

Original Italian Art Songs from the Ferrucci Institute

An art song is the musical representation of a poem. The form developed originally in the 19th century, innovated by the Viennese composer Franz Schubert. The creation of the art song sprang primarily from culturally significant German poets, such as Goethe and Heine, who wrote inspired verses about Romantic themes of love and nature. Around this period, the piano as an instrument also developed and became more expressive in tone. As a result, composers sought to generate and enhance the emotive content of poems, even as brevity is a hallmark of the musical form. Many early art-songs were suitable for amateurs to sing at home, yet more were intended for professional artists to perform in a concert setting.

In that tradition, we have used as our inspiration two poems written by Federico Pacchioni from his collection of poems, *I frutti del mio giardino* (Lecce: Manni Editore, 2022). The book represents a personal and collective lyrical journey that, at times, pauses to meditate on the world of academia, on the relationship between what rests inside and outside its walls, and on education as the embracing and cultivating of humanity. In these contemporary settings, which we will premiere today, we have attempted to find expansive forms to enhance the meaning of the poetry and to give expression to the nuanced colors of contemporary Italian poetry.

Music:
Louise Thomas

Lyrics:
Federico Pacchioni

Piano:
Louise Thomas

Tenor:
Ashley Faatoalia, 2006

Dr. Louise Thomas (Ferrucci Institute Fellow) joined Chapman University as Director of Keyboard Collaborative Arts and is currently Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Performing Arts. Born in Ireland, Louise Thomas studied at Trinity College, Dublin and at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hannover, Germany. As a pianist, she has concertized extensively throughout Europe, North America and Asia at significant concert venues, including in Italy, as a prize-winner both at the Annual International Music Competition and Festival in Ibla-Ragusa, Sicily and the International Piano Competition, Città di Senigallia. Louise Thomas has been on the faculty at several summer programs, including La Fabbrica in Tuscany. She is currently expanding her research in the performance of art-song to include the musicalization of Italian poetry. She regularly concertizes with violinist Elizabeth Pitcairn, who performs on the legendary “Red Mendelssohn” Stradivarius. She also appears on chamber music and contemporary music programs throughout the US and internationally.



Dr. Federico Pacchioni (Ferrucci Institute Director) joined Chapman University as the Sebastian Paul and Marybelle Musco Endowed Chair in Italian Studies and has directed the Italian Studies program until 2023 when he became the founding director of the Ferrucci Institute of Italian Experience and Research. He is a native of Emilia-Romagna, Italy, and holds a Ph.D. in Italian Studies from Indiana University Bloomington. He teaches interdisciplinary courses in Italian Studies, the Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, and the University Honors Program, including several travel courses across the Italian peninsula. He is the author of more than 60 publications, including scores of peer-reviewed articles and eight books. His writings focus on the history of Italian cinema and Italy’s popular puppet theater and include works of poetry and travel prose.



Prima Canzone

Ci aspettano i giovani
con l'eterno entusiasmo rinnovato
i loro bisogni di gioco e sentimento
di pensiero e disciplina.

Ci aspettano i giovani
le promesse da mantenere
le porte da ritagliare
su viste inedite del mondo.

Ci aspettano i giovani
portatori di intelligenze sconosciute
liberi da pregiudizi antichi,
ci aspettano a braccia aperte.

Ci aspettano i giovani
felici di accogliere la sfida
come una rassicurazione, una prova
che esistono ancora regole al gioco.

Ci aspettano i giovani
con molto tempo e più speranze
disponibili all'invito
disperati d'ottimismo.

Ci aspettano i giovani
con storie non raccontate
necessità non rivelate
sogni non sognati.

Ci aspettano i giovani
o aspettiamo noi loro?

*The young wait for us
with enthusiasm eternally renewed
their need for play and feeling
for thought and discipline.*

*The young wait for us
promises to keep
doors to carve
upon unseen views of the world.*

*The young wait for us
carriers of unknown intelligence
free from ancient prejudices,
they wait for us with open arms.*

*The young wait for us
happy to embrace the challenge
as a reassurance, evidence
that rules still exist to the game.*

*The young wait for us
with much time and more hopes
ready to be invited
desperate for optimism.*

*The young wait for us
with stories not told
necessities unrevealed
dreams undreamt.*

*The young wait for us
or is it us who wait for them?*

Seconda Canzone

Come una stanza silente
nel centro di una festa vorticosa,
come una valle non segnata nelle
mappe del vento,
come un angolo di sogno non
ancora trascritto,
il mio paese attende,
farfalla miracolosamente intatta
nella pioggia.

Nel ventre di respiri profondi
teste giovani ingrignate dolcemente
attendono con i piedi appena lambiti
dalle mareggiate del grande mondo.

Non diversi gli ottuagenari
nipoti di antichi emigrati
che io sento come figli miei
abbandonati
privati persino della lingua che è loro
e con la quale potrei ancora consolarli.

Sono un cieco che costruisce un ponte
tra sponde non conciliabili del tempo,
che annota regolamenti per scambi
impossibili di merci invisibili.

*As a silent room
in the center of a whirlwind party,
as a valley unmarked by maps of wind,
as a corner of a dream not
yet transcribed,
my country awaits,
butterfly miraculously intact in the rain*

*In the bowels of deep breaths
young heads turned grey sweetly
wait with feet barely touched
by the tides of the wide world.*

*No different are octogenarians
descendants of ancient migrants
whom I picture as abandoned
children of mine
deprived even of a language
that is theirs
and with which I could still
console them.*

*I am a blind man who builds a bridge
between irreconcilable shores of time
who annotates regulations
for impossible exchanges of invisible
goods.*

*(Translated by Lauren Moyle, Creative
Writing and History major, Italian
Studies minor)*

