscript of the unpublished biography. This thesis compiles and contextualizes pertinent correspondence within Uhler's collection, specifically, Italian letters between Amato and Zirato and letters from Amato's colleagues. The correspondence is an invaluable source regarding Amato's personal and professional life: it offers for the first time a candid look into his aspirations and disappointments and reveals the obstacles Amato faced upon his re-entrance into the American concert and opera scene, particularly, the rumor that he had lost his voice. This thesis will also be the first focused study on Amato since Uhler's earlier work, and will hopefully establish the foundation for further scholarship on the baritone.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 1935, Pasquale Amato, one of the leading baritones of the early twentieth century,¹ became director of the opera department at Louisiana State University (LSU). He had been invited by Hollywood set designer and eventual LSU faculty member Dalton S. Reymond, who promised Amato that his appointment would be supported by then Governor Huey Long.² While at LSU, Amato directed nine operas including a production of Giuseppe Verdi's *La traviata* in New Orleans that earned favorable reviews.³ Amato's success in his twin role as director and teacher at LSU led to the tremendous growth of the opera department and major accomplishments of the students under his guidance, especially Frances Greer and Marguerite Piazza. Amato was still teaching at LSU when he took a summer trip to New York in 1942 and died unexpectedly.

Amato made his debut in 1900 at the Teatro Bellini in Naples as Germont in *La traviata*.⁴ Afterward, he made an extensive tour of Europe and in 1903 met Enrico Caruso and Arturo Toscanini while singing in Buenos Aires.⁵ Toscanini was so impressed with Amato that he recommended him to Giulio Gatti-Casazza, then the director of La Scala; Amato gave his Scala debut during the 1907–1908 season, under Toscanini's direction.⁶ When in 1908 Gatti-Casazza and Toscanini moved to New York City to build an Italian repertoire at the Metropolitan Opera, they brought along Amato as one of their leading singers.⁷

¹ Robert Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983), 134.

² Giles Borbridge to John Earle Uhler, July 1952, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA.

³ "LSU Highlights: LSU Opera Program Continues to Prosper after nearly 75 Years," <http://www.lsu.edu/highlights/033/opera.html> [accessed June 9, 2008].

⁴ David Hamilton, *The Metropolitan Opera Encyclopedia: A Comprehensive Guide to the World of Opera* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 21.

⁵ John Earle Uhler, Unpublished biography, chapter 12, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

⁶ Hamilton, *The Metropolitan Opera Encyclopedia*, 21.

⁷ Uhler, Unpublished biography, chapter 13, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

Amato made his debut at the Met in 1908 in the same role that launched his career. While there, he created the title roles in Walter Damrosch's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Umberto Giordano's *Madame Sans-Gêne*, and Giacomo Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*.⁸ By 1921, when he left the company, Amato had sung 471 performances to enthusiastic audiences and had shared seven opening nights with Caruso.⁹ Amato's significance was due not only to his outstanding voice and dramatic interpretation but also the wide range of characters he depicted and his versatility in German, Italian, French, and English roles.¹⁰

Although Amato's name appears in opera history books and biographies, scholarship on his life has been limited. In the 1970s, Percy Kenyon and Clifford Williams wrote a seminal article on Amato's performances and many recordings.¹¹ Their work, the basis for dictionary entries (including *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*) and primary source for short articles on Amato, covers Amato's entire career but is by no means a complete biography. To complete such a task, Amato's widow, Egeria Amato, approached LSU English professor John Earle Uhler a few years following the singer's death. Uhler contacted Amato's friends and colleagues for information; the letters he received, together with accounts from Mrs. Amato and articles published on Amato's vocal pedagogy, provided the foundation for the biography. It was never completed, but the collected materials are now housed at the Hill Memorial Library on the LSU campus.

Amato's letters (all unpublished) are scattered throughout Uhler's sizable collection of his personal correspondence as well as published and unpublished manuscripts. One box contains

⁸ Desmond Shawe-Taylor, "Pasquale Amato," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, 4 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1992), 1:107.

⁹ Percy Kenyon and Clifford Williams, "Pasquale Amato," *The Record Collector* 21 (1973–1974): 8.

¹⁰ Kenyon and Williams wrote that while at the Met, Amato "remained the only major baritone to sing Wagnerian roles in the original German." Ibid.

¹¹ His recordings, dating from 1907 to 1924, are made with a number of American and European recording companies, including Victor, Columbia, Fonotipia, and Homocord. Kenyon and Williams, "Pasquale Amato," 25–47.

the unpublished Amato biography,¹² a second box Uhler's correspondence as well as the correspondence between Amato and music agent Bruno Zirato.¹³ The correspondence in the collection pertaining to Amato comprises thirty-one letters and contains previously unknown information about his dealings with Gatti-Casazza, anecdotes regarding his performances, and details concerning his move to Louisiana. This correspondence discloses the views of established musicians on Amato's talent; more importantly, it is an invaluable source for information about Amato's personal and professional lives, offering for the first time a candid look into his aspirations and disappointments. This thesis will compile and contextualize the Amato-related letters housed in Hill Memorial Library, drawing on biographies of the letters' authors, literature about the Metropolitan Opera, and materials in Hill Library concerning Amato's professorship at LSU.¹⁴

Chapter 2 will introduce the letters from and to Amato (dated between 1925 and 1931), presenting first a transcription of the original Italian (with accents marks updated to modern usage and misspellings corrected in footnotes) and then an English translation with annotations and commentary, providing a narrative to tie the letters together. This chapter will draw heavily on contemporary periodicals and newspaper articles for the contextualization of the events and persons mentioned.

Chapter 3 will introduce the letters (dated 1945 or 1946) between Uhler and colleagues of Amato, such as Frieda Hempel, Geraldine Farrar, Margaret Matzenauer, Frances Alda, and Lucrezia Bori; the letters will be contextualized by some biographical information on the letter's

¹² Manuscripts, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

¹³ Correspondence, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

¹⁴ Pierre V. R. Key, *Enrico Caruso* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1922); Frances Greer, interview by Ronald Ross, August 3, 1997, Tape T 1286, T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA; Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*; Irving Kolodin, *The Metropolitan Opera, 1883–1996: A Candid History* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1966); LSU School of Music Records, A1600, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA.

author and any additional information concerning Amato and the respective colleague.¹⁵ In editing the foreign-language letters, I have annotated problems of punctuation and spelling; where opera titles were underlined, left unmarked, or given in quotation marks, I have italicized them.

¹⁵ Frieda Hempel, *My Golden Age of Singing* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1998); Frances Alda, *Men, Women, and Tenors* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937); Geraldine Farrar and Aida Craig Truxall, *All Good Greetings, G. F.: Letters of Geraldine Farrar to Ilka Marie Stotler, 1946–1958* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991); John Francis Marion, *Lucrezia Bori of the Metropolitan Opera* (New York: P. J. Kenedy, 1962).

CHAPTER 2: ZIRATO CORRESPONDENCE, 1925–1931

The following letters in Italian comprise the correspondence between Amato and Bruno Zirato (1884–1972), who became one of the most important figures on New York’s musical scene. In 1915, Zirato met Enrico Caruso at a World War I fund-raiser and later oversaw Caruso’s professional and personal affairs. His list of accomplishments include the co-authorship of Caruso’s biography with music critic Pierre V. R. Key in 1922; the business management of the *Musical Digest*, 1922–1928; and the representation of various artists for the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, La Scala in Milan, and the San Francisco and Los Angeles opera companies. Additionally, Zirato held the positions of vice-president of Columbia Artists Managements (1936–56) and managing director of the New York Philharmonic (1956–59). Upon Zirato’s retirement from the Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein remarked, “Although he might not be known to you, no one in the world of music will ever forget him.”¹⁶

The correspondence, which begins in 1925, documents the negotiations between artist and manager during the pre-depression era, when ardent patriotism, the rise of sound films, and the advent of affordable opera pervaded American culture. After his departure from the Met in 1921, Amato continued to perform frequently. Even though he had given the American public the impression of returning to Italy for vocal rest, the primary reason was Gatti-Casazza’s failure to renew his contract.¹⁷ Thus, persistently embedded in Amato’s letters are attempts to persuade Zirato of his worth as an artist, primarily focusing on his many performances in Europe as proof of his continued popularity. When Amato returned to America in 1926, he was unable to find substantial work, perhaps due to persistent rumors that he had lost his voice. As a consequence,

¹⁶ A sketch of Zirato’s career appears in “Bruno Zirato, 88, Caruso Aide Who Headed Philharmonic, Dies,” *The New York Times*, November 30, 1972, 46.

¹⁷ Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 134.

his focus shifted from performing to teaching. The correspondence abruptly ended in 1931, with Amato expressing gratitude to Zirato for his help thus far and discussing possibilities of finding a teaching position at a respected musical institution.¹⁸

In his letter of January 20, 1925, Amato relays to Zirato his German triumphs (adding reviews as proof) and numerous German job offers. Amato makes this his first order of business since his later years at the Met were clouded by an illness that necessitated a sabbatical from the Met during the 1918–19 season.¹⁹ During his sabbatical, Amato had a kidney operation, and news spread that Amato’s voice had deteriorated beyond repair.²⁰ This situation set the theme for his letters: the great Amato, though rumored to have lost his voice, is still a worthy singer.

The letter further reveals Amato’s strained relationship with Gatti-Casazza. Even though most singers, managers, and conductors considered themselves fortunate to work with Gatti-Casazza during his twenty-seven year reign at New York’s first opera house, Amato openly wrote of his hatred for the man and scorned those who were associated with him (especially baritone Antonio Scotti and tenor Beniamino Gigli). These feelings had probably emerged when Gatti-Casazza managed La Scala (1898–1908) and shortly after Amato had given his debut in Naples (in 1900). Amato approached Gatti-Casazza for an audition, but Gatti-Casazza turned him down, suggesting that he gain more experience before returning.²¹ Illnesses undermined two subsequent auditions; only in 1907, with better health and a strong endorsement from Toscanini, was Amato able to persuade Gatti-Casazza to offer him a role at La Scala.

¹⁸ Although the correspondence in this collection ends in 1931, further letters between Zirato and Amato may exist.

¹⁹ According to Tuggle, Amato had suffered from a kidney ailment. Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 134.

²⁰ Kenyon and Williams argued that Amato’s illness might not have caused him to lose his voice entirely. Upon listening to Amato’s early Victor records and his Homocord records from the 1920s, they postulate that perhaps Amato could effectively sing arias, but not an entire opera. Kenyon and Williams, “Pasquale Amato,” 12.

²¹ Uhler, Unpublished biography, 33, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

Amato's feeling toward Gatti-Casazza may have been further injured by Gatti's treatment of Caruso. Amato and Caruso first met in 1903 in Buenos Aires; they became good friends and sang together in numerous performances at the Met (e.g., in *La traviata* [Amato's debut in 1908], *La gioconda* [1909], *Aida* [1909], and the world premiere of Puccini's *La fanciulla del West* [1910]).²² By 1920, Caruso's health had begun to decline and to affect his singing. Gatti-Casazza encouraged him to persist, but Caruso retired from the stage on 24 December of that year. Irving Kolodin suggests that Gatti-Casazza—recalling Verdi's admonition to “read most attentively the reports of the box office”²³—needed a singer at the top of his art—“if not Martinelli,²⁴ then Gigli²⁵”—to assure continued high ticket sales.²⁶ In the spring of 1921, just months before Caruso's passing, Gatti-Casazza placed Gigli in a role intended for Caruso. The incident did not escape Caruso's notice. Enrico Caruso Jr. later wrote about his father's impression of the situation, to which Amato alludes in his letter: “He could have at least waited until I was dead.”²⁷ The offense Amato felt may have been due to Gatti-Casazza's undermining of Caruso's legacy,

²² A search of both Amato and Caruso in the Metropolitan archives online yields 268 joint performances. The following link is to their first performance of *La fanciulla del West*. The Metropolitan Opera Archives Online. <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=BibSpeed/fullcit.w?xCID=49290&limit=5000&xBranch=ALL&xstartdate=&xenddate=&theterm=amato%20caruso&x=0&xhomepath=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/&xhome=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/bibpro.htm> [accessed September 2, 2009].

²³ Giulio Gatti-Casazza, *Memories of Opera* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1941), 68.

²⁴ Giovanni Martinelli, an Italian tenor, gained a contract with the Met in 1912 and made his debut there at the start of the 1913–1914 season. He sang with the company as one of the lead tenors until 1945. Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 122–23.

²⁵ The Italian tenor Beniamino Gigli came to the attention of the world after his La Scala debut as Faust in a memorial performance of *Mefistofele* upon composer Arrigo Boito's death in 1918. Soon after, he made his Met debut on November 26, 1920 (while Caruso still sang) and for the following twelve seasons sang the principal tenor roles. See *The Art of Beniamino Gigli* [Liner Notes], Album 2, Seraphim 60280, 33 rpm, n.d. Though his time at the Met ended unexpectedly (his refusal to accept a lower salary during the Depression), Gigli continued to learn new roles and tour in concerts until the age of 64. Tuggle wrote of Gigli's longevity: “His more than forty years of nonstop barnstorming in opera and concert were testimony to a well-produced voice.” Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 175.

²⁶ Kolodin, *The Metropolitan Opera, 1883–1966*, 300.

²⁷ Enrico Caruso and Andrew Farkas, *Enrico Caruso: My Father and My Family* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1997), 302.

not just Caruso's role being filled by another tenor. Amato never forgave Gatti-Casazza for the treatment of his friend and repeatedly recalled Gatti-Cassaza's ostensible errors to Zirato.²⁸

Berlin

January 20, 1925

My dear Bruno,

In reply to your letter of January 2 (and [by] now you are already in possession of my letter of last month),²⁹ I spoke to you of my great triumph in *Boris* here in Berlin, and I also enclosed some reviews for you.³⁰ Here you will find others of my latest performances in Dresden, where I went for the third time and will return again in a week. I do not lack work, but I would still like to make a little tour in America, both for personal satisfaction and then also to make another little catch of dollars to put myself at ease.

In Dresden they would want me for three years, or rather, for eight months a year, and they would guarantee me thirty performances, but the main reason for this engagement shall be the establishment of a special position for me, something like artistic director for the Italian repertory. I must then, in agreement with the set designers, tailors, prop managers, stage director, [and] conductors, give a different direction to the Italian repertory. The conditions they offer me are very good, but I fear that it may be too much strain for me, as I am not able to do things only halfway. I am giving myself until February to reply, then we shall see.

It is not true that I have a contract with Haensel and Jones;³¹ I have never had one. It was a simple arrangement that should have been confirmed but never was and thus has expired. I had a contract with Johnson³² made through Longone,³³ but now it has no value because it was for the year 1922–23. But then, in a fury of postponements, they asked me to postpone it to the following year, but I did not accept.³⁴ Even better, these gentlemen arranged for advertising in

²⁸ Some historians have suggested that Gatti-Casazza placed Amato on an impossibly busy schedule while at the Met, which eventually led to his vocal deterioration. See, for example, Michael Scott, *The Record of Singing*, 2 vols. (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1977), 1:116; Kenyon and Williams, "Pasquale Amato," 9. Perhaps Amato knew he had been over-worked and resented Gatti-Casazza for that as well.

²⁹ This letter is the first in Uhler's collection. The earlier letters mentioned by Amato have not yet been located.

³⁰ Examples of some of the German reviews mentioned in this letter can be found in Amato's scrapbook in Hill Memorial Library. Pasquale Amato Scrapbook, MS 2563.

³¹ Haensel and Jones were concert managers in New York who represented, among others, soprano Margaret Matzenauer. "As London Sees His Visit," *The New York Times*, September 1, 1913, 5.

³² Herbert M. Johnson began his career in finance; then, in 1913, he joined the Chicago Grand Opera Company as head of its financial division. From 1916 to 1932, Johnson held the position of opera's general manager, each season actively recruiting opera stars in Europe. "Herbert M. Johnson, Former Opera Head," *The New York Times*, March 17, 1937, 25. See also Ronald L. Davis, *Opera in Chicago* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1966), 128.

³³ Paul Longone began his career as a musician in Italy, became an opera manager in Europe, and eventually took the position of general manager of artistic productions with the Chicago Grand Opera Company, which became the Chicago City Opera Company in 1935. "Paul Longone, 49, an Opera Manager," *The New York Times*, August 4, 1939, 13.

³⁴ The Chicago Opera Association went bankrupt in 1921 and re-emerged as the Chicago Civic Opera for the 1922 season. Delays with Amato's contract may have been due to the reorganization of the company. See Davis, *Opera in Chicago*, 141–43.

the *Musical Courier*,³⁵ for which [the *Courier*] continues to send me the bill. I have never given any order and hence have no obligation to pay. If Johnson did it of his own initiative, he should also pay, certainly NOT I.

As I have told you, I would be happy to return to America, but with Gatti—NEVER; if I should die of hunger (and [such a death] would only be because of him) I would refuse!!!! It is difficult for me to hate a person, but if it happens, it is over. He needs men like Scotti:³⁶ here is a worthy companion for him.³⁷ I am not surprised by Serafin's success,³⁸ first of all, he is a good conductor, then he comes to the Metropolitan after so many years of no one being in the position [once] occupied by Toscanini;³⁹ finally, when that buzzard Gatti wants to, he knows how to do all this and more. The ghost of Toscanini frightens him, and thus, he must create another idol, as he created, in good part, the idol Gigli while the Unforgettable was still alive and [Gatti] had already cynically gotten rid of him.⁴⁰ Forgive me for this eruption, but when I speak of that man, my mouth fills with bile. And to think that I do my best to meet him when he comes to Europe ... but I can't. I know he is in Milan; when I arrive, he has left for Ferrara; I go to Ferrara, he has gone to Montecatini.⁴¹

I hope to say a few words to him before I die.

I would willingly go to Chicago or even perform concerts or, as a last resort, as I have written to you, Vaudeville. The purpose of my travel is to show that I am still good for something, see some good friends again, and make some money as well.

As to the conditions? Opera [at] 700 dollars per performance; at least twenty performances guaranteed; [and] travel for two people, first class with bath, round-trip.

³⁵ An ad in the June 7, 1923 issue of the *Musical Courier* presents reviews of Amato's performances of Falstaff in Fiume, Italy (no date) and informs of his upcoming 1923–1924 season in America (which never occurred). See the *Musical Courier* 86, no. 23 (June 7, 1923): 25.

³⁶ Italian baritone Antonio Scotti sang as a leading baritone at the Met from his debut in 1899 until 1933. He sang over a thousand performances and outlasted most stars of his day, including Geraldine Farrar and Enrico Caruso. Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 102–5.

³⁷ Amato may have made this statement because he was jealous of Scotti's lasting success at the Met. Scotti's tenure at the Met spanned 34 years and was due not least to the care he took of his voice. In his autobiography, Gatti-Casazza, not overly enthusiastic about the baritone, praises Scotti's reliability and his long career at the Met. For more on the relationship between Gatti-Casazza and Scotti, see Gatti-Casazza, *Memories of Opera*, 208–11.

³⁸ Italian conductor Tullio Serafin began his career as a violinist in the Scala orchestra under Toscanini. He began conducting as an assistant for Toscanini and later continued his long career in Ferrara, at Covent Garden, and La Scala before conducting at the Met from 1924 to 1934. "Tullio Serafin, Conductor, Dies," *The New York Times*, February 4, 1968, 80.

³⁹ When Toscanini refused to return to the Met in 1915, Giorgio Polacco took over the Italian repertory until 1917 (at which point he went to Chicago to conduct for the Chicago Opera Company). "Toscanini Leaves the Metropolitan," *The New York Times*, September 30, 1915. From 1917 to 1924, Roberto Moranzoni held the position. After Moranzoni, Serafin took over as "chief conductor" of the Italian repertory. See also Gerald Fitzgerald, *Annals of the Metropolitan Opera: The Complete Chronicles of Performances and Artists* (New York: G. K. Hall and Company, 1989), 341. Martin Mayer echoes Amato's sentiment about the lack of a principal conductor, writing that Polacco and Moranzoni served to "pick up some of the slack left by Toscanini" until Serafin took on the duties. Martin Mayer, *The Met: One Hundred Years of Grand Opera* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 135.

⁴⁰ Enrico Caruso had been ill for a number of years yet continued to sing until December 24, 1920, thus allowing his and Gigli's careers at the Met to overlap. Key, *Enrico Caruso*, 442.

⁴¹ Montecatini is a spa town in Tuscany where composers including Verdi often visited. "A Meeting with Verdi at Montecatini," from *Encounters with Verdi*, ed. Marcello Conati (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 317–32.

Concerts [at] 1000 dollars per concert, at least twenty guaranteed; expenses for advertisement, photographs, posters, etc. on me. But the said expenses must not exceed 100 dollars for each concert. The [financial responsibility for the] accompanist will be on the agent.

For vaudeville, forty weeks, 3000 per week; round-trip travel; travel for the tour half on me and half on the company. Of course, I am speaking of travel for only my wife and me.

Ten percent for you if we come to an agreement (for next year, of course). I am pleased to know that your wife is well and singing.⁴² Give her our regards (my wife [too] wants to be remembered). I affectionately shake your hand,

Your
Pasquale Amato

Berlino
20 Gennaio 1925
Mio caro Bruno,

In risposta alla tua del 2 Gennaio e a quest'ora sarai già in possesso della mia del mese scorso, nella quale ti parlavo del mio grande trionfo in Boris qui a Berlino e ti accludevo anche alcune critiche.⁴³ Qui ne troverai altre sulle mie ultime recite a Dresda dove andavo per la terza volta e vi tornerò ancora in settimana. Lavoro non me ne manca, ma vorrei fare ancora una scorazzata in America, sia per soddisfazione personale e poi anche per fare un'altra piccola retata di dollari per poi mettermi tranquillo.

A Dresda mi vorrebbero⁴⁴ per tre anni ossia 8 mesi per ogni anno e mi garantirebbero⁴⁵ 30 recite, ma la ragione principale di questa scrittura dovrebbe essere quella di creare un posto speciale per me, qualche cosa come direttore artistico per il repertorio italiano, dovrei quindi d'accordo con gli scenografi, sarti, attrezzisti, regista, maestri, dare un indirizzo diverso al repertorio italiano. Le condizioni che mi offrono sono buonissime, ma io temo che sia per me troppa fatica, non essendo capace di fare le cose a metà. Mi sono risercato⁴⁶ di rispondere entro Febbraio, poi vedremo.

Non è vero che io abbia un contratto con Haensel e Jones, non lo ebbi mai. Fu un semplice compromesso che avrebbe dovuto essere confermato ma non lo fu mai e quindi è scaduto. Ebbi un contratto con Johnson fatto a 1/2⁴⁷ Longone, ma, oramai non ha alcun valore perchè era per l'anno 22-23 ma poi a furia di rimandi finirono per chiedermi di rimandarlo all'anno dopo ma io non accettai. Anzi a proposito quei signori ordinarono della reclame al Musical Courier, per la quale questi continua a mandarmi il conto. Io non diedi mai ordine alcuna⁴⁸ e quindi non ho alcun obbligo di pagare, se il Johnson lo feci⁴⁹ di sua iniziativa, potrà anche pagare, io certo NO.

⁴² American soprano Nina Morgana studied in Milan before taking on roles at the Met from 1920 to 1935. While touring in concerts with Caruso, Morgana met Zirato and later married him, with Caruso as his best man. "Nina Morgana, Singer; Toured with Caruso," *The New York Times*, July 11, 1986, D18.

⁴³ The Italian is muddled.

⁴⁴ *Recte*: vorrebbero

⁴⁵ *Recte*: garantirebbero.

⁴⁶ *Recte*: riservato.

⁴⁷ An abbreviation for "fatto a mezzo."

⁴⁸ *Recte*: alcuno.

⁴⁹ *Recte*: fece.

Sarei, come dettati contento di tornare in America, ma con Gatti MAI, se dovessi morire di fame, e questo potrebbe essermi assicurato solo da a mezzo⁵⁰ suo, rifiuterei!!!! Difficilmente io odio una persona, ma se questo avviene è finita per me. Egli ha bisogno degli Scotti, ecco un suo degno compagno. Non mi meraviglio⁵¹ del successo di Serafin, anzitutto è un buon maestro, poi viene al Metropolitan⁵² dopo tanti anni che al posto occupato da Toscanini, non vi fu nessuno, infine quando la carogna Gatti vuole sa fare questo e altro. Lo spettro di Toscanini gli fa paura e deve quindi creare un altro idolo, come creò, in buona parte[,] l'idolo Gligli⁵³ mentre l'Indimenticabile era ancora vivo e lui lo aveva già cinicamente liquidato. Scusami di questo sfogo, ma quando parlo di quell'uomo mi viene il fiele alla bocca. E pensare che faccio il possibile per incontrarlo quando viene in Europa, ma non mi riesce. So che è a Milano, quando arrivo è partito per Ferrara, vado a Ferrara, è andato a Montecatini.

Spero di potergli dire due parole prima di morire.

Andrei volentieri⁵⁴ a Chicago o magari in concerti e nell'ultima dell'ipotesi, come scrittoti[,] andrei in Vaudeville. Scopo del mio viaggio è quello di mostrare che sono ancora buono a qualche cosa, rivedere qualche buon amico e mettere insieme ancora qualche soldo.

Per le condizioni? Opera 700 dollari per recita, almeno venti assicurate, viaggi per due persone prima classe con bagno andata e ritorno.

Concerti 1000 dollari per concerto almeno venti assicurati, a mio carico le spese di reclame, fotografie, windows card⁵⁵ ecc. ma dette spese non dovranno superare i centi⁵⁶ dollari per ogni concerto. L'accompagnatore sarà a carico dell'agente.

Per vaudeville 40 settimane tremila dollari per settimana[,] viaggi andata e ritorno[,] viaggi per la tournée metà a mio carico metà all'impresa[,] beninteso parlo dei viaggi per me e mia moglie soltanto.

Il 10% a te se combino, beninteso per il prossimo anno.

Mi compiaccio sapere che la Signora sta bene e canta. Salutala per noi, mia moglie vuole essere⁵⁷ ricordata ed io ti stringo affettuosamente la mano

Tuo

Pasquale Amato

In his next letter to Zirato, dated February 4, 1925, Amato goes to great lengths to defend the state of his career. In order to counter the rumor about his voice, Amato refers to his German reviews, arguing that the German critics are as knowledgeable as the American ones and that

⁵⁰ *Recte*: a mezzo.

⁵¹ *Recte*: meraviglio.

⁵² *Recte*: Metropolitan.

⁵³ *Recte*: Gigli.

⁵⁴ *Recte*: volentieri.

⁵⁵ Both Amato and Zirato often mixed English and Italian words in their correspondence.

⁵⁶ *Recte*: cento.

⁵⁷ *Recte*: essere.

their praise is accordingly reliable.⁵⁸ In addition to pointing to his excellent reviews, Amato promotes himself as a singer in a league with Caruso and Emmy Destinn,⁵⁹ and rightly so: colleagues frequently compared Amato to Caruso.⁶⁰

After making a case for his continued popularity, Amato returns to issues regarding Gatti-Casazza. He vents his bitterness over his and Caruso's treatment at the Met, where they experienced similar problems towards the end of their respective tenure. Just like Caruso, Amato may have felt purposely slighted when Gatti-Casazza engaged baritone Luigi Montesanto for the world premiere of Puccini's *Il trittico* during Amato's absence in the 1918–19 season.⁶¹ Whether or not the role of Michele in *Il tabarro* (the first act) was intended for Amato,⁶² he probably felt entitled to another world premiere because of his successful appearance in the world premiere of Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*.

At the end of the letter, Amato once again lists his conditions for engagements in the United States, dropping his rates for opera and vaudeville (doubtless per Zirato's request). He acknowledges that his performance fees and desire for long-term engagements may be difficult for Zirato to negotiate. Yet Amato, who is caring for his ill wife, urges Zirato to succeed.

⁵⁸ A sample of these reviews, covering the years 1924–26, appears in an ad of May 5, 1927, in the *Musical Courier*. The ad includes statements such as, "Pasquale Amato excited admiration anew for his masterly singing" (*Nachrichten*, Bremen); "He is a conquering, mighty and overwhelming singer. At the same time, he is an appealing, powerful and brilliantly gifted actor" (*Mittags-Zeitung*, Vienna). See the *Musical Courier* 94, no.18 (May 5, 1927): 15.

⁵⁹ Czech soprano Emmy Destinn sang in Dresden, London, and Berlin before she gave her debut at the Met in 1908 (in *Aida*, with Caruso and Louise Homer). Destinn's time at the Met ended in 1921, when she permanently returned to Czechoslovakia. See Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 73–74.

⁶⁰ Letters that compare Amato to Caruso include: Bruno Zirato to John Earle Uhler, March 1, 1946, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902; Geraldine Farrar to John Earle Uhler, March 20, 1946, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902; Frances Alda to John Earle Uhler, March 27, 1946, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902; Arthur Bergh to John Earle Uhler, April 21, 1946, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902. For all these letters, see chapter 2.

⁶¹ Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 134.

⁶² J. B. Steane, *Singers of the Century*, 3 vols. (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 2000), 3:106.

Berlin

February 4, 1925

My dear Bruno,

In response to your letter of the 21st of last month:

By now the loss of my voice ought to be disproven once and for all. If I continue to sing and if the German critics write what you will have been able to have translated, it means that I am still able to do much more than so many others who should not have had the right for some time to remain on those stages where the Carusos, the Amatos, [and] the Destinns, to name only a few, appeared.

I don't believe that the German critics are any more ignorant or indulgent than the American ones, nor do I believe that the American public is more competent than the German one. The fact then remains that, in spite of the terrible crisis,⁶³ I find enough work; I continually return to the same theaters, and I take the highest wages, because I'm profitable. Last week, for a concert in Hanover, I received 3000 gold marks.⁶⁴ This, for Germany, is a lot of money.

There are now many difficulties to overcome here because the directors, though they are interested in engaging me, must be cautious because their regular artists, who have to accept very limited conditions, would not willingly tolerate that I take higher wages. In Dresden, for example (and that pig at the Metropolitan⁶⁵ knows that it is among the first, if not the first theater in Germany), they have offered me a position as first baritone for the Italian repertoire and artistic director of the entire Italian repertoire. This proves to you the extent of my success there. We have been in negotiations for a couple of weeks, but the financial difficulties to overcome are many, because all the directors of the German theaters, state and municipal, are bound by a unique agreement that limits the pay of the artists, under penalty of 150 marks for the one who violates it. If this were not so, I would at this time already have in my pocket a contract for three years, a contract which is morally flattering, too, because it is not an easy thing for a foreign artist today to be so successful in Germany. But all these are considerations that I wanted to present to you so you may give them the validity you believe [is right].

Surely then, if something new does not happen here, things will remain in bad shape. The theater where I sang Boris⁶⁶ had for some time been in terrible financial condition and now has turned to operettas. The Charlottenburg Theater is on life support:⁶⁷ singers, chorus, [and] orchestra are in a cooperative and divide what little they collect; the theater in Dresden has a deficit of two million [marks]; [and] the theater in Breslau will make it to the end of the season with the help of the town council; after that, who knows what will happen? And so on and so forth. This is why I am seeking other ways still to exploit my faculties profitably for some time.

Forgive me; I'm proceeding to our issue.

⁶³ The German economy suffered from inflation at the end of World War I until 1924. Amato, at the beginning of 1925, continued to witness the repercussions of the inflation. For a discussion of the German economy at the time, see Gerald D. Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914–1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁶⁴ For more information, see Sabine Hammer, *Oper in Hannover: 300 Jahre Wandel im Musiktheater einer Stadt* (Hannover: Schlütersche Verlagsanstalt, 1990).

⁶⁵ Giulio Gatti-Casazza.

⁶⁶ The title role in *Boris Godunov*.

⁶⁷ This theater is located in Berlin.

With Polacco⁶⁸ and Moranzoni⁶⁹ I have always been on the most cordial terms; in fact, if there were a little gratitude in this world, both of them ought to remember that I have always been a very good friend to them, at the time when at the Metropolitan, I could have ruled and stupidly did not. In Chicago they have even tried out Stabile,⁷⁰ who became a celebrity for having sung Falstaff.⁷¹ But the old and ancient lad Scotti speaks the part, too.⁷² I always regret to be so bitter, but believe me, my Bruno, that what they did to me and to dear Enrico is so mean that not even the centuries could erase it from my mind.

They can easily obtain information about me from the directors of the theaters where I sing: they surely don't have to ask or listen to all the gravediggers of the world. I sing in public and don't sell beans in a can.

The fee for Chicago ought to be no less than 600 dollars per performance, a minimum of twelve assured, and two first class round-trip tickets. You will understand that if Chicago were in Vienna, for example, I would have no difficulty doing only two performances, with the possibility of a reappointment. I don't believe that I am expecting too much.

In vaudeville, at least a minimum of thirty weeks at 2500 dollars per week. The work does not scare me because I would also select effective but not exhausting pieces. And then, after the débuts, it is possible to spare myself a bit; the orchestras are small, and a small amount of voice is enough to do well.

If you can arrange something, you will tell me. But from your letter as a whole, it seems to me that it will not be easy for you to succeed, and yet it would not be a bad deal for you.

Two days ago, my poor wife underwent a serious operation here. I hope she will be able to recover, but since yesterday, she has been suffering terribly. This is another hard moral blow as well as ... a material one. Patience; the good are made to suffer. My only comfort is the thought of our dear dead [Savior]. Even he who was so helpful was crucified. Cowards!!!!

With affection to Mrs. Nina and to you, I am very affectionately yours,
Pasquale Amato

Berlino

4 Febbraio 1925

Mio caro Bruno:

In risposta alla tua tua⁷³ del 21 u[ltimo] S[corso].

⁶⁸ Giorgio Polacco, after conducting at the Met from 1915 to 1917, toured with various companies, settling at the Chicago Civic Opera from 1922 until 1930. "Giorgio Polacco, Conductor, Dead," *The New York Times*, May 2, 1960, 29.

⁶⁹ Italian conductor Roberto Moranzoni conducted at the Met from 1917 to 1924 then went on to conduct at the Chicago Civic Opera from 1924 to 1929. "Roberto Moranzoni Dies at 78; Conducted at the 'Met,' 1917-1924," *The New York Times*, December 15, 1959, 39.

⁷⁰ Italian baritone Mariano Stabile, who was noted in his role as Falstaff, sang under Toscanini at the reopening of La Scala in 1921. See Giorgio Lotti and Raul Radice, *La Scala* (London: Elm Tree Books, 1979), 21. Stabile sang at La Scala for eight seasons and at Convent Garden for four seasons; his only visit to the United States was a short trip to the Chicago Opera to sing in *Tosca* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. "Mariano Stabile's Remarkable Career," *Musical Courier* 101, no. 10 (September 6, 1930): 6.

⁷¹ Amato seems to allude to the absurdity of giving preference to Stabile, famous for only one role, over himself (Amato).

⁷² Amato uses the Italian word "parlare" because Scotti, later in his life, was known to have compensated for his fading voice with histrionics, especially in the role of Falstaff. Scott, *The Record of Singing*, 1:117.

⁷³ Error in the typescript.

Oramai la perdita della voce dovrebbe essere cosa bella e sfatata. Se continuo a cantare, e se i critici tedeschi scrivono quello che avrai potuto farti tradurre, vuol dire che sono ancora capace di fare molto più di tanti altri che, da tempo, non avrebbero più il di ritto⁷⁴ di stare su quelle scene dove vi furono i Caruso gli Amato le Destinn per noimnare⁷⁵ solo qualcuno.

Non credo che i critici tedeschi sieno⁷⁶ più ignoranti o più indulgenti degli americani, né credo che il pubblico americano sia più competente di quello tedesco. Resta poi il fatto che ad onta della crisi terribile io trovo abbastanza lavoro, ritorno continuamente degli⁷⁷ stessi teatri e prendo il massimo delle paghe, perché rendo. La scorsa settimana ad Hannover⁷⁸ per un concerto ebbi 3000 marchi oro. Questo per la Germania è molto danaro.

Vi sono tante difficoltà da superare qui ora, perché i direttori, pur avendo interesse a scritturarmi debbono andare cauti perché i loro scriturati⁷⁹ stabili, e che debbono⁸⁰ accettare condizioni molte limitate, sopportano mal volontieri⁸¹ che io prenda paghe maggiori. A Dresda per esempio, e il porco del Metrpolitan⁸² sa che è fra i primi se non il primo teatro della Germania, mi hanno offerto un posto quale primo baritono per il repertorio italiano e la direzione artistica di tutto il repertorio italiano. Ciò ti prova l'entità del mio successo colà. Siamo in trattative da un paio di settimane, ma le difficoltà finanziarie da superare sono molte, perché tutti gli intendenti dei teatri tedeschi, Statali e Municipali, sono vincolati da un patto unico che limita le paghe degli artisti pena 150 mila marchi per chi trasgredisce. Se così non fosse a quest'ora avrei già in tasca il contratto per tre anni[,] contratto che anche moralmente, è lusinghiero perché non è facile cosa per un artista straniero imporsi così, oggi, in Germania. Ma tutte queste sono considerazioni che ho voluto farti perché tu gli dia il valore che crederai⁸³.

Certo che se non avviene qualche fatto nuovo qui si sta male. Il teatro dove cantai il Boris, da un pezzo era in terribili condizioni finanziarie ed ora è passato all'operetta, il Charlottenburg Theatre⁸⁴, vive di ossigeno, cantanti coro orchestra sono in cooperativa e si dividono quel poco che incassano, il teatro di Dresda ha un deficit di due milioni, il teatro di Breslavia andr[à] avanti sino a fine stagione con l'aiuto del municipio poi chissà che cosa avverrà. E così di seguito. Ecco perché cerco altre vie⁸⁵ per poter sfruttare ancora proficuamente per qualche tempo le mie facoltà.

Scusami, e passo al nostro argomento.

Con Polacco e Moranzoni fui sempre in cordialissimi rapporti anzi, se a questo mondo ci fosse un poco di riconoscenza, tanto gli uni che gli altri dovrebbero ricordarsi che io fui sempre ottimo amico loro, quando al Metropolitan, potevo imperare e stupidamente non lo feci. A Chicago hanno tentato perfino Stabile, diventato celebrità per aver cantato Falstaff. Ma questa parte la parla anche il vecchio e vetusto giovane Scotti. Mi rincresce essere sempre così amaro,

⁷⁴ *Recte*: Il diritto.

⁷⁵ *Recte*: nominare.

⁷⁶ *Recte*: siano.

⁷⁷ *Recte*: negli.

⁷⁸ *Recte*: Hanover.

⁷⁹ *Recte*: scritturati.

⁸⁰ *Recte*: e debbono.

⁸¹ *Recte*: volentieri.

⁸² *Recte*: Metropolitan.

⁸³ *Recte*: credi.

⁸⁴ *Recte*: Theater.

⁸⁵ *Recte*: vie.

ma credilo Bruno mio quello che fecero a me e al caro Enrico è cosa talmente nefanda che neppure i secoli⁸⁶ potrebbero cancellare dal mio cervello.

Informazioni mie essi ne possono facilmente avere dai direttori dei teatri dove canto, certo non debbono chiedere o dare ascolto a tutti i beccamorti del mondo. Io canto in pubblico e non vendo faglioli⁸⁷ in scatola.

Il cachet per Chicago dovrebbe essere non meno di 600 dollari per recita⁸⁸ un minimo di dodici assicurate e due viaggi in prima andata e ritorno. Comprenderai che se Chicago fosse a Vienna per esempio non avrei nessuna difficoltà di andare a fare solo due recite, salvo poi eventuale riconferma. Non credo di chiedere eccessivamente.

In Vaudeville almeno un minimo di trenta⁸⁹ settimane a dollari 2500 per settimana. Il lavoro non mi spaventa perché anche sceglierei⁹⁰ di a cantare⁹¹ pezzi di effetto ma non strapazzosi e poi dopo i debutti si può anche risparmiarsi,⁹² le orchestre sono piccole e basta poca voce per fare bene.

Se puoi combinare qualche cosa me lo dirai, ma dall'insieme della tua lettera mi pare che non ti sarà facile riuscire, eppure—non sarebbe per te un cattivo affare.

Mia moglie poverina subì qui ieri l'altro una grave operazione[;] mi auguro che possa guarire, ma da ieri soffre terribilmente. Anche questa è un'altra scoppola morale e ... materiale. Pazienza i buoni sono fatti per soffrire. L'unico mio conforto è⁹³ il pensiero del caro estinto. Perfino lui che tanto beneficiò, fu crocifisso. Vigliacchi!!!!!!!

Affettuosità alla signora Nina e a te e credimi affezionatissimo.

Pasquale Amato

In the letter dated December 26, 1925, Zirato writes of recently leaving his position as business manager for Pierre V. R. Key, editor of the *Musical Digest*.⁹⁴ After leaving the *Digest*, Zirato began his own theatrical agency, which prospered from the start; his earlier work as manager of

⁸⁶ *Recte*: secoli.

⁸⁷ *Recte*: faglioli.

⁸⁸ *Recte*: recita.

⁸⁹ *Recte*: trenta.

⁹⁰ *Recte*: scegliere.

⁹¹ *Recte*: di cantare.

⁹² *Recte*: risparmiarsi.

⁹³ *Recte*: è

⁹⁴ *The Musical Digest* was a weekly New York magazine started in 1919 by music critic Pierre V. R. Key. See Andrea Olmstead, *Juilliard: A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 87. The weekly periodical was intended to communicate the opinions of music critics and the public on musical performances in various venues in America and England. "Music: Some New Publications," *The New York Times*, November 21, 1920, 80. For more information on *The Musical Digest* and similar periodicals of the time, see Charles Lindahl, "Music Periodicals in U.S. Research Libraries in 1931: A Retrospective Survey. Part III: The United States," *Notes*, Second Series 38, no. 2 (December 1981): 320–26.

famous singers such as Lily Pons, Grace Moore, and Ezio Pinza had positioned him well for the new endeavor.⁹⁵

Zirato then addresses Amato's interest in singing at the Chicago Opera. Amato knew its conductors, Giorgio Polacco and Roberto Moranzoni, from his time at the Met and hoped they might be interested in working with him. Zirato, however, had heard of what he called "Americanophilia" in Chicago (an ostensible preference of American singers over foreign ones)⁹⁶ and thus suggested that Amato explore other venues. Unfortunately, Zirato's perception was inaccurate: during the mid 1920s, the Chicago Opera continued to engage foreign artists and in the summer of 1925 even made a scouting trip to Europe to find new talent,⁹⁷ in fact, it showed no particular preference toward American performers.

Aware of the difficulty in procuring a contract in opera, Zirato contacted the firm of B. F. Keith, long reigning mogul of the vaudeville business, in hopes of finding work in vaudeville instead. Keith had launched his business in 1883 and served audiences throughout the period when vaudeville was America's most popular theatrical art form (1890–1920).⁹⁸ Edward F. Albee, Keith's successor, unfortunately clung to the belief of vaudeville's unrivalled popularity during the subsequent years, when film, Broadway, and radio were luring artists with better wages. Zirato does not seem to have been aware of these trends.⁹⁹

At the end of his letter, Zirato lauds Amato for his European successes (he has read reviews of Amato's performances and is duly impressed). He thus makes a last request that

⁹⁵ See "Bruno Zirato, 88, Caruso Aide Who Headed Philharmonic, Dies," *The New York Times*, November 30, 1972, 46.

⁹⁶ Davis, *Opera in Chicago*, 155–57.

⁹⁷ "Civic Opera Roster Lists Many Stars," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 9, 1925, C3.

⁹⁸ Arthur Frank Wertheim, *Vaudeville Wars: How the Keith-Albee and Orpheum Circuits Controlled the Big-Time and Its Performers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), xvii.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 254.

Amato send him recent reviews so that he may distribute them in order to stir up public anticipation for Amato's return in either vaudeville or opera.¹⁰⁰

[New York]

December 26, 1925

My dearest Don Pascà,¹⁰¹

What vicissitudes since our last letters I have left the *Digest*, where I did not see a future for myself and was no longer able to endure the unfair demands of Key; he apparently has changed, but the leopard cannot change his spots.¹⁰² You understand what I mean. Now I have a theatrical agency and hope to do well. I have started well.

And now, a Happy New Year to you and your lovable and kind wife, also, of course, on Nina's behalf.

Don't think that I have forgotten you all this time. You'd be wrong. I have used all the means at my disposal to give you some good news. I could change nothing in Chicago where, at present, Americanophilia rules ... You see all the Bonellis¹⁰³ and all the Steels,¹⁰⁴ who sing *Un Ballo in maschera* as if it were nothing. And Baklanoff who performs Boris ... unbelievable!¹⁰⁵ About the concerts (after that little uproar over your name, started by inconsiderate people who haven't left anything untried to make it known everywhere that you had lost your voice ... etc. etc.): at the time, I published your triumphs in Germany to the four winds; things have calmed down, and today, the concert agents certainly want to hear you. Now that I have abandoned those fields [i.e., concerts], I have turned to vaudeville. Here, the soil is better, but they found your price too high. Just a week ago, I spoke to the booking agent of Keith, to whom I told your intentions as I took them from your letter, that is: thirty weeks guaranteed at \$2500 a week [and] the roundtrips (yours and your wife's)—from Europe to here—paid half in advance, and those in America one by one. I expect their answer any day. And since it is necessary to catch the ball on

¹⁰⁰ Not all reviews in the German newspapers liked Amato's voice; for example, Kenyon and Williams include in their article two negative reviews from Berlin newspapers. One stated, "the voice itself disappoints, its substance appears affected and its timbre has...lost much of its earlier charm." The other noticed that his "vocal zenith in spite of the relative youth of his forty years has obviously passed." Kenyon and Williams, "Pasquale Amato," 13. If Zirato had happened to see these negative reviews, then his reason for his wanting new reviews may have been the goal of having more evidence in Amato's favor.

¹⁰¹ Zirato's nickname for Amato could be a reference to Don Pasquale.

¹⁰² This is the English equivalent of the Italian phrase "Il lupo perde il pelo ma non il vizio." The literal translation is: "The wolf can lose its hair but not its vices."

¹⁰³ American baritone Richard Bonelli studied at Syracuse University and (with Jean de Reszke) in Paris. He later toured with several groups in America and sang at Chicago for several seasons before making his debut at the Met in 1932. Richard LeSueur, "Bonelli, Richard," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O900757> [accessed August 4, 2008].

¹⁰⁴ American baritone Robert Steel made his debut at the Chicago Opera as Renato in *Un ballo in maschera*. See Edward C. Moore, *Forty Years of Opera in Chicago* (New York, Horace Liveright, 1930), 299.

¹⁰⁵ Zirato mentions Russian baritone Georges Baklanoff as an aside, since Baklanoff could not have been connected to Zirato's argument regarding Chicago's Americanophilia. Baklanoff began his opera career in Europe before singing with the Boston Opera (1915–1918), then with the Chicago Opera Company (1917–1926). Harold Barnes and Katherine K. Preston, "Baklanov, Georgy," in *The Grove Book of Opera Singers*, ed. Laura Macy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 25.

the rebound, I am writing to ask you the favor of telling me where you will be during the next two months so that I'll be able to reach you by cable, if necessary.

For the commission, it is necessary, I believe, to pay 15%, of which 5% generally go to the agency that does the booking, 5% to the person who handles the deal, and 5% to me. The latter agreement is my commission of 10%, which I must divide.

If you have some recent articles about your recitals or concerts, I beg you to send them to me immediately. I went to the library to look at the Berlin and Dresden newspapers of last year. From that reading emerged some very good comments and the encouragement to negotiate with you.

Reply soon, I beg you. My best wishes to you and your wife. With a loving embrace,
I am, as always, your very affectionate
Bruno Zirato

[New York]

li 26 Dicembre 1925

Mio carissimo don Pascà,

Che vicende dopo le ultime nostre lettere Io ho lasciato il Digest dove non vedevo il mio futuro e non potevo più reggere le imposizioni del Key che ha cambiato—forse—il pelo e non il vizio. Voi mi capite. Ora ho un'agenzia teatrale e spero far bene. Ho cominciato bene.

Ed ora Buon Principio a voi ed all'amabile e gentile signora anche, naturalmente da parte di Nina.

Non immaginate che io vi abbia dimenticato¹⁰⁶ tutto questo tempo. Avreste torto. Ho posto tutti i mezzi di cui potevo disporre per darvi una buona novella. Nulla ho potuto combinare alla Chicago dove adesso regna un['] americanofilia ... Vedete tutti i Bonelli e tutti gli Steels che cantano il Ballo in maschera come se nulla fosse. E Blakanoff¹⁰⁷ che fa il Boris ... Cose dell'altro mondo. Per i concerti dopo quel po' po' di cagnara che è successa qui sul vostro nome da parte di sconsigliati che non han lasciato mezzo intentato per far sapere ovunque che voi avevate perduta la voce ... etc. etc.

Io ho pubblicato ai quattro venti, allora, i vostri trionfi in Germania e le cose si sono calmate, ma certo oggi gli agenti di concerti voglion sentirvi. Abbandonati questi campi, mi son rivolti¹⁰⁸ ai vaudevilles. Qui il terreno è migliore, ma han trovato il vostro prezzo troppo elevato. Proprio una settimana fa io ho parlato con il booking agent di Keith al quale ho detto le vostre intenzioni ricavate dalla vostra lettera e cioè: 30 settimane assicurate a \$2500 a metà viaggi (per voi e la signora) pagati in anticipo dall'Europa qui e volta per volta quelli in America. Attendo da un giorno all'altro la loro risposta. E siccome bisogna cogliere la palla al balzo vi scrivo perché mi facciate il favore di dirmi dove sarete nei prossimi due mesi per potervi raggiungere, se del caso, con un cable.¹⁰⁹

Per la commissione è necessario, credo pagare il 15%, di cui 5 va all'agenzia generale che fa il booking, 5 alla persona che tratta l'affare e 5 per me. Quest'ultimo accordo sarebbe la mia commissione del 10 che debbo dividere.

¹⁰⁶ *Recte*: dimenticato.

¹⁰⁷ *Recte*: Baklanoff.

¹⁰⁸ *Recte*: rivolto.

¹⁰⁹ *Recte*: via un cavo.

Se avete degli articoli recenti di vostre recite o concerti vi prego mandarmeli subito. Sono andati¹¹⁰ alla biblioteca per vedere i giornali di Berlino e Dresda dell'anno scorso. Da quella lettura ne sono venuti fuori degli ottimi commenti e l'incoraggiamento di trattarvi.

Rispondetemi presto, ve ne prego. Abbiatevi i più cordiali augurii¹¹¹ in uno con la signora e con abbraccio affettuoso.

Vostro sempre affezionatissimo
[Bruno Zirato]¹¹²

With the Dresden opera negotiations apparently dropped for financial or political reasons, Amato directly addresses the vaudeville proposal in his response of January 15, 1926.¹¹³ Despite his eagerness to return to America, Amato requests a contract with no loopholes—one that would guarantee a determined time period of engagements at an unambiguous salary. Offering an address in France where he could be contacted, Amato closes his letter with the indication that he will wait for further information.

Florence
January 15, 1926
Dearest Bruno,

In Paris, where in December I sang three performances of *Traviata*, I learned from the correspondent of the *Digest*, Mr. Sevallé, that you are no longer with Key. There is nothing to do about it—that's the way it goes.

I am here for a few days and will probably sing *Otello*, and your letter has just arrived.

I would gladly return to the United States, but [only] if the deal you propose is a sure thing. I know the seriousness of the Keith agency, but I wish in this case that the contract not have loopholes of any kind. I know a little bit about the traps of certain contracts and would not like, for any reason whatsoever, that they would be able to annul [the contract] whenever they do not find it to their financial advantage. I know that, in said contracts, they put a clause that only after the first week or first three weeks, it is understood as confirmed for the remainder of the duration. I am not able to accept such a clause; the time period must be guaranteed. As for the trips, I do not know what you mean by "half"; I want to have the trips paid, first class for me and my wife, outside cabin on the promenade deck for me and my wife, as well as all the trips during the tour; the return trip from New York to Europe will be on me.

¹¹⁰ *Recte*: andato.

¹¹¹ *Recte*: auguri.

¹¹² The typescript is an unsigned letter, probably the carbon copy to which Zirato refers in a 1946 letter to Uhler. See Bruno Zirato to John Earle Uhler, March 26, 1946, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

¹¹³ This is the only example in the collection of a letter from Zirato directly responding to a letter from Amato.

My address is: Rue Alphonse Barr 19, Nice, France. I had to take an apartment there due to the health of my wife. And thank God I am happy with it because she is improving from day to day.

I beg you to see whether it is possible to reduce the commission because 15% is a little heavy. Thanks for your good wishes, which I return from my heart, also to Signora Nina. With an embrace,

Amato

Firenze

15 Gennaio 1926

Carissimo Bruno,

A Parigi, dove cantai in Dicembre¹¹⁴ 3 recite di Traviata, appresi dal corrispondente del “Digest,” Mr. Sevallé¹¹⁵, che non eri più con Key. Non c’è che fare[;] così va il mondo.

Sono qui per qualche giorno e probabilmente canterò Otello, e mi giunge la tua lettera.

Tornerei molto volentieri¹¹⁶ agli¹¹⁷ Stati Uniti ma se l’affare che mi proponi è cosa sicura. Conosco la serietà dell’azienda Keith, ma desidero al caso che il contratto non abbia scappatoie di alcun genere, conosco un poco le insidie di certi contratti e non vorrei che per una qualsiasi ragione potessero sciogliere qualora finanziariamente essi non trovassero la loro convenienza. So che in detti contratti essi mettono la clausola che dopo la prima o le prime tre settimane soltanto s’intende riconfermato per il resto della durata, ne quale clausola io non potrei accettare, il periodo di tempo deve essere garantito. Per i viaggi non so che cosa intendi per metà, io desidero aver pagati i viaggi in 1^a classe per me e mia moglie, cabina esterna su promenade deck per me e mia moglie non che tutti i viaggi durante la tournée; quelli di ritorno da New-York in Europa a mio carico.

Il mio indirizzo è: rue Alphonse Karr 19 Nice—France. Ho dovuto prendere colà un appartamento causa la salute di mia moglie e grazie a Dio ne sono contento perché essa migliora di giorno in giorno.

Ti prego cercare se possibile ridurre la mediazione perché il 15% è un poco pesante. Grazie per gli auguri che contraccambio di cuore anche per la Signora Nina, a te un abbraccio

Amato

In his letter of March 23, 1926, Amato does not say much about their business with the Keith agency. He promises to have patience while Zirato tries to arrange the contract. He then addresses the problems of travel due to tensions over disputed European territories. As an example, he mentions the Alto Adige (also called South Tyrol), which Italy had annexed at the end of World War I. While Amato could have traveled there free from interrogation, his German

¹¹⁴ *Recte*: Dicembre.

¹¹⁵ Spelling unclear in the original manuscript.

¹¹⁶ *Recte*: volentieri.

¹¹⁷ *Recte*: negli.

colleagues would have been scrutinized,¹¹⁸ in return, Amato faced problems with his German tour. It is likely that the instability of the German economy and its effect on German theaters added to Amato's interest in finding a reliable, well-paying job in America.

Amato furthermore raises issues of teaching, some of which he had repeatedly discussed in interviews and journal articles.¹¹⁹ For example, Amato once offered in an interview that a singer should constantly work hard, sing scales first if practicing in the morning, and work on tone rather than volume.¹²⁰ Amato knew that promising voices existed in America and he campaigned for increasing the number of institutions and qualified teachers who could recognize and nurture talent in the States, rather than sending students to Europe for training.¹²¹

Nice

March 23, 1926

Dear Bruno,

I took note of what you told me about the Keith business; patience! I am only just now beginning to get accustomed to human injustices. In addition, my usual tour in Germany is delayed (at least for the moment),¹²² and this in the wake of the disputes over the Alto Adige and the rest of the international situation.

Patience! Meanwhile, in order not to be bored, I have yielded to the requests of several people and am giving a few lessons; if only I could find an interesting "subject" or a good voice, but everybody wants to sing without having what it takes, and I give in as always. I send away those who for years have let themselves be flattered by many imposters. It repulses me to take money from people who do not have a chance.

I am pleased to learn that you will be going to Buenos Aires.

¹¹⁸ "Jingoes Blamed for Tyrol Clash," *The New York Times*, April 11, 1926, X16. For more on this region, see Mario Toscano, *Alto Adige-South Tyrol: Italy's Frontier with the German World* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

¹¹⁹ Amato contributed a chapter ("Modern Vocal Methods in Italy") to a book compiled by James Francis Cooke, titled *Great Singers on the Art of Singing* (Philadelphia: Presser, 1921). Articles on Amato's pedagogy include: William Armstrong, "Pasquale Amato and His Views on Singing," *Musician* 17 (November 1912): 734–35; and Pasquale Amato, "Helping American Singers" *Munsey's Magazine* 54 (February–May 1915): 510–12.

¹²⁰ William Armstrong, "Pasquale Amato and His Views on Singing," *Musician* 17 (November 1912): 734–35.

¹²¹ "Pasquale Amato Tells How He Obtained First Engagement," *Musical America* (March 30, 1918): 11.

¹²² It is not clear what Amato's usual tour in Germany was or if it ever took place before his return to America in December of that year.

I saw Scotti at San Siro in Milan;¹²³ he made promises, told me many things, but!! The instruction is ... to snore.¹²⁴

Affectionate greetings and wishes both from my wife and myself. And if you have any news, I shall be here at Nice all through May, then at Cesenatico.¹²⁵

Pasquale Amato

Nizza

23 Marzo 1926

Caro Bruno,

Ho preso nota di quanto mi dice per l'affare Keith, pazienza! Oramai comincio ad abituarmi alle ingiustizie umane. Anche il mio solito giro in Germania subisce un rinvio, almeno per il momento, e questo in seguito alle polemiche per l'Alto Adige e il resto della situazione internazionale.

Pazienza! Intanto per non annoiarmi ho ceduto alle richieste di parecchi e dó qualche lezione, almeno potessi trovare qualche soggetto interessante ossia una buona voce, ma tutti vogliono cantare senza averne le qualità ed io accedo come sempre mando via quelli che da anni si fanno lusingare dai tanti impostori, mi ripugna prendere danaro da gente che non ha alcuna probabilità.

Ho piacere sentire che andrà a Buenos Ayres.

Scotti lo vidi a Milano a San Siro mi promise, mi disse tante cose mah!! La consegna è ... di russare.

Saluti affettuosi e auguri ad entrambi da mia moglie e da me e se avrà qualche notizia a tutto Maggio[,] sono qui a Nizza, poi a Cesenatico.

Pasquale Amato

In December 1926, Amato finally returned to the United States. Although Gatti-Casazza (together with Otto Kahn, the philanthropist and patron of the arts) sponsored his trip, he did not

¹²³ It is unclear under what circumstances Amato saw Scotti at the San Siro; it cannot have been a performance, since the stadium was not inaugurated until September 1926. Scotti, who was still at the Met, may have promised to help find Amato a job.

¹²⁴ The phrase "The instruction is to snore" is alluding to a proverb derived from a comedy of the same title. See Eugene Pierre Boste Grange and Lambert Thiboust, *La consegna e di russare, Scherzo comico in un atto* (Florence: Tipografia Adriano Salani, 1876). In his dictionary, Policarpo Petrocchi explains that the proverb applies to a situation in which "a superior or a subordinate ignores the evil in an administration or the like, either because he wants to ignore it or is told to do so [La consegna è di russare. Proverbio derivato da una commediola; e si dice quando qualcuno de' superiori o inferiori non s'accòrge, perché non vuole o à ordine di non dovèrsene accorgere, del male che si fa in una amministrazione o simili]." See *Nòvo dizionario universale della lingua italiana*, 2 vols. (Milano: Fratelli Trèves, 1924), 1:568. Amato uses the proverb to imply that he does not trust Scotti's promises and will ignore them.

¹²⁵ Cesenatico is a small town on the coast of the Adriatic Sea where Amato had a villa and where he planned to retire. William Armstrong (*The Romantic World of Music* [New York: E. P. Dutton, 1922], 171–73) recounts his visit to Amato in Cesenatico, calling the town "a charming corner of the Old World." Italian baritones Giuseppe Campanari (a close friend of Amato's) and Antonio Pini-Corsi resided often at Cesenatico.

engage Amato at the Met.¹²⁶ Amato planned to teach a class at the Chicago Musical College,¹²⁷ which was then led by Herbert Witherspoon, an American bass who had sung at the Met, had written a book on singing and vocal pedagogy, and was teaching a large voice studio.¹²⁸ In his letter of July 6, 1927, Amato expresses disappointment in being informed that only one student had requested him as a teacher. He explains his misfortune by suggesting that Witherspoon may have lied about the lack of interest in Amato because he, Witherspoon, wanted to keep the students for himself.¹²⁹

In New York, with only a few students and little income, Amato's frustration with the lack of concert engagements reached its peak, and he became indignant that an artist of his stature continued to be ignored. To make the situation worse, he realized that several of his colleagues still possessed contracts with the leading opera houses, including Scotti (who performed at the Met until the age of 67)¹³⁰ and baritone Titta Ruffo,¹³¹ whose name had replaced Amato's on the Met's 1922 roster¹³² and who was engaged at Chicago at the time. Convinced that his voice was still strong, Amato wondered whether someone was undermining his efforts to obtain notable concert and opera engagements (in his letter, he does not mention the vaudeville contract with Keith again; the efforts of reaching an agreement had apparently been dropped).

¹²⁶ Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 134.

¹²⁷ Amato was given an invitation to teach a master class for the summer term beginning in June. "Pasquale Amato in New York after Long Absence Abroad," *Musical Courier* 94, no. 2 (January 13, 1927): 50.

¹²⁸ "Witherspoon Studios Summer Master Class," *Musical Courier* 101, no. 3 (July 19, 1930): 22.

¹²⁹ Whether or not Amato ever went to Chicago remains unclear. On May 1, 1927, the *Daily Tribune* lists Amato as a judge for the Chicago Musical College's scholarship contest to take place the following week (Eric DeLamarter, "Carillonneur Brings an Age Old Art to Chicago," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 1, 1927, H1), but his letter in July states that he is remaining in New York.

¹³⁰ Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 105.

¹³¹ Italian baritone Titta Ruffo sang at notable opera houses such as La Scala (debut in 1903) and Covent Garden (debut in 1903) and Chicago (debut in 1912). From 1922 to 1929, he regularly performed at the Met. Scott, *The Record of Singing*, 1:118.

¹³² Steane, *Singers of the Century*, 3:107.

Amato increasingly felt that he had a mission beyond performing. He mentions to Zirato for the first time his idea of founding a school for singers¹³³ and expresses hope that his reputation as a performer would help him recruit promising students.

July 6, 1927

Dearest Bruno,

I have freed myself from Chicago and I believe that I have done the right thing. I have never believed in that combination, even though Mr. Ziegler may have been of a different opinion.¹³⁴

Imagine that they claim to have had only one request for me.

Now there are two hypotheses: either they are actually telling the truth, or they are playing tricks, thinking first of President Witherspoon and leaving the scraps for the others. In both hypotheses, it is logical for me to have remained in New York, where, even though I don't have many students (it could not have been expected in such a short period of time), I nevertheless get by.

Therefore you will find me upon your return, and I hope to take the trip together.¹³⁵

I read in some newspaper that Formichi¹³⁶ is suffering and has not been able to sing lately: somebody here says that he is in such a nervous condition that he cannot even think about serious employment. I do not wish ill on anyone, but if it were true we could try to push Johnson of Chicago for some performances.¹³⁷ But is it possible that with so many artists laying themselves open to criticism that I really am the only one who cannot have himself a door opened after all I have done in this country?

This is a great mystery, but whom have I hurt?

¹³³ Amato made public his plans for an vocal institution in September 1927 when the *Musical Courier* published a letter he received from Richard Tauber, Sr., General Intendent of the Chemnitz Opera House in Germany and father of tenor Richard Tauber. In his letter, Tauber praises Amato for intending "to create a school over there for the purpose of recruiting and teaching good American vocal material for the European opera field," a project Amato had presented in a June 21, 1927 to Tauber. See "Amato Representative of Chemnitz Opera House," *Musical Courier* 95, no. 9 (September, 1, 1927): 10.

¹³⁴ Edward Ziegler was an administrative secretary at the Met from 1916 to 1920. In 1920, he became assistant general manager to Gatti-Casazza and continued administrative and recruiting services for the Met until his death. See David Ewen, *Encyclopedia of the Opera*, enl. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963), 553. Martin Mayer offers insight about Ziegler's diverse roles in the daily operations of the Met. No doubt Amato made his acquaintance and later received advice from Ziegler on his business ventures. Mayer, *The Met*, 127–30.

¹³⁵ Amato is referring to his trip to California to sing with the Los Angeles Opera. Zirato's travel to California for the same event (and his connection with the Los Angeles Opera) is confirmed in the *Musical Courier*: "[Zirato] is leaving New York soon for California to attend the San Francisco and Los Angeles performances of opera ... Mr. Zirato is the New York representative of the San Francisco and Los Angeles Opera Association." "Zirato Back from Europe," *Musical Courier* 95, no. 8 [August 25, 1927]: 37.

¹³⁶ Cesare Formichi (1883–1949) was principal baritone in Chicago for ten years. J. B. Steane, "Formichi, Cesare," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O004225> [accessed November 1, 2008].

¹³⁷ Herbert M. Johnson.

I'm not asking for many performances, just a few (seven or eight) in a season, for which it is easy to find the repertoire: *Barbiere, Aida, Gioconda, Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci, Cena delle Beffe, Bohème*, to name only a few. But if they try me out and give me courage, I know I can do more. My idea is to create the school little by little, but it is also necessary that I still make the most of my artistic talents. Is it possible that in a country such as this, where everyone has found (and still finds) something to do when no longer young, everything is difficult for me? But consider Hempel,¹³⁸ de Gorgoza,¹³⁹ Whitehill,¹⁴⁰ Scotti, Titta, and so many others about whom it is better not to write. The lessons will probably give me enough to live on, [but] if I can give a few performances with a good company, free from the anxiety of not knowing what might happen in the next bar, they will serve me as publicity for the school and permit me to save something for the time when the vitality, which I still have, will be gone. After all, the public receives me with enthusiasm, the press in general speaks well of me; how is it so difficult to find work for me?

Excuse me for this little vent: I'm writing to you because now in Italy, you could easily see Polacco, Johnson, our Gatti, etc.

I expect a lot from the outcome in California; at the moment I feel better than ever.¹⁴¹ I'm studying *Tristan* in German, and in the third act, I'm finding the voice of my young days. I know that it is not easy to demolish certain prejudices, but to an artist and a man such as [me] should be due the same respect as is given to so many others. I believe that something should be done for me.

It is true that they have abolished all the agencies.¹⁴²

I hope that by now you have found your mother in the best of health and that your trip will turn out according to your desires.

Affectionate greetings and farewell until August

Your

Pasquale Amato

6 Luglio 1927

Carissimo Bruno,

Mi sono sciolto da Chicago e credo di aver fatto bene; non ho mai creduto a quella combinazione benché Mr. Ziegler fosse di opinione diversa.

Figurati che asseriscono aver avuto una sola domanda per me.

¹³⁸ For more on Frieda Hempel, see Chapter 2.

¹³⁹ Emilio de Gogorza, a Hispanic American baritone, studied voice in Europe and began his concert career singing with Marcella Sembrich in 1898. Gogorza's long career in music includes coaching vocalists, becoming the first artistic director for Victor Talking Machine Company, and eventually directing the voice department at the Curtis Institute from 1926 to 1940. "Emilio de Gogorza, Taught Opera Stars," *The New York Times*, May 11, 1949, 29.

¹⁴⁰ American bass Clarence Whitehill made his debut at the Met in 1909 and established himself as a regular artist at the opera house until 1931. He also appeared in Belgium, London, and Germany. Scott, *The Record of Singing*, 1:59.

¹⁴¹ Giles Borbridge, a friend of the Amato family, mentions that Amato sang with the Los Angeles Opera in the fall of 1927. Giles Borbridge to John Earle Uhler, July 1952, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902. In addition, an article about an 8 October performance with the opera company confirms Amato's presence there. See "Los Angeles Opera Season is Opened," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 13, 1927, 12.

¹⁴² The meaning of this sentence is unclear since it has little context. Amato may be referring to political agencies, social agencies, or music agencies.

Ora due sono le ipotesi: o che effettivamente essi dicono il vero o che facciano trucchi pensando prima al presidente Witherspoon lasciando le ossa agli altri. In entrambi le ipotesi è logico che io sia rimasto a New York dove pur non avendo molti allievi, e non era da attenderselo in sì breve tempo, pur mi difendo.

Quindi mi troverai al tuo ritorno e spero di fare il viaggio insieme.

Ho letto in qualche giornale che Formichi è sofferente e non ha potuto cantare ultimamente, qualcuno qui afferma che egli trovarsi¹⁴³ in condizione di nervi tali da non poter pensare a seri impegni. Io non auguro male a nessuno, ma se ciò fosse vero si potrebbe tentare di spingere Johnson di Chicago per qualche recita. Ma è possibile che con tanti artisti che mostrano il fianco alla critica io proprio sia l'unico che non possa farmi aprire una porta dopo tutto quanto ho fatto in questo paese?

Questo è un grande mistero, ma a chi ho fatto male?

Io non chiedo molte recite, ma poche 7 o 8 in una stagione, per quelle facile è trovare il repertorio Barbiere, Aida, Gioconda, Cavalleria, e Pagliacci, Cena delle Beffe, Boheme, per dirne solo qualcuna, ma se mi provano e mi danno coraggio io so che posso fare di più. La mia idea è quella di formare la scuola poco a poco, ma è necessario anche io sfrutta¹⁴⁴ ancora i miei talenti artistici. È possibile che in un paese come questo dove tutti hanno trovato da fare quando non più giovani e trovano ancora, per me tutto è difficile? Ma guarda la Hempel, de Gogorza, Whithill¹⁴⁵, Scotti, Titta e tanti altri che è meglio lasciare nelle penne. Le lezioni potranno darmi da vivere ma, se potrò fare qualche recita in buona compagnia e non con l'ansia di non sapere cose succedersi alla prossima battuta, quelle mi serviranno da reclame per la scuola e mi permetteranno di mettere da parte qualche cosa per quando la vitalità che ancora mi resta non vi sarà più. Dopo tutto, i pubblici mi accolgono con entusiasmo la stampa in generale dice bene ma quali sono le difficoltà per farmi lavorare?

Scusami questo piccolo sfogo, te ne scrivo perché ora in Italia ti sarà facile vedere Polacco, Johnson, il nostro Gatti ecc.

Io mi riprometto molto dall'esito di California, in questo momento mi sento meglio che mai, studio Tristano per il tedesco e nel terzo atto trovo la voce di altri tempi. Lo so che non è facile smontare certi pregiudizi ma ad un artista e un uomo come [me] si devono dei riguardi usati a tanti altri. Credo che qualche cosa per me si deve fare.

È vero che hanno abolite tutte le agenzie.

Spero che avrai trovato la mamma tua in ottima salute e che il tuo viaggio riesca secondo i tuoi desideri.

Saluti affettuosi e arrivederci in Agosto.

Tuo
Pasquale Amato

Between this letter and the next one, Amato continued to work small jobs in the United States. Zirato had arranged (as promised in his letter of December 26, 1925) a private concert for a few personalities in a position to hire or promote Amato. Those attending included Arthur

¹⁴³ *Recte*: trovati.

¹⁴⁴ *Recte*: sfrutti.

¹⁴⁵ *Recte*: Whitehill.

Judson (a manager), Robert A. Simon (a music editor), Gaetano Merola (music director for the San Francisco and Los Angeles Opera Companies), and Pierre Key.¹⁴⁶ Key's subsequent review confirmed Amato's return to the American stage and announced an appearance at the Los Angeles Opera Company in October of 1927.¹⁴⁷ Amato sang Kurwenal in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and was praised by the *Christian Science Monitor* for his "eminently satisfying" interpretation.¹⁴⁸

Always open to new challenges, Amato made a foray into film: in 1928, he appeared in *Glorious Betsy*, a film about the love affair between Napoleon's brother Jerome and a young Baltimore woman named Elizabeth Patterson.¹⁴⁹ After this engagement, several different newspapers reported on his guest appearances with small companies in America such as the Pittsburgh Opera and the Washington National Opera.¹⁵⁰

With the few short engagements earning him less money than he had hoped, Amato continued to pursue a permanent job in teaching. In his letter of December 9, 1931, he expresses his gratitude for Zirato's help, proceeds to list his assets as a teacher, and concludes with his expression of hope that Mary Louise Curtis Bok would invite him to join the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music.

December 9, 1931

Dear Bruno,

¹⁴⁶ Zirato to Uhler, March 1, 1946, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

¹⁴⁷ Pierre Key, "Pierre Key's Observations" (April 5, 1927), quoted in the *Musical Courier* 94, no.18 (May 5, 1927): 15.

¹⁴⁸ "Los Angeles Opera Season is Opened," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 13, 1927, 12.

¹⁴⁹ "Though he [Amato] looks considerably older than Napoleon did at that time[,] he does quite well with his impersonation." Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen: Betsy and Bonaparte," *The New York Times*, April 27, 1928, 16. Amato had some experience with this character, having created the part of Napoleon in the 1915 premiere of Umberto Giordano's *Madame Sans-Gêne* at the Met. He was praised in detail for mimicking the Emperor by showing "the brow, the lock, the lowering vision, the right hand thrust into the waistcoat, the abrupt and hurried air." See "World's Premiere of *Mme. Sans-Gene*," *The New York Times*, January 26, 1915, 8.

¹⁵⁰ Newspaper clippings of his performances with the Pittsburgh Opera are contained in a folder with the Pasquale Amato Scrapbook. On the Washington National Opera Company: Jim McPherson, "Mr. Meek Goes to Washington," *The Opera Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (2004): 197-267.

I don't have to tell you how grateful I am for your interest in me; you know well the devotion I have to good friends and how thankful I am to those who have done something for me.

Let us hope that something may come up to give me a little more peace of mind in these moments of worldwide unrest.

Don't you believe that a greater clarification of what I'm able to do might be useful to Mrs. Bok?¹⁵¹

My artistic relationship for so many years with the Maestro [Toscanini] has taught me so many things others ignore, and apart from teaching voice, I can be useful in all that concerns the study of a role, diction, phrasing, interpretation, etc.

I'm certain that, if I were to come to that institution, I could prove myself very useful to the artistic growth of the young forces at that school.¹⁵²

Many thanks, and I hope that you and Nina will accept my warmest greetings and those of my wife.

Yours,
Pasquale Amato

9 Dicembre 1931

Carissimo Bruno,

Inutile dirti quanto io ti sia grato per il tuo interesse a mio riguardo, tu conosci bene la devozione che ho per i buoni amici e quanto io sia riconoscente verso quelli che fecero qualche cosa per me.

Speriamo che qualche cosa possa spuntare per darmi un poco più di tranquillità d'animo in questi momenti di perturbazione mondiale.

Non credi che un maggiore schiarimento, su quello che io posso fare, alla Sig.^{ra} Bock possa giovare?

La mia associazione artistica per tanti anni con il Maestro, mi fecero apprendere tante cose che altri ignorano e a parte l'insegnamento vocale io posso essere utile in tutto quanto concerne lo studio di un ruolo, dizione, fraseggio, interpretazione ecc

Ho la certezza, se potrò entrare in quella istituzione, di poter dimostrarmi utilissimo per lo sviluppo artistico delle giovani forze che fanno capo a quella scuola.

Grazie assai e, con Nina, ti prego di gradire i saluti affettuosi miei e di mia moglie.

Tuo
Pasquale Amato

Amato was never offered a professorship at the Curtis Institute.

¹⁵¹ Mary Louise Curtis Bok founded the Curtis Institute of Music in 1924. Information on the Curtis Institute can be found on its Web site at <http://www.curtis.edu/html/20000.shtml>; in Gertrude Leimbach, "The Curtis Institute of Music: A Woman's Ideal That Is Being Translated into Actuality," *Music Supervisors' Journal* 11, no. 4 (March 1925): 46–48; and in Mona Mender, *Extraordinary Women in Support of Music*, 181–87.

¹⁵² Soprano Marcella Sembrich and contralto Sarah Charles-Cahier were teaching at the Institute at the time. See "The Curtis Institute of Music: A Woman's Ideal That Is Being Translated into Actuality," *Music Supervisors' Journal* 11, no. 4 (March 1925): 48.

The next few years were filled with occasional engagements, for example in 1932, in Washington (*Aida*, directed by Alfredo Salmaggi).¹⁵³ In 1934 Amato took the position of artistic director and a member of the ensemble at the Hippodrome National Opera Company in New York.¹⁵⁴ Only a few months later, Louisiana Governor Huey P. Long offered Amato the chairmanship of the opera department at Louisiana State University and a new house in Baton Rouge (a nice bonus for someone who had temporarily lived at the Hotel Ansonia in New York since 1926). Amato accepted the offer, leaving behind his stage career in hopes of sustaining his legacy through teaching.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ “Washington to See *Aida* out of Doors,” *The New York Times*, May 29, 1932, 11.

¹⁵⁴ This was his first documented directorial position. For more information on the company, see Milton Epstein, *The New York Hippodrome: A Complete Chronology of Performances from 1905–1939* (New York: Theatre Library Association, 1993), 295.

¹⁵⁵ Giles Borbridge to John Earle Uhler, July [n.d.] 1952, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

CHAPTER 3: TESTIMONIALS

In 1946, four years after her husband's death, Amato's widow (who still resided in Baton Rouge) approached Uhler with the request to write a biography of Amato.¹⁵⁶ Uhler's research had already begun earlier, when he assembled a commemorative program that eventually aired on a New Orleans radio station in 1945.¹⁵⁷ Though he would leave a manuscript of over one hundred and fifty pages, Uhler's only publication on Amato remains a brief sketch published in a 1953 issue of the *Catholic World*.¹⁵⁸

As part of his research, Uhler wrote to Amato's former friends and colleagues. The resulting correspondence (provided below in chronological order) largely confirms the personality and ambitions conveyed in Amato's own letters; however, the collective tribute of his colleagues also intimately links Amato to great singers of the Met's Golden Age and lets him emerge as one of the greatest baritones of that era.¹⁵⁹

Uhler's contact letter, first addressed to French baritone Lucien Muratore but later used to contact other colleagues of Amato as well, asks the recipient to share any memories of the late baritone. Uhler also reveals his ultimate goal of a biography focusing on Amato's professional journey.

February 23, 1946

¹⁵⁶ Uhler, a professor of English, seems to have had a strong interest in music; he later edited two facsimiles of Thomas Morley's canzonets. See John Earl Uhler, *Morley's Canzonets for Two Voices*, Louisiana State University Studies (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954), and John Earle Uhler, *Morley's Canzonets for Three Voices*, Louisiana State University Studies (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957).

¹⁵⁷ The transcript for the program (which included biographical information and aria selections) and Uhler's notes for his presentation can be found in the John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

¹⁵⁸ John Earle Uhler, "Pasquale Amato," *Catholic World* 177, no. 1057 (April 1953): 31–37.

¹⁵⁹ The term "Golden Age" is frequently used by commentators of this era; Robert Tuggle applies it to the years 1906–32 (Tuggle, *Golden Age of Opera*, 9).

Dear Mr. Muratore:

Mrs. Pasquale Amato has asked me to write a biography of her husband, who died, as you remember, August 12, 1942.¹⁶⁰ She has suggested to me that, since you knew him, you would be helpful in reminding me of any anecdote that you remember about him. Or you might comment on him as a singer—on his voice, his ability as an actor, his character, any peculiarities of habit or manner—in fact, anything that you think would interest a reader who wants to know how a great singer becomes great. That will be the principle underlying the whole work: to try to reveal the struggle that is necessary to greatness, especially in an artist. Far too many people think that a singer simply is born to sing; they do not realize the effort, hopes, disappointments that an artist must endure. All these I should like to emphasize.

In general, my effort will be to do credit to a distinguished and, at the same time, admirable and loveable man who, in his turn, did credit to the opera stage, of which you yourself are a famous part. For whatever help you give me, both Mrs. Amato and I will be grateful.

Yours sincerely,
John Earle Uhler

Frieda Hempel

German soprano Frieda Hempel began her career at the Met when Amato's was at his prime. Before arriving at the Met, she studied in Leipzig and Berlin. From Berlin, where she had risen to stardom, she toured opera houses in Europe, making, among other places, a memorable appearance at Covent Garden in 1907. Despite a less than favorable *New York Times* review of her Met debut in 1912 (as Marguerite in *Les Huguenots*), she impressed audiences and critics alike in a subsequent performance of *La traviata* (with Amato in the cast).¹⁶¹

Hempel and Amato's performances together were many, including *La traviata*, *Un ballo in maschera* (with a cast often including Destinn and Caruso, and Toscanini conducting),¹⁶² and *Lucia di Lammermoor*.¹⁶³ In her autobiography, Hempel remembers "having been electrified by

¹⁶⁰ The date of Mrs. Amato's request remains unknown.

¹⁶¹ Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 113.

¹⁶² In her autobiography, Hempel recalls the "magnificent cast" of *Un ballo in maschera* and boasts: "When Gatti-Casazza was asked, upon the occasion of his retirement, which performance under his management had been the greatest, he replied, *Un ballo in maschera*—such a cast will never again be brought together." Hempel, *My Golden Age of Singing*, 118.

¹⁶³ In *Un ballo in maschera*, Hempel sang Oscar and Destinn sang Amelia. The Metropolitan Opera Archives Online, <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=BibSpeed/fullcit.w?xCID=55050&limit=5000&xBranch=ALL&xdate=&xdate=&theterm=Destinn%20Hempel%20Ballo&x=0>

the genius of Caruso, of Toscanini, and of Amato as I sang with them.”¹⁶⁴ Their collaboration was not limited to the Met, however; they also worked together in the recording studio—at a time when the technology was still in its infancy¹⁶⁵—and shared concert performances.¹⁶⁶

Hempel responded to Uhler’s request with only a short letter characterized by the same kind of generic description found in her autobiography with regard to other colleagues. The reason may have been her strong sense of privacy, which may have prevented her from getting to know Amato and thus to share anything of significance.¹⁶⁷

March 1, 1946

Dear Mr. Uhler:

It was very nice to hear from you after so long a time had elapsed since our meeting. I have a very pleasant recollection of our visits both in Long Beach and Bowling Green.¹⁶⁸ I have often thought of you and your charming wife, and will be glad to hear from you both.

I did not know of Mr. Amato’s personal life, or of his early struggles (if he had any).¹⁶⁹ I only knew Pasquale Amato as a very fine artist with a beautiful voice, a splendid actor, and one of the most lovable characters and colleagues one could be associated with. He was handsome, and had great charm, which endeared him to everyone coming in contact with him. He was helpful to aspiring young artists. I was always delighted to be associated with him at the opera, and recall his fine qualities with pleasure.

With warm personal greetings to Mrs. Uhler and yourself,

Sincerely,
F.H ... L.L.¹⁷⁰

&path=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/&xhome=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/bibpro.htm [accessed August 19, 2009].

¹⁶⁴ Hempel, *My Golden Age of Singing*, 288.

¹⁶⁵ A 1914 review of the Violetta-Germont duet “Dite alla giovane” testifies to the beauty of their voices and artistry. The review praises their performance as being of “a radiant beauty that ... is infinitely more expressive of the pathos in the dramatic situation [than the performance on a later recording with Licia Albanese and Robert Merrill].” Dyneley Hussey, “The Musician’s Gramophone,” *The Musical Times* 97, no. 1365 (November 1956): 584.

¹⁶⁶ She mentions singing a joint recital with Amato in Chicago in which both were celebrated in their alternating performances. Hempel, *My Golden Age of Singing*, 147.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶⁸ It is not yet clear how their paths crossed. They may have met when Hempel stopped in Long Beach while on vacation in 1919 (*ibid.*, 199). Uhler probably visited Bowling Green, KY, often since his wife was native to the town. See Ancestry.com, <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~chatweb/b598.htm#P3741> [accessed August 31, 2009].

¹⁶⁹ Uhler’s biography documents in great detail the beginnings of Amato’s career in Europe. See Uhler, Unpublished biography, chapters 1–14, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

¹⁷⁰ Hempel’s letter is typewritten with the initials “L.L.” added after her name; the initials probably indicate her typist’s name.

Bruno Zirato

Bruno Zirato's response focuses on Amato's celebrity status and friendship with Caruso, his pedagogical interests, as well as details involving his return to New York in 1926. Zirato composed his letter—like the one to Amato quoted in chapter 1—in a professional and reserved manner, recalling well-known facts.¹⁷¹ He presents himself as a helpful person who organized an informal concert by Amato upon the baritone's return to the United States. The concert persuaded impresario Gaetano Merola to engage Amato at the Los Angeles Opera and Arthur Judson to become Amato's manager.¹⁷²

Zirato further mentions having written letters to Amato at Cesenatico, presumably before the baritone's 1924–1925 venture into Germany.¹⁷³ Uhler later requested to see those letters, but Zirato explained in a follow-up note that they were lost; in their stead, Zirato sent his business correspondence with Amato (included in chapter 1). Zirato's willingness to entrust to Uhler letters from his personal collection testifies to the manager's friendship with Amato and his interest in contributing to the planned biography.¹⁷⁴

The tone of Zirato's letter differs from the tone in his letter to Amato. When writing to Amato, Zirato, being a shrewd manager, needed proof that Amato was still worth promoting; when writing to Uhler, however, he remembers Amato's reputation at the Met and, possibly out of respect for his late friend, omits any allusion to Amato's vocal problems and explicitly praises his post-Met voice.

¹⁷¹ Zirato to Amato, December 26, 1925, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

¹⁷² Amato writes in his letter of July 6, 1927 (see chapter 1) that this meeting resulted in an engagement. Amato to Zirato, July 6, 1927, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

¹⁷³ In his first letter of this collection (found in chapter 1), Amato mentions an earlier letter he sent to Zirato. Amato to Zirato, January 20, 1925. John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

¹⁷⁴ Zirato to Uhler, March 26, 1946, John Earle Uhler Papers, MS 1902.

March 1, 1946¹⁷⁵

Dear Mr. Uhler,

In answer to your letter asking me for reminiscences and opinion about the late Pasquale Amato, I am afraid I can't add much to what is generally known.

However, I did have occasion to observe Mr. Amato both as artist and man during my long association with Enrico Caruso. At one time in the career of both singers (about 1914, I should say), Amato's fame was second only, if not equal to that of Caruso himself and he had a personal following rare for a baritone. Yet there was no rivalry or jealousy between the two great artists. Caruso and Amato were real friends, with affection for and confidence in each other.¹⁷⁶ They were also the only two singers of their time who had a concert as well as an opera public. Until recently most singers' talents were confined to the opera stage; few had the musicianship and hold on the public to command great audiences in bare song recital.

It was my honor and privilege to be a devoted friend of Amato. He was really a great man—so human, so understanding of life's problems, and the possessor of a "big" heart. As a singer, he was as great as the man. His voice was rare, his artistry of the highest order, his acting a profound study of each character.¹⁷⁷ I will never forget that when he left the Metropolitan to return to his Italy and his mother near Cesenatico, he wrote me from there many beautiful letters. On his return here, he wanted a "come-back" to the concert stage. I arranged an informal concert in his studio at the Ansonia Hotel. I invited Arthur Judson and Robert A. Simon, music editor of the *New Yorker*.¹⁷⁸ We all were enthusiastic about Amato's voice. It was there in all its splendor. Some one had spread the rumor that his voice was gone. The rumor was unfounded.

He taught many young singers and what they learned from him cannot be put in words.¹⁷⁹ He was a great teacher as he was a great singer, and had that particular gift of "imparting" so rare in the teachers of today.

I can't remember any anecdotes except one, which happened when both singers were quite young. It was in 1904, when Caruso was singing at London's Covent Garden in the San Carlo Opera Company brought there from Naples.¹⁸⁰ Among the operas given was *Bohème* with Alice Nielsen,¹⁸¹ Emma Trentini,¹⁸² Amato and Arimondi.¹⁸³ Caruso loved practical jokes and

¹⁷⁵ Zirato's letter is typewritten.

¹⁷⁶ Frieda Hempel recalls a performance of *La gioconda* in which Amato and Caruso "staged an impromptu rivalry in the great duet" [between Enzo and Barnaba] for which the audience "gave them a tremendous ovation." Hempel, *My Golden Age of Singing*, 131.

¹⁷⁷ A good example of this is Amato's characterization of Napoleon in *Madame Sans-Gênes*, relayed in a 1915 issue of *Musical America*: "It is true historically to the best descriptions we are privileged to read about the great Bonaparte from the nervous quick walk to the movements of hand and body." Pasquale Amato Scrapbook, MS 2563.

¹⁷⁸ This is possibly the same concert Pierre V. R. Key references in his 1927 review. Pierre Key's Observations (April 5, 1927) are quoted in the *Musical Courier* 94, no.18 (May 5, 1927): 15.

¹⁷⁹ Amato's interest in pedagogy dates back to the beginning of his career at the Met; a 1912 article on Amato indicates that for two seasons he taught two young baritones for free nearly every day. William Armstrong, "Pasquale Amato and His Views on Singing," *Musician* 17 (November 1912): 734–35.

¹⁸⁰ Chairman of the Covent Garden board Harry V. Higgins had suggested that the San Carlo hire Caruso in order to "ensure success" at Covent Garden. Stanley Jackson, *Caruso* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), 120.

¹⁸¹ American soprano Alice Nielsen, who began in musical comedy and light opera, performed at Covent Garden (1904) and the San Carlo (1905) before joining the Boston Opera Company in 1909. She remained with the latter until 1914, retiring from opera in 1917 in order to teach. Gerald Bordman and J. B. Steane, "Nielsen, Alice," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/42086> [accessed June 4, 2009];

one night, when Amato was attempting to put on his coat to go out for medicine for the dying Mimì, he found to his horror—and the public’s great amusement—that Caruso had sewed up the sleeves. That same night Arimondi, after finishing his touching “Vecchia zimarra” aria, endeavored to put on his head Colline’s tall hat—only to discover it half-filled with water!¹⁸⁴

With greetings to Mrs. Amato and best wishes for the success of your book, I am,
Very sincerely yours,

Bruno Zirato

Geraldine Farrar

Gatti-Casazza once proclaimed American soprano Geraldine Farrar “one of the most interesting personalities that ever appeared on the stage of the Metropolitan”; according to him, Farrar’s beauty, personality, and extensive repertoire made her one of the most popular sopranos with the Met’s critics and public.¹⁸⁵ Farrar studied in the United States (Boston and New York) and Paris before studying intensively with Lilli Lehmann in Berlin. There she made her operatic debut at the Royal Opera House (later the Berlin State Opera) in 1901 as Marguerite in *Faust* and was an instant success. Her successful 1906 Met debut as Juliet in Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette* brought favorable reviews as well.¹⁸⁶ Later, she won *New York Sun* critic W. J. Henderson’s

for more on Nielsen, see Dall Wilson, *Alice Nielsen and the Gayety of Nations, Standing Room Only: A Biography* (New York: by the Author, 2008).

¹⁸² Not much is known about the Italian soprano Emma Trentini. After having discovered her in Milan, Oscar Hammerstein brought her to the US to sing with his Manhattan Opera Company. Due to her fiery temper, she disappeared from the opera scene after only a short time. Gerald Bordman, “Trentini, Emma,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O004674> [accessed June 4, 2009]; for a performance review, see John Frederick Cone, *Oscar Hammerstein’s Manhattan Opera Company* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 90.

¹⁸³ Italian bass Vittorio Arimondi sang at Convent Garden, with the Metropolitan Opera, and the Chicago Civic Opera. He created the role of Pistol in *Falstaff*, per Verdi’s request. “Vittorio Arimondi Dead,” *The New York Times*, April 17, 1928, 29.

¹⁸⁴ Zirato’s story also appears in Key, *Enrico Caruso*, 202.

¹⁸⁵ Gatti-Casazza, *Memories of Opera*, 162.

¹⁸⁶ Copies of Henry Krehbiel’s and Richard Aldrich’s *New York Times* reviews are found in the Metropolitan Opera Archives Online, <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=BibSpeed/fullcit.w?xCID=38000&limit=5000&xBranch=ALL&xdate=&xedate=&theterm=Rom%E9o%20et%20Juliette%3A%20Juliette%20%5BFarrar,%20Geraldine%5D&x=0&xhomepath=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/&xhome=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/bibpro.htm> [accessed August 18, 2009].

praise for her portrayal of Cio-Cio San in *Madama Butterfly* (singing that role at the Met more often than anyone else) and the title role in *Carmen*.¹⁸⁷

Farrar provides the most substantial account of any of Amato's Met colleagues, showing her unabashed admiration and recalling some of her nearly one hundred performances with Amato. Among these are important Met premieres such as Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Zazà* (1920)¹⁸⁸ and Jules Massenet's *Thaïs* (1917); the U.S. premiere of Pietro Mascagni's *Lodoletta* (1918); and the world premiere of Giordano's *Madame Sans-Gêne* (1915).¹⁸⁹ The singers also shared a season as principal artists in Andrés de Seguro's opera company that presented a four-week season in Havana.¹⁹⁰

After having retired from her singing career in 1931, Farrar continued to be a public figure by giving lectures on American music and singers.¹⁹¹ Her letter, especially the reflections on the elements of good singing and on the decline of music and its culture in America, hint at the nature of her public work.

Farrar's letter is cast in a peculiar style. Aida Craig Truxall, editor of a collection of Farrar's letters, published under the title *All Good Greetings*, pointed to this peculiarity: "[They] were typewritten, for which I was thankful, for as Miss Farrar said, her words 'rushed on paper

¹⁸⁷ Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 85. For more on Farrar, see Elizabeth Nash, *Always First Class: The Career of Geraldine Farrar* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1981); Geraldine Farrar, *The Autobiography of Geraldine Farrar: Such Sweet Compulsion* (New York: Greystone Press, 1938).

¹⁸⁸ Critic Richard Aldrich wrote, "Mme. Farrar's impersonation of the heroine was found an effective and striking addition to her operatic portraits." Of Amato he wrote, "There is much characteristic quality in Mr. Amato's fine impersonation of Casca." Richard Aldrich, "Farrar sings *Zaza* Revealed in Opera," *The New York Times*, January 17, 1920, 14.

¹⁸⁹ The Metropolitan Opera Archives Online, <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=BibSpeed/fullcit.w?xCID=58840&limit=5000&xBranch=ALL&xdate=&xedate=&theterm=Madame%20Sans-G%EAne%3A%20Caterina%20%5BFarrar,%20Geraldine%5D&x=0&xhomepath=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/&xhome=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/bibpro.htm> [accessed August 31, 2009].

¹⁹⁰ In a gesture of gratitude to his host country, Seguro, a Spanish bass who sang at the Metropolitan, auditioned American singers for the Havana tour. "De Seguro to Be Opera Impresario," *The New York Times*, September 22, 1916, 5.

¹⁹¹ Geraldine Farrar and Aida Craig Truxall, Introduction to *All Good Greetings, G. F.: Letters of Geraldine Farrar to Ilka Marie Stotler, 1946–1958* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), xxi.

like a whirlwind.’ ... Her tendency [was] to insert three dots in the middle or at the end of sentences. They appear to indicate that the thought drifted off and was to be left hanging in the air. Similarly, she often underlined words or phrases for emphasis.”¹⁹² The characteristics, especially the use of ellipses and the discursive style, are evident in the following two documents (the second attached to the first).¹⁹³

March 20, 1946

Dear Mr. Uhler;

As my schedule becomes congested, I am sending the enclosed ahead of the time I suggested for the material desired on the AMATO souvenirs;¹⁹⁴ and I do hope you will find in them enough to warrant your purpose in compiling your own study of this fine singer.

Unfortunately, I could not consult my own records, in the press of routine and their present inaccessibility.

With best wishes for the successful results of your interest and research, I am

Sincerely,
Geraldine Farrar

Some Reflections on Pasquale Amato
Geraldine Farrar

It is a double pleasure to write of Pasquale Amato; not only in admiration of his superb vocal endowment, but for his endearing qualities as an opera comrade.

In that era to which we now refer as the Golden Age of opera, the Metropolitan was fortunate in having one large family of harmonious design, in a nucleus of truly remarkable singers.

They were unusual as both singers and actors.

The composers of that moment offered singing drama in the choice of their works, so that the lyric stage was not wholly one of vocal acrobatics.

I sang with Amato in *Bohème*, *Pagliacci*, *Zaza*, *Sans-Gêne*, and *Lodoletta*: while *Carmen*, *Thaïs*, and *Manon* served to add to the standard repertoire. With Caruso, these two superlative voices gave forth such tonal opulence as has not been heard in the Metropolitan walls since their passing.

¹⁹² Farrar and Craig Truxall, Introduction to *All Good Greetings*, G. F., xvii. Farrar’s letter in the Uhler collection is typewritten.

¹⁹³ In this letter, she uses all capital letters in certain words to emphasize them (shown in the transcription as underlined), but not as often as the ellipses. Titles of operas in all capital letters are rendered (as in the transcription of the other letters) in italics.

¹⁹⁴ Both are typed.

Amato was so easy to work with on stage; having an instrument ever ready for lavish outpour, he was not restricted to vocal economy, or preoccupied with the fatigues of acting emotions.¹⁹⁵

In fact, he was often too generous with his gifts.

I recall one night in *Carmen* (after the *Toreador* song) that the public would not let him go, and since encores are not allowed in our opera houses, there was a hubbub for the remainder of the act while he was on stage.¹⁹⁶

As Napoleon, in *Sans-Gêne*, he was uncanny in his likeness to that historical figure; his facial expressions and his gestures faithfully based upon old engravings, it was a most striking and successful impersonation.¹⁹⁷

Not only in this opera, but [also] in *Zaza* we had much rollicking fun ... quite as actors in a highly spiced comedy.¹⁹⁸

In *Thaïs*, his vocal delineation was vibrant and warm ... while the same prevailed in the lesser-known *Lodoletta*,¹⁹⁹ the last Mascagni opera, based on the novelist Ouida's *Two Little Wooden Shoes* (the story well known to the earlier generation).

In *Pagliacci*, with Caruso, we three evolved many new touches in acting as the turgid little opera progressed; original color that has escaped so many who have since played this opera tragedy.²⁰⁰

Of course, with two such gifted throats, unsparing in their performances, the public accorded them adulation seldom equaled. Their vocal richness was a bounty that had inexhaustible sources.

Amato's handsome and mobile features were also a great asset, supplementing the vocal fervor.

¹⁹⁵ Robert Tuggle attributes Amato's fast decline to over-singing. Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 134.

¹⁹⁶ Farrar may be referring to opening night on November 19, 1914. A *New York Times* review praised Amato's performance as filled with "intelligence and spirit" and concluded that "after the curtain fell [the audience] recalled the singers repeatedly, and ... would have had the repetition of several airs had Mr. Toscanini permitted it." "New Production of Bizet's *Carmen*," *The New York Times*, November 20, 1914, 9. Farrar describes the rehearsals (which included herself, Amato, Caruso, and Toscanini) on a boat trip from Europe to the US after having been rescued by Gatti-Casazza from the impending chaos of the war. Farrar, *Such Sweet Compulsion*, 136–38.

¹⁹⁷ Farrar wrote to a friend, "Amato was the spitting image of Napoleon even to the folded cross-arm, which history says was a pose necessary for the scratching of an intolerable skin irritation." Farrar, *All Good Greetings*, 26. Similarly, a review in the *Musical Leader* stated: "Vocally no part ever suited Geraldine Farrar better Amato as Napoleon is an imposing impersonation with a characterization such as might be a credit to any great actor, let alone an opera singer" Pasquale Amato Scrapbook, MS 2563.

¹⁹⁸ Music critic W. J. Henderson reviewed the January 16, 1920 Met premiere of *Zaza* (possibly the performance Farrar mentions) and noted both Farrar and Amato's acting, saying of Farrar, "She plays skillfully along the gamut of emotions," and of Amato, "As the patient Cascart Mr. Amato was histrionically admirable. He looked and acted the part. He sang it only tolerably." This was Amato's penultimate season at the Met, when his vocal decline would have been understandable. The Metropolitan Opera Archives, <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=BibSpeed/fullcit.w?xCID=73730&limit=5000&xBranch=ALL&xdate=01/01/1920&xedate=12/31/1920&theterm=Farrar|Zaza&x=0&xhomepath=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/&xhome=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/bibpro.htm> [accessed August 31, 2009].

¹⁹⁹ "Lodoletta Charms at Premiere Here," *The New York Times*, January 13, 1918, 16.

²⁰⁰ Farrar rarely sang *Pagliacci* at the Met once Amato had arrived (though Caruso and Amato were often cast together). One performance—perhaps the only one with all three singing together—took place on December 26, 1908. *The New York Times* mentioned the warm applause Amato received, Farrar's good voice and good acting, and Caruso's appearance despite a rumor of throat illness. "Yesterday's Operas," *The New York Times*, December 27, 1908, 9.

Rigoletto, *Gioconda*, *Traviata*, and *Aida* offered interpretations that have never been surpassed. In such roles, I recall with delight, his Amonasro to the peerless Aida of Claudia Muzio.²⁰¹ His Barnaba, to Rosa Ponselle's *Gioconda*.²⁰²

His *Rigoletto* to any of the altitudinous sopranos of the moment ... likewise to the courtly Germont of *Traviata*.

The list of Amato's achievements goes far beyond my own recollections; but one conjures up easily in such company, those great voices that were not only a supreme gift, but employed real singing.

Not the loud noises that come over the air, and are the dexterous manipulations of the engineer in a control room; but real singing in the throat of the artist, controlled by his skill and care of a precious endowment.

If you wish to know a voice, hear it in the natural confines of the human throat; without the dubious meddling of the studio operator.

Happily we still have records that show the fundamental reason why singers of the past were called great. They knew their profession, and gave to its perfection all their interest and energy.

If today's performers do not tread the path of true singing, by which these predecessors still wear eternal laurels, we shall have no one to bear the torch or emulate their like ... and the future will be more of the mechanical effort, as we cease to re-create natural singing, in the offenses of the radio distortions. More's the pity.

Tone, not noise; color, not blast; normal vocal effort, no mere whisperings to an amplified mike—these are matters that give all true lovers of the human voice grave concerns for the future of real singing.

Margaret Matzenauer

After her 1901 debut in Strasbourg as Puck in Weber's *Oberon*, contralto Margaret Matzenauer,²⁰³ made guest appearances at Covent Garden and Bayreuth. She made her Met

²⁰¹ Italian soprano Claudia Muzio maintained a busy opera career throughout her life. She made her opera debut in Arezzo, Italy, as the lead in Massenet's *Manon* in 1910. Future appearances of note include La Scala in 1914 and Covent Garden in 1914 (opposite Caruso as the first Italian to sing Tosca there). In 1916, she made her Met debut as Tosca (replacing an ill Lucrezia Bori). Muzio sang with the Met until 1923, when she began her tenure with the Chicago Opera. Scott, *The Record of Singing*, 2:68–69. *The New York Times* reviewed one of those performances ("Our Anthem Sung at Opera Opening," *The New York Times*, November 13, 1917, 13).

²⁰² American soprano Rosa Ponselle began her career as a singer in vaudeville and film, then made her operatic debut opposite Caruso in 1918 in the lead role of *La forza del destino* (Amato was present at her Met audition). See James A. Drake, *Rosa Ponselle: A Centenary Biography*, Opera Biography 9 (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1997), 19. She enjoyed a long career at the Met (until 1939). Ponselle said of Amato, "Amato, of course, was one of the greatest baritones of that day, but he wasn't really in his prime when I did *Aida* with him [March 6, 1920]. But you could tell what he must have been like, and, of course, his acting was excellent" (pp. 105–6). Contrary to Farrar's account, Ponselle and Amato never appeared together in *La gioconda*. They sang together in several performances of *La forza del destino*. Thomas G. Kaufman, "A Chronology of Ponselle's Appearances," in *Rosa Ponselle: A Centenary Biography*, 411–12.

²⁰³ The sources offer several spellings of Matzenauer's first name, including "Margarete" and "Margerethe," but once she became an American citizen, she preferred to be called "Margaret." Philip Lieson

debut as Amneris in *Aida* (with Amato in the cast) in 1911, receiving a glowing review in *The New York Times*.²⁰⁴ Known for her great memory and ease with which she learned difficult roles, she remained at the Met for nineteen seasons and sang a vast repertoire. After her retirement from the Met in 1930, she appeared in concerts and taught a studio of students.²⁰⁵

Not much can be said of Matzenauer and Amato's relationship, although the two frequently performed together. Since she does not seem to have talked about her colleagues and did not leave any personal writings, it is difficult to know her opinions. Matzenauer claims in her response to Uhler that she knew Amato well, but, for reasons unknown, the letter is brief and generic in content.

March 23, 1946²⁰⁶

My dear Mr. Uhler!

Pasquale Amato was indeed a close friend of mine since he also took Caruso's place as godfather at my baby's christening in 1914 in Cardinal O'Connell's place in Boston, Massachusetts when the former was unable to be there on account of rehearsals.²⁰⁷

I had the good fortune of singing my debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 1911 with Amato as Amonasro, Caruso as Radames and Destinn as Aida, [and] Toscanini conducting. Many are the glorious memories of his beautiful voice in such operas we did together as *Ballo in maschera*,²⁰⁸ *Trovatore*, *Samson et Dalila*, *Carmen*,²⁰⁹ etc.²¹⁰ He was a marvelous actor and

Miller, "Margaret Matzenauer," *Record Collector* 23 (1976-77): 5. Miller's entry on Matzenauer in *Grove Music Online* gives her name as "Margaret(e) Matzenauer." Philip L. Miller, "Matzenauer, Margaret(e)," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/18115?q=matzenauer&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit [accessed August 31, 2009].

²⁰⁴ The reviewer states: "Mme. Matzenauer, the newcomer, won well-merited favor as a singer endowed with a voice of power and fine quality, a voice of dramatic potency and expressiveness. Her representation of Amneris was well conceived and well executed, showing a full command of the routine of the stage." "Opera Season Opens; Throng Hears *Aida*," *The New York Times*, November 14, 1911, 3. The same review covers Amato: "Mr. Amato was the Amonasro, a part which he makes peculiarly impressive by his characteristic denotement of barbaric power and by his beautiful singing, which was last evening at its best."

²⁰⁵ "Margaret Matzenauer, 81 Dies; Contralto at Met in Caruso Era," *The New York Times*, May 20, 1963, 31.

²⁰⁶ Matzenauer's letter is handwritten.

²⁰⁷ Matzenauer's daughter, Adrienne Matzenauer, was born January 20, 1914 to Matzenauer and her then husband, tenor Edoardo Ferrari-Fontana. Later, the younger Matzenauer's career in "singing blues and torch songs at Rockefeller Center's Rainbow Room" earned disapproval from her mother, though her mother herself had played a role on Broadway (in the unsuccessful farce *Vickie*, September 22, 1942). "Culinary Contralto," *Time Magazine*, October 5, 1942.

²⁰⁸ Martin Mayer wrote of the 1913 Verdi centenary production of *Un ballo in maschera*: "*Ballo* was performed on opening night (with Caruso as Riccardo, Pasquale Amato as Renato, Destinn as Amelia, Margarete

interpreter and a perfect gentleman besides, which does not always go together. I also had occasions to meet him off the operatic stage in the summer in Italy on the Adriatic seashore²¹¹ where he vacationed with his charming wife and his children²¹² and I felt his loss very keenly, not only as a true friend but also as one of the greatest singers of our time.

Margaret Matzenauer

Frances Alda

New Zealand soprano Frances Alda studied in Paris with the renowned pedagogue Mathilde Marchesi. She appeared at Covent Garden (1906), and later at La Scala (1908) while Gatti-Casazza and Toscanini were still there. In 1908, a few weeks after Amato, Alda made her debut at the Met in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, with Caruso and Amato in the cast. She created the lead in the 1913 world premiere of Walter Damrosch's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (earning praise from the notoriously severe critic W. J. Henderson) and remained a lead soprano with the company until 1929. Alda was a versatile singer, traveling often to Buenos Aires and touring the United States in operas and concerts.²¹³

Alda knew Amato well: she had sung with him at the Met for twelve seasons and appeared with him in the United States premieres of Alexander Borodin's *Prince Igor* (1915) and Riccardo Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* (1916).²¹⁴ Alda had dinner with Amato as late as two

Matzenauer as Ulrica, and Frieda Hempel as Oscar—perhaps the finest cast this opera has ever known.” Mayer, *The Met*, 131–32.

²⁰⁹ Matzenauer lists *Carmen* as an opera in which both she and Amato sang, but this is a performance for which it is difficult to find documentation. If the performance did indeed take place, it might have been on tour.

²¹⁰ Other operas with their joint performances include *Armide* and *La gioconda*.

²¹¹ Amato regularly invited his friends to his villa. Armstrong, *The Romantic World of Music*, 171–73.

²¹² Matzenauer is the first to mention Amato's two boys, Mario and Spartaco. A picture of the Amato boys with their mother (and pictures of Amato's villa in Cesenatico) can be found in “When Amato was a Starving Singer in Milan,” *The New York Times*, December 21, 1913, SM9.

²¹³ Alan Blyth, “Alda, Frances,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/00496> [accessed August 4, 2008]; J. B. Steane, *Singers of the Century*, 203–7; “Frances Alda Dies,” *The New York Times*, September 19, 1952, 23.

²¹⁴ The Metropolitan Opera Archives Online, <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=BibSpeed/fullcit.w?xCID=64450&limit=5000&xBranch=ALL&xdate=&xedate=&theterm=Francesca%20da%20Rimini%3A%20Francesca%20da%20Rimini>

days before his death, yet wrote nearly nothing about her friend. Her brief letter (like Matzenauer's) seems to ignore Uhler's request for useful information, possibly because his request for anecdotes may not have clearly conveyed the importance of his project.

March 27, 1946²¹⁵

Dear Mr. Uhler,

It is with great regret that I cannot sit down and write you a long letter, telling you what I thought of Amato. We were very close and good friends, and he sang in many different operas with me. His voice was one of the most beautiful I have ever heard. Just as beautiful a baritone as Caruso had a tenor, and it was always with the greatest joy, when I sang with both of them. He was a kind colleague, and a devoted friend.

After a number of years that I had not seen him, it is strange that we dined together at Maestro Toscanini's house two days before he, Amato, died.²¹⁶ Please give my kind regards to Mrs. Amato.

Sincerely yours,
Frances Alda

John Charles Thomas

American baritone John Charles Thomas (1891–1960) studied at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and soon became a star on Broadway and a popular concert artist. He made his operatic debut in 1922 at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels and later appeared at Covent Garden, the Washington Opera, and the Chicago Opera. From 1934 to 1943, he sang at the Met, making his debut as Germont in *La traviata*.²¹⁷ Throughout his career, Thomas toured

%20%5BAlda,%20Frances%5D&x=0&xhomepath=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/&xhome=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/bibpro.htm.

²¹⁵ Alda's letter is typewritten.

²¹⁶ The night he died, Amato was dining with his former students Mrs. H. A. Robbnet and Mario Silveira. "Pasquale Amato, Baritone, was 63," *The New York Times*, August 13, 1942, 19.

²¹⁷ Gatti-Casazza was thought to have scorned American singers when he did not ask the widely famous Thomas to appear at the Met early in his career. Victoria Etnier Villamil, *From Johnson's Kids to Lemonade Opera: The American Classical Singer Comes of Age* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004), 33. For more on Thomas, see Michael J. Maher, *John Charles Thomas: Beloved Baritone of American Opera and Popular Music* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2006).

extensively, giving concerts in which he is known to have performed both popular and classical repertoires.²¹⁸

Thomas curiously writes in his letter about knowing “of [Amato] as a student”; he probably meant “as a student in the broadest sense,” because he did not formally study with him. It is not clear how the two singers knew each other: they may have been in touch between 1927 and 1928 at the short-lived Washington National Opera Company;²¹⁹ in addition, both were on the roster of a New York opera company about to be launched in 1933. This company, to be backed by A. C. Blumenthal and managed by Paul Longone, intended to draw on singers available during the weeks left open by a shortened Met season. If the company had ever been launched, it would have boasted an all-star roster including Titta Ruffo, Claudia Muzio, Beniamino Gigli, Amato, and Thomas.²²⁰

March 29, 1946²²¹

Dear Mr. Uhler,

You are to be envied in your most pleasant task of writing the biography of Pasquale Amato. Unfortunately, I am afraid that it is impossible for me to give you any help in this undertaking except to say that he was one of the greatest singers I have ever heard, and as such was a continued inspiration. What I know of him, as a student, was correct and remains the same—that is—that he embodied all of the fundamental qualities that go to make a great artist, a great singer, and a fine gentleman. My only regret is that I did not enjoy a closer association with him.

Please give my very kindest wishes to Mrs. Amato, and tell her that the little gold pencil is a daily reminder of her great kindness. I shall await your book with impatience.

With best wishes, I am

Most sincerely yours,
John Charles Thomas

²¹⁸ Elizabeth Schaaf, “John Charles Thomas; An American Classic,” Record Notes for Nimbus Records CD, NI 7838, <http://www.wyastone.co.uk/nrl/pvoce/7838c.html> [accessed August 31, 2009].

²¹⁹ Jim McPherson, “Mr. Meek Goes to Washington,” *The Opera Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (2004): 250–65.

²²⁰ “New York Opera Venture Seeks Major Stars,” *The New York Times*, September 28, 1932, 22. Biographer Michael Maher does not clearly explain why the unnamed opera company did not materialize, though one can guess that the Depression was a factor. Maher, *John Charles Thomas*, 83.

²²¹ Thomas’s letter is typewritten.

Arturo Toscanini

Uhler, probably aware of Arturo Toscanini's reluctance to talk about his own life as well as that of others, sent an inquiring letter to Mrs. Toscanini instead. The reply came from the couple's son, Walter,²²² however, who kindly informed Uhler of his father's insistence on privacy. Nevertheless, Walter confirmed the admiration and respect his father had for Amato.²²³

It is unfortunate that Toscanini did not offer any stories about Amato, for the two had interacted as colleagues and friends over a number of years.²²⁴ Amato's performances with Toscanini were many, including the baritone's first engagement in Buenos Aires, the Italian premiere of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at La Scala,²²⁵ the Verdi centenary in Busseto, and many opening nights and premieres at the Met. In fact, many of their performances together resulted from Toscanini requesting Amato to be in the cast.²²⁶ Outside the opera house, the Amato and Toscanini families shared Sunday dinners and resided in the fashionable Hotel Ansonia in New York.²²⁷

April 10, 1946²²⁸

Dear Mr. Uhler:

Your letter of February 23 to my mother has been referred to me and I am indeed embarrassed to be unable to comply with your request.

²²² Walter Toscanini saved valuable materials about his father and thus is largely responsible for the existence of the Toscanini Legacy Archives, housed in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Harvey Sachs, *Reflections on Toscanini* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), 133–34.

²²³ Harvey Sachs, *The Letters of Arturo Toscanini* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), xxi.

²²⁴ Upon his introduction to Amato in 1903 in Buenos Aires, Toscanini joked, "Amato? ... His name should be Amatone! [Big Amato]." In his biography, Uhler wrote about Toscanini being "of slight build, about five feet five" while Amato had a large frame. Uhler, Unpublished biography, chapter 12, John Earle Uhler Papers, Ms. 1902.

²²⁵ Regarding the singers in the production, Gatti-Casazza wrote, "To each of them ... Toscanini had transfused his entire being." Harvey Sachs, *Toscanini* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1978), 101.

²²⁶ For example, Toscanini "saw to it that the best singers were obtained" for his Verdi centenary production in Busseto (ibid., 121). Toscanini, impressed by Amato, invited the baritone to audition at La Scala (Kenyon and Williams, "Pasquale Amato," 6). He presumably chose Amato for the Italian premiere of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, since he "supervised every aspect of the production with extraordinary care." Sachs, *Toscanini*, 101.

²²⁷ Sachs, *The Letters of Arturo Toscanini*, 79–80.

²²⁸ Toscanini's letter is typewritten.

My father has never made comments on or written about his relations with any musician. Mr. Amato and my father were great friends and for many years their careers linked together. My father's respect and admiration for Mr. Amato was based not only on Mr. Amato's talents and voice but also because Mr. Amato was an honest and sincere man.

With kindest regards,
Walter Toscanini

Lucrezia Bori

Spanish soprano Lucrezia Bori made her first appearance with the Met during the institution's Paris tour in 1910, replacing at the last minute an ill Lina Cavalieri in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*.²²⁹ Upon the recommendation of Jean De Reszke, Gatti-Casazza sought to engage Bori, but an earlier contract with La Scala prevented her from immediately joining the company. At the Met itself, Bori made her debut on November 11, 1912, also in *Manon Lescaut*.²³⁰ She, like Amato, had to take a sabbatical from the Met due to an illness (which in her case led to a throat operation, however, not the removal of a kidney).²³¹ While she recovered, Gatti-Casazza took an uncharacteristic interest in her career and made certain that she would return to the Met (which she did in 1921).²³² Even after her farewell from the stage, Bori stayed connected with the Met through fundraising and eventually joining the Board of Directors.²³³

Bori's letter mentions Italo Montemezzi's *L'amore dei tre re*, an opera with which she had become identified²³⁴ and of which she had sung the US premiere at the Met on January 2,

²²⁹ Scott, *The Record of Singing*, 2:93.

²³⁰ Alan Bilgora, "Lucrezia Bori (1887–1960) in Opera and Song," Record Notes for Nimbus Record CDs, NI 7932/3 [2-CD set], <http://www.wyastone.co.uk/nrl/pvoce/7932c.html> [accessed June 24, 2009].

²³¹ "Miss Lucrezia Bori Recovers Her Voice," *The New York Times*, September 10, 1916, 11.

²³² Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 220.

²³³ J. B. Steane, *Singers of the Century*, 3:10.

²³⁴ W. J. Henderson wrote a favorable review on her: "Miss Bori must have astonished her most devoted admirers by her impersonation of Fiora. To summarize briefly, it was lovely in its pictorial quality and sung almost flawlessly." The Metropolitan Opera Archives Online, <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=BibSpeed/fullcit.w?xCID=55550&limit=5000&xBranch=ALL&xdate=&xedate=&theterm=Bori%20Fiora&x=0&xhomepath=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/&xhome=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/bibpro.htm> [accessed August 18, 2009].

1914 (with Amato as Manfredo and Toscanini conducting).²³⁵ A reviewer with *The New York Times* reported, “Mr. Amato and Miss Bori were both superb in roles that are in a way the most difficult of the opera, since they demand more subtle touches of histrionism [*sic*] than the others.”²³⁶ Bori’s letter, the shortest in the collection, offers little help to Uhler. It is difficult to determine the reason for her brief reply, but, like Frances Alda, she may have taken issue with Uhler’s letter or felt uncomfortable sharing personal stories.

April 13, 1946²³⁷

Dear Mr. Uhler:

The role I remember Pasquale Amato most vividly in was Manfredo in *L’Amore dei tre re*. He was the best Manfredo I ever sang with and, in my opinion, no one has ever surpassed him at the Metropolitan Opera. He was superb.

Sincerely yours,
Lucrezia Bori

Arthur Bergh

Arthur Bergh began his career as a violinist in the New York Symphony Orchestra and in 1908 transferred to the Met, where he witnessed Amato’s first season. Bergh directed two record companies (Emerson and Columbia), worked as music researcher and librarian for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and was credited with writing more than four hundred musical compositions, including a variety of operettas, songs, and symphonic works.²³⁸ Even though his tenure at the Met overlapped with Amato’s by only a season and even though the two men did not work

²³⁵ The Metropolitan Opera Archives Online, <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=BibSpeed/fullcit.w?xCID=55550&limit=5000&xBranch=ALL&xdate=&xdate=&theterm=L'Amore%20dei%20Tre%20Re%3A%20Fiora%20%5BBori,%20Lucrezia%5D&x=0&xhomepath=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/&xhome=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/bibpro.htmhttp://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/frame.htm> [accessed August 31, 2009].

²³⁶ “*L’Amore dei tre re* Sung,” *The New York Times*, January 13, 1914, 6.

²³⁷ Bori’s letter is typewritten.

²³⁸ “Arthur Bergh Dies; Composer Was 81,” *The New York Times*, February 14, 1962, 35; and “Percy Hemus in Recital,” *The New York Times*, November 6, 1913, 11. Bergh’s songs are mentioned at length in Claire McGlinchey, “American Literature in American Music,” *The Musical Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (January 1945): 114–15.

directly with each other, Bergh provides more substantial feedback to Uhler's request than most of Amato's singer colleagues.

April 21, 1946²³⁹

Dear Mr. Uhler:

I regret exceedingly having delayed so long in reply to your letters.²⁴⁰ Unfortunately, it was unavoidable, due to an accident in which Mrs. Bergh and I were run down by an automobile. For two months we have been completely out of commission but are now on the road to recovery.

I am delighted to know that you are doing a book on my old friend Pasquale Amato [,] and I wish I might make some contribution that would be of value but my memory does not serve me too well in trying to recall personal or human interest anecdotes. However, if you want my opinion of Amato, the artist, I can really enthuse.

He is already a part of the musical history of the world and nothing can dim the memories of such glorious vocal artistry.

I joined the orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera House as one of the first violin section in the season of 1908–1909, the year that Amato came to the Metropolitan. His first rehearsal with the orchestra was a rare and thrilling experience, for here was a voice of such unusual beauty that it was immediately recognized as one of the great voices of all time. In the thirty-eight years that have passed since that day, I have yet to hear a baritone faintly comparable. Enrico Caruso was at his youthful best at the time and the similarity in vocal timbre of these two artists was really startling and led Mr. Gatti-Casazza to use them in the same casts as frequently as possible. I have heard Amato sing a high B flat off stage, as a stunt, and every musician in the orchestra would have laid odds that it was the voice of Caruso. Both men were young and filled with boundless enthusiasm, which under the discipline and direction of that wonder conductor Toscanini made those years a truly Golden Era of Opera.

To his extraordinary vocal equipment Amato added a histrionic ability that was, and is rare in opera. He was an inspiration to those who were on the stage with him, and his superb artistry was a memorable experience for all who were privileged to hear him. In my opinion Pasquale was the greatest baritone of this century.

He was the kindest and most loveable of men. Success never turned his head. His friendship was treasured by the great who had already arrived at the pinnacle of Fame as well as by the obscure but aspiring young singer to whom his encouragement meant so much.

I am proud to have been his friend.

Most sincerely yours,
Arthur Bergh

²³⁹ Bergh's letter is typewritten.

²⁴⁰ Uhler may have sent a follow-up letter, but no evidence of it exists in his collection.

Louise Homer

American contralto Louise Homer (married to composer Sidney Homer) studied music in Philadelphia, Boston, and France before making her debut at Covent Garden in 1899. After singing the summer season at Convent Garden, Homer signed a contract to sing at the Met and made her debut on the company's tour to San Francisco in 1900.²⁴¹ She was not only celebrated for her portrayal of Amneris in *Aida* but also created the Witch in Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* and sang in the first American operas produced at the Met (William Converse's unpopular *The Pipe of Desire* [1906] and Horatio Parker's *Mona* [1912]).²⁴² Homer left her full-time position at the Met in order to pursue a concert career as well as occasional guest appearances with the Chicago Grand Opera Company (1920–25) and the San Francisco Opera Company (1926); she also made numerous recordings with Victor Talking Machine Company between the company's inception and 1927.²⁴³

Though Homer and Amato sang together frequently, her letter is short and uninformative. Homer, who was said to have “preferred to spend as much time as possible with her family,” doubtless paid more attention to her household than the affairs of the opera.²⁴⁴ When asked in interviews about her profession, she would talk about children; similarly, in her letter about Amato, she writes mostly about his children.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ Fortunate for Homer, Maurice Grau, the Met's manager at the time, also managed the Covent Garden summer season; consequently, he offered her a contract. Anne Homer, *Louise Homer and the Golden Age of Opera* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), 158.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 301–15.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 384.

²⁴⁴ Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 113.

²⁴⁵ Sidney Homer, *My Wife and I* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1939), 186. After her last performance at the Met in 1929, Homer and her husband dissolved her remaining concert contracts so she could be with her family at their new Florida home (*ibid.*, 263).

May 20, 1946

Dear. Mr. Uhler:

It would give me great pleasure to be able to add anything of importance to your story of the life of Mr. Amato.

I cannot recall anything worth telling. I remember, however, very clearly, how delighted we all were to sing with Mr. Amato. He was a great baritone, a great singer, and a great artist. I do recall how very proud he was of his two little boys whom he talked of frequently, and who were then studying in a school in Switzerland. He told us what fine students they were and how hard they were working.

I am sorry not to do any better than this, but we remain, with very kind regards to Mrs. Amato, (from us both)

Very sincerely,
Mrs. SH/erw²⁴⁶

Lucien Muratore

French tenor Lucien Muratore originally wanted to be an actor, but soprano Emma Calvé encouraged him to become an opera singer instead. He made his operatic debut at her side in the world premiere of Reynaldo Hahn's *La Carmélite* (Opéra-Comique, 1902).²⁴⁷ In 1913, Muratore arrived in New York, married Italian soprano Lina Cavalieri, and appeared with her in concert at the Hippodrome.²⁴⁸ He made his Chicago opera debut in 1913 and remained there for seven seasons (through the 1921–22 season).²⁴⁹ He also continued to appear at the Opéra-Comique (until 1924) and made a celebrated guest appearance at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires.²⁵⁰

Even though Muratore never sang with Amato and only saw him perform a few times, he provided the most complete response to Uhler's request. He addressed the issue of "how a singer

²⁴⁶ Homer's letter is typewritten and the initials "erw" probably belong to her typist.

²⁴⁷ Tuggle, *The Golden Age of Opera*, 120.

²⁴⁸ Reviews by New York music critics were generally favorable. Richard Aldrich stated that Muratore "had a good dramatic voice" and W. J. Henderson proclaimed him "an excellent actor for a tenor." Scott, *The Record of Singing*, 1:64–65.

²⁴⁹ Music critic Edward C. Moore recounted Muratore's debut at the Chicago Opera: "Then came the debut of Lucien Muratore in *Faust*, as handsome a person as ever had been a tenor matinee idol gifted with a glorious voice trained in the traditions of French acting." Moore, *Forty Years of Opera in Chicago*, 130.

²⁵⁰ A discrepancy exists concerning the date of his Teatro Colón appearance: Rodolfo Celletti wrote that Muratore was there in 1920 (Rodolfo Celletti, *Voce di tenore*, CinqueSensi 6 [Milan: Idealibri, 1989], 202), but Enzo Valento Ferri wrote that the tenor's one performance there occurred in 1919. Enzo Valenti Ferro, *Las Voces: Teatro Colón, 1908–1982* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de Arte Gaglianone, 1983), 103.

becomes great” and—as one who “constantly decried the present tendency in interpretation of French chanson to purify and dehumanize it to the point of lack of interest and emotional appeal”—praised Amato’s emotional singing and professional acting.²⁵¹

July 30, 1946²⁵²

Dear Sir:

I apologize for having taken so long to reply, but I was away from Paris and unable to write you an important letter concerning so great an artist (being far from my home where I could ponder your questions).

I rarely met with Amato but heard him often. The first time was in Paris, at the Châtelet, in Puccini’s *Manon Lescaut*.²⁵³ His vocal art, his acting, his interpretation had moved me deeply; it was great art. Later, I heard him in almost all of his roles and always with the same emotion.

He had pretty much everything that makes a great singer: the physique, the voice, the intelligence, the acting, and the innate gift of music, which is something quite different from musical technique.

You are right, dear sir; many people believe that one is born a singer and that this is enough. How false that is. Of course, for a singer, having a voice is a necessity just as a violinist needs a violin in order to become a violinist. But I have known numerous young students who had a good violin at their disposal (sometimes an Amati or a Stradivarius!) and did not become great violinists.

We can say the same about singers. I have known students with very beautiful voices, who were never able to become even minor singers because they had nothing that would make them true artists.

Singing, in my opinion, is the most complete art, because if every singer had practiced, studied all that is necessary to know in order to become a truly great singer, he would have to be an excellent musician and a very fine actor; he would have to know all the vocal difficulties, all the weapons and how to carry them (because our operatic roles abound with duels); he would have to have visited museums or consulted works documenting the paintings of the great masters in order to research a person’s demeanor, the way of wearing a coat, a hat, the colors of fabrics; and he would never let himself be dressed by a costumer without having verified, discussed, and decided everything.

For us singers, the School of the Italian Renaissance is a treasure trove from which we can endlessly draw, as are the French School of the eighteenth century [as well as] the Flemish and the Spanish Schools.

²⁵¹ Kenneth Neate, “Lucien Muratore,” *Opera* 5, no. 11 (1954): 675.

²⁵² Muratore’s letter is handwritten.

²⁵³ The performance took place on June 9, 1910; Amato and Caruso were cast with Lucrezia Bori, who gave her debut with the Metropolitan Opera Company. The Metropolitan Opera Archive Online, <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=BibSpeed/fullcit.w?xCID=48500&limit=5000&xBranch=ALL&xdate=&xedate=&theterm=Bori%20Ch%E2telet&x=0&xhomepath=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/&xhome=http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/bipro.htm> [accessed August 16, 2009].

All this is very good and, I believe, very correct but requires time. One should begin young, very young; virtuosos begin their studies in their earliest childhood, but this is denied to a singer since one can only judge his voice around the age of eighteen or twenty. The career of a virtuoso is long, that of a singer is short, [with] consequences! All that which is the basis, the foundation of this career is neglected, rushed. And as the public always lets itself be fooled by a beautiful voice and [thus] helps it succeed, the artist who is not a great artist is content and does not work any more and remains always the same, without any great talent.

Those who are born great artists—for he who wants to be a great artist does not [simply] become one—must have received in the cradle special gifts, just like savants and inventors. I'd say, they do not allow themselves to be intoxicated by success; they continue to work, to learn until the end of their lives as artists. Amato was one of these; he was one of a rare, privileged few who appear to each generation in the firmament of operatic art. It is for this reason that he had the marvelous career that was all his own. That is why he was the great professor, the great teacher whom the whole world knows; and it is why those who have had the joy of hearing and seeing him cannot forget him.

You have asked me for some information about Amato, whom unfortunately I knew but a little, and for some of my impressions concerning a great singer's career; I am sending you both. I have digressed a little and apologize, but the field is so vast. It interests me so deeply that I have let myself be carried away by the subject. All this will seem a bit random to you, you will have to forgive me.

Your letter has interested me very much, for this is the first time that I have seen a writer who has to produce a *vie romancée* of an artist, concerning himself and interesting himself so deeply with everything that bears upon the art of said artist.²⁵⁴

I regret that I am no longer living in that marvelous country of America, where I experienced such pure and great artistic pleasures, and I regret it even more at this moment when your letter has just brought back some dear memories.

I equally regret it because I would have felt a great joy to meet you, to tell you all about my beautiful life as an artist, about all it still is, about my youth, which was wholly devoted to that career and to art in all its forms.

I have often been asked to write down my memories; I would do so and in the same spirit that is guiding you regarding Amato, with a comprehensive look on singing, opera, and simply art.

Perhaps I shall return to your beautiful country, and then I shall allow myself to write to you in order to arrange a meeting.

I shall be very happy to be kept posted on the birth of the fine book that you are writing.

I am at your disposal for further information, and I ask you to kindly give my regards to Mrs. Amato.

Yours sincerely,

L. Muratore

²⁵⁴ The term *vie romancée* refers to a biography that uses a certain fictional license (borrowed from the novel) to enhance the inner truth of the biographical representation. See Anne Jefferson, *Biography and the Question of Literature in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 234.

Paris le 20 Juillet 1946²⁵⁵

Cher Monsieur,

Je m'excuse d'avoir pris tant de temps à vous répondre, mais j'étais absent de Paris et dans l'impossibilité de vous écrire une lettre sérieuse concernant un si grand artiste, loin de chez moi où je pouvais méditer sur vos questions.

J'ai rarement rencontré Amato. Mais je l'ai beaucoup entendu, la première fois, c'était à Paris, au Châtelet, dans *Manon Lescaut* de Puccini, son art vocal, son jeu, son interprétation m'avait²⁵⁶ bouleversé, c'était du grand Art, ensuite je l'ai entendu dans presque tous ses rôles et toujours avec la même émotion.

Il avait à peu près tout ce qui fait un très grand artiste lyrique, physique, voix, intelligence, jeu, et le don inné²⁵⁷ de la musique ce qui est bien autre chose que la technique musicale.

Vous avez raison, cher Monsieur, bien des gens croient que l'on [est] né chanteur et que cela suffit, comme cela est faux, évidemment pour un chanteur, avoir une voix est une nécessité, comme un violoniste a besoin d'un violon pour devenir violoniste[.] Mais, j'ai connu des quantités de jeunes élèves ayant à leur disposition un bon violon et quelquefois un Amati ou un Stradivarius et ne pas devenir de grand²⁵⁸ violonistes.

Nous pouvons en dire autant des chanteurs. J'ai connu des élèves ayant de très belles voix qui n'ont jamais pu faire [que] de petits chanteurs car ils n'avaient rien pour faire de vrais artistes.

L'Art lyrique, à moi avis, est l'art le plus complet, car si chaque chanteur avait travaillé, étudié, tout ce qu'il est nécessaire de connaître pour devenir un très grand chanteur, il devrait être un excellent musicien, un très beau comédien,²⁵⁹ connaître toutes les difficultés vocales, connaître les armes et savoir les porter, car nos rôles lyriques pullulent de duels, avoir visité les musées, ou consulté les ouvrages documentant²⁶⁰ les toiles des grands maîtres, pour y rechercher les attitudes des personnages, la façon de porter un manteau, un chapeau, les couleurs des étoffes et ne jamais se laisser habiller par un costumier, sans avoir tout vérifié, discuté et décidé.

Pour nous chanteur,²⁶¹ l'École de la Renaissance Italienne est un trésor où nous pouvons puiser sans fin, ainsi que dans les Écoles Française du XVIII, la Flamande²⁶² et l'Espagnole.

Tout cela est très bien et je crois très juste, mais il faut du temps pour cela il faudrait commencer jeune, très jeunes,²⁶³ les virtuoses commencent leurs études dès leur plus tendre enfance, mais cela est interdit à un chanteur puisque l'on ne peut juger de sa voix que vers 18 ou 20 ans, la carrière d'un virtuose est longue celle d'un chanteur courte, conséquence! tout ce qui est la base, le fond de cette carrière est délaissé, bâclé, et comme le public se laisse toujours prendre par une belle voix, et lui fait du succès, l'artiste qui n'est pas un grand artiste s'en contente et ne travaille plus et reste toujours le même, sans grand talent.

Ceux qui naissent grands artistes, car, ne devient pas qui veut, grand artiste, il faut au berceau avoir reçu des dons spéciaux, comme les savants, les inventeurs, ceux là, dis-je, ne se

²⁵⁵ Missing accents have been supplied without further note.

²⁵⁶ *Recte*: m'avaient.

²⁵⁷ Muratore first seems to have written "inouï," which he then corrected to "inné."

²⁵⁸ *Recte*: grands.

²⁵⁹ *Recte*: comédien.

²⁶⁰ *Recte*: documentant.

²⁶¹ *Recte*: chanteurs.

²⁶² *Recte*: Flamande.

²⁶³ *Recte*: jeune.

laissent pas griser par le succès, ils continuent à travailler, à s'instruire²⁶⁴ jusqu'à la fin de leur vie d'artiste. Amato était de ceux là, il faisait parti de ces quelques rares privilégiés²⁶⁵ qui apparaissent au firmament de l'art lyrique à chaque génération. C'est pour cela qu'il a fait la merveilleuse carrière, qui fut la sienne. C'est pour cela qu'il a été le grand professeur, le grand maître que tout le monde connaît et c'est pourquoi, ceux qui ont eu la joie de l'entendre et de le voir, ne peuvent l'oublier.

Vous m'avez demandé quelques renseignements sur Amato, que j'ai malheureusement peu connu, et quelques impressions sur la carrière d'un grand chanteur, je vous envoie, les uns et les autres, je me suis un peu étendu et m'en excuse, mais le champ est si vaste, il m'intéresse si profondément que je me suis laissé emporté²⁶⁶ par le sujet. Tout cela vous paraîtra un peu décousu[;] il faudra m'en excuser.

Votre lettre m'a beaucoup intéressé car c'est la première fois, que je vois un écrivain devant faire la Vie Romancée d'un artiste, s'occuper et s'intéresser si profondément à tout ce qui à²⁶⁷ trait à l'art de cet artiste.

Je regrette de ne plus vivre dans ce merveilleux pays d'Amérique où j'ai éprouvé de si pures et si grandes joies artistiques et je le regrette encore plus en ce moment où votre lettre vient de faire revivre ces chers souvenirs.

Je le regrette également, parce que j'aurais éprouvé une grande joie à vous connaître pour vous parler de tout ce qui a été ma belle vie d'artiste, de tout ce qu'elle est encore, de ma jeunesse qui, toute, à²⁶⁸ été consacrée à cette carrière et à l'art sous toutes ses formes.

On m'a souvent demandé d'écrire mes souvenirs, je le ferai et dans le même esprit qui vous guide pour Amato, avec un large regard sur l'art lyrique, le théâtre lyrique et l'art tout court.

Peut-être retournerais-je dans votre beau pays et alors, je me permettrai de vous écrire pour tâcher de nous rencontrer.

Je serai très heureux d'être tenu au courant de la naissance du beau livre que vous écrivez.

Je me mets à votre disposition pour d'autres renseignements et je vous prie de bien vouloir présenter mes respectueux hommages à Madame Amato.

Je vous prie de croire, cher Monsieur, à mes sentiments les meilleurs et les plus distingués,

L. Muratore

²⁶⁴ *Recte:* s'instruire.

²⁶⁵ *Recte:* privilégiés.

²⁶⁶ *Recte:* laissé emporter

²⁶⁷ *Recte:* a.

²⁶⁸ *Recte:* a.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

In his letter to Zirato of January 30, 1925, Amato maintained that his voice was still in good shape, an assessment that is not challenged in any of the testimonials by his former colleagues. If Amato was correct, why, then, did he not succeed in reviving his performance career in the United States? Had his voice deteriorated after all?

In 1925, Amato had been offered a three-year contract in Dresden, which was never signed, presumably because of the political and financial constraints of the German opera houses. In America, Amato's best chances for employment would have been at the Met, but he made it clear that he would no longer work under Gatti-Casazza. Amato then set his sights on the Chicago Opera but, for reasons yet to be determined, could not secure a contract there.

Amato himself had wondered, in his letter of 1927, whether he might have offended any of his contacts in America. Gatti-Casazza presumably did not know of Amato's dislike toward him, because in 1926, he sponsored, together with philanthropist Otto Kahn, Amato's passage to America; for some reason, however, neither Gatti-Casazza nor Kahn offered further help. In addition, Amato felt that his conductor friends Polacco and Moranzoni, both established in Chicago, were in his debt, but they did not seem to have helped either.

One wonders whether the loss of his voice was the cause of Amato's continual misfortune after all. While some reviews praised Amato's voice in his German performances, others called it disappointing.²⁶⁹ In the States, reviews from his few performances between 1927 and 1933 do not help solve questions about the condition of his voice: the few reviews that

²⁶⁹ These reviews (cited earlier in chapter 1) comment that his "vocal zenith in spite of the relative youth of his forty years has obviously passed," and also that "the voice itself disappoints, its substance appears affected and its timbre has...lost much of its earlier charm." Kenyon and Williams, "Pasquale Amato," 13.

comment on vocal matters are varied, while others seem to avoid the issue by praising Amato as a veteran of opera and commenting on his acting.²⁷⁰

An example of Amato's post-Met voice can be found in recordings of arias he made for the Germany company Homocord during 1924. Of the scholars who have reviewed Amato's recordings, both Michael Scott and Rodolfo Celletti only comment on Amato's voice as heard on his early recordings (1907–1916).²⁷¹ The scholars who analyze the 1924 recordings offer varied reviews. Kenyon and Williams, comparing the Homocord recordings to the Victor recordings, claim hearing little to no difference, cautioning, however, that a single aria may have been easier for Amato to sing rather than an entire opera.²⁷² J. B. Steane admits that though Amato's voice had faded, his 1924 recordings "remain impressive."²⁷³ Harold Bruder gives the most detailed review in writing that Amato's recordings "reveal deterioration and breathing difficulties," but still remain "remarkably characteristic and expressive."²⁷⁴ Reviewers in general seem to agree that Amato's voice had declined by the time of his Homocord recordings, an assessment that is supported by an examination of some tracks transferred to a compact disc still commercially

²⁷⁰ A 1927 review of his performance in *Pagliacci* states: "There were many plaudits for Pasquale Amato whose Prologue was acted so vividly and whose vocal power is an unforgettable lesson to aspiring singers and has been a joy for a generation." Isabel Morse Jones, "Brilliance Marks End of Season," *Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 1927, A11. For a performance of *Trovatore* at Pittsburgh's Syria Mosque, the reviewer noted: "Exceptionally effective in the more dramatic moments, once more he proved himself the artist that he is in every respect, although his voice impressed us as being tired at odd moments." *The Press*, October 5, 1929, located in the Pasquale Amato Scrapbook, MS 2563. Edward Moore wrote of a 1933 *Tosca* performance: "Mr. Amato was one of the best. He had good manners overlaying his forcefulness. He was unscrupulous, lying, cheating, murderous, lecherous, but he could pass the time of day with polite people." Edward Moore, "New Company Makes its Chicago Debut with Jeritza in *Tosca*," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 27, 1933, 15. A reviewer writes of his performance in *Tosca* at the Hippodrome: "His Scarpia...held the house with its suggestion of the majesty of Roman law. Suave, slow-moving, the art of the veteran actor as well as the climactic tones lent force to the Sardou melodrama." W. B. C., "Amato Acclaimed by 5,000 at Opera," *The New York Times*, April 28, 1934, 11.

²⁷¹ Scott mentions that in his earlier recordings, Amato had a "splendidly firm and ring voice." Scott, *The Record of Singing*, 1:116; Celletti, using Victor recordings of *Germania*, *Due Foscari*, and *Rigoletto* as examples, comments on Amato's beauty of phrasing and force of declamation, as well as his clear diction and touching vocal inflections. Rodolfo Celletti, *Le grandi voci: Dizionario critico-biografico dei cantanti con discografia operistica*. Collana Scenario 1. (Rome: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1964), 12.

²⁷² Kenyon and Williams, "Pasquale Amato," 12.

²⁷³ J. B. Steane, *Singers of the Century*, 3:107.

²⁷⁴ Harold Bruder, "Two Golden Age Baritones," *The Opera Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1995): 162–66.

available (Symposium 1321).²⁷⁵ They indeed show a voice capable of the same passionate expression as in earlier years, with a full palette of colors and without wobble.²⁷⁶

It indeed appears that related problems (the kidney operation in 1918, Gatti-Casazza's refusal to renew Amato's Met contract, and subsequent rumors concerning Amato's voice) undermined Amato's attempts to revive his career. Zirato's efforts and the occasional successful performance upon his return to the United States were not enough to overcome the obstacles. The baritone, who with Caruso had been counted among the best singers of the time, was forced, perhaps prematurely, to abandon his career as a performer and take on the role of a pedagogue.

²⁷⁵ *Pasquale Amato*, The Symposium Opera Collection 12, Symposium 1321 (2002).

²⁷⁶ The occasional problems with intonation are present in both the early and late recordings.

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