Department of Music

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How I Wrote My Prospectus

Writing my prospectus took me roughly eight months. I came to Yale with a project in mind, but none of my coursework overlapped directly with its subject area. I devoted one of my qualifying exam topics to the broader area of research I imagined my research question would contribute to, but the true work on my prospectus began in September of my third year with the department of music's prospectus seminar. There, I read many exemplar prospectuses from previous years, explored my topic with more in-depth reading, chased rabbit holes of sources, planned future archive research, and wrote out every idea that came to mind. Throughout the semester I completed writing exercises to help solidify my research question and situate that point of inquiry within extent scholarly conversations. The course culminated in a ten minute "lightning talk" in late November, where we each presented a skeletal structure of our prospectus to the whole department. My lighting talk, and subsequently my prospectus followed the rough outline of hook, thesis question, literature review, methods, chapter summaries, impact, project feasibility and timeline (such as whether it required archival work), and conclusion. Over the next several months, I expanded the skeletal form of my lightning talk of 1600 words into a full-bodied prospectus of 3800 words excluding footnotes and bibliography. I had a full draft sent out to my prospectus committee in early March and defended at the end of that same month. Since then, my project has been updated in many ways, and much of what I wrote in my prospectus is irrelevant for the dissertation I am currently writing. That being said, I have returned to my prospectus often, especially when applying for grants and fellowships.

Advice for Prospectus Writers

My advice to grad students writing a prospectus is to use this time to cultivate a daily practice of writing. In the semester I took my department's prospectus seminar, I scheduled time every morning when I would sit down at my computer with a cup of coffee and set a half hour timer. Initially, I didn't have specific goals for what section I would write, but would simply let whatever thoughts were mulling about in my head flow through my fingers to the blank page in front of me. I discarded most of what I wrote down, but what I held onto was a habitual practice of writing— even for short bursts of 10 or 15 minutes— which I have carried with me past the prospectus into the marathon of dissertation writing that follows.

Taryn Dubois
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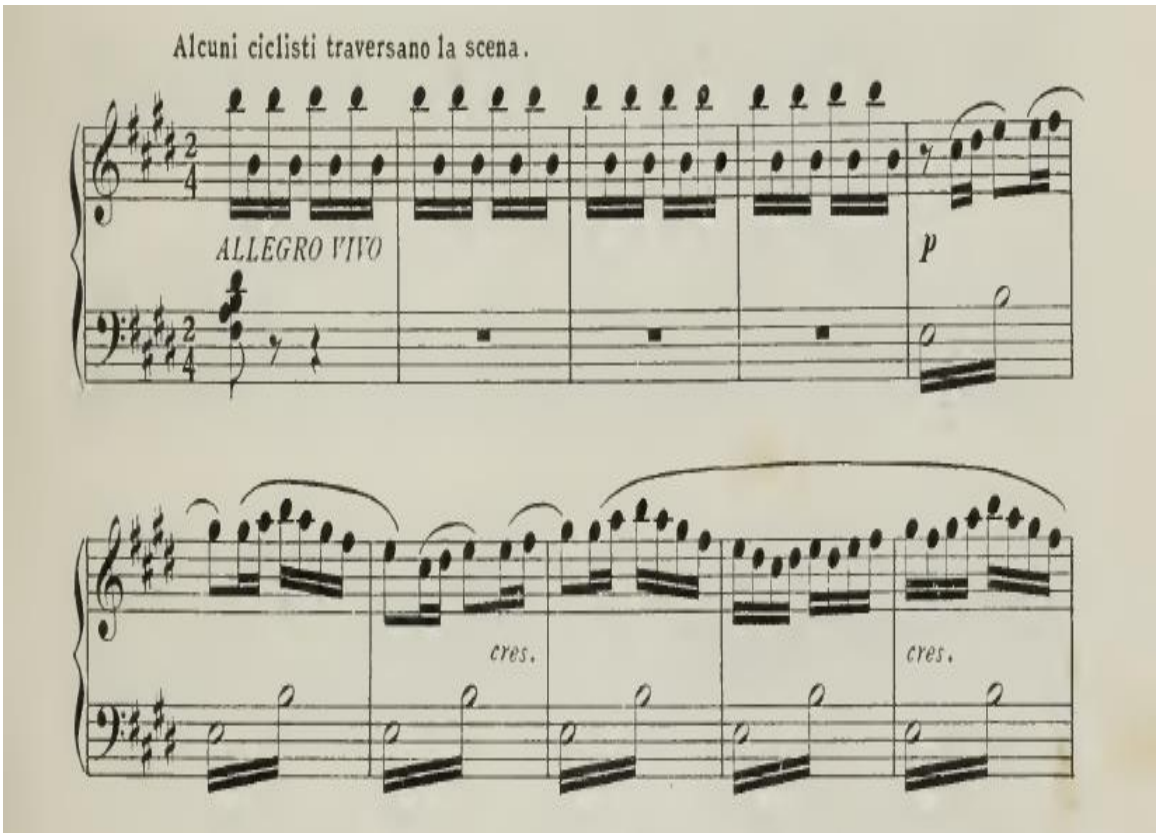
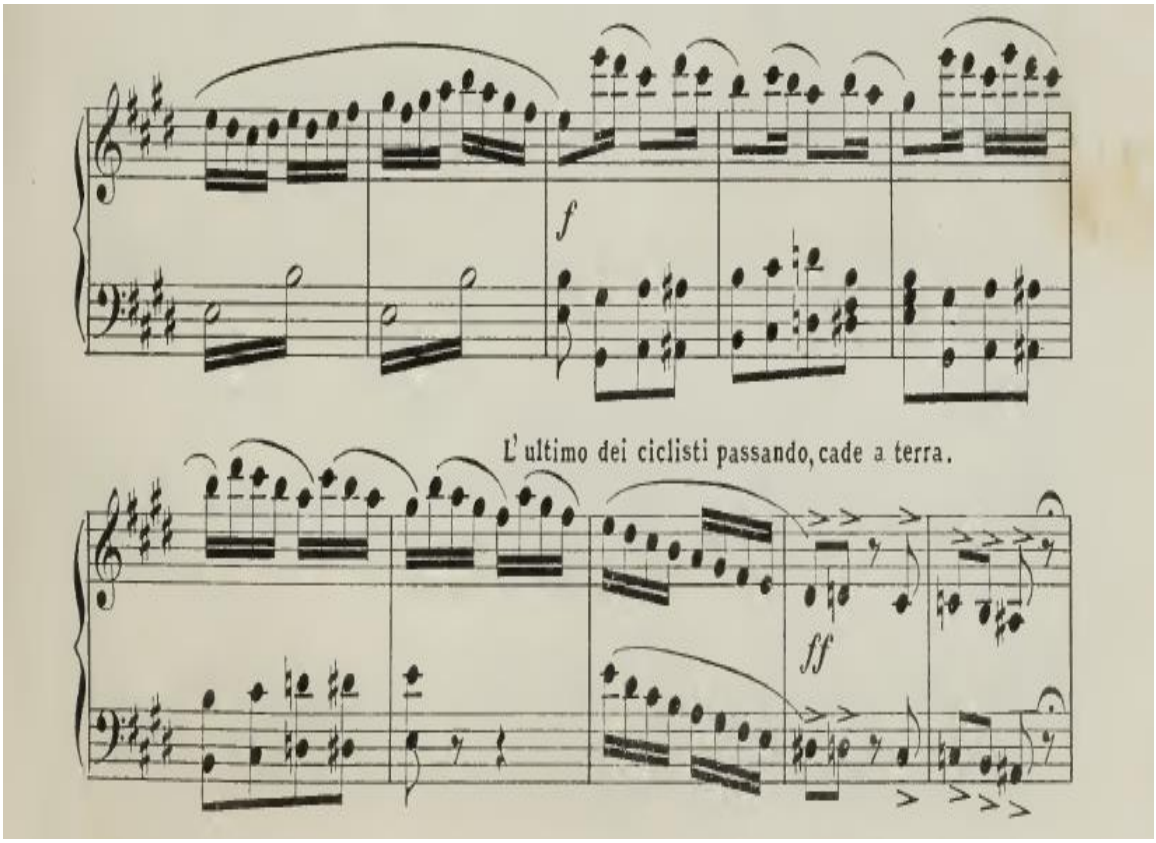
Ballare della modernità:
Dance and cultural discourses in Post-Unification Italy

Prospectus

The curtain rises on a picturesque setting of the Villandry castle at Fontainebleau. Hunting horns sound from near and afar. A group of hunters pass by and servants offer them beverages. All of a sudden, something unexpected appears: a group of bicyclists come on stage, circling around. As seen in example 1, running sixteenth notes over a tonic pedal sonically portray the spinning of the wheels, until a unison scale cascades into an accented fortissimo chromatic line (mm 17-19) that accompanies the grotesque fall of the final cyclist. As the orchestra pauses on a fermata, the onlookers rush to help, giving rise to a comic pantomime scene. The cyclist has hurt his leg and hobbles around on stage, eliciting laughter from those gathered. After taking a drink, he feels miraculously recovered, remounts his bicycle and rejoins his companions along to the same musical evocation of pedaling.





Example 1. Bicycle Scene from Sport, La Caccia,[1]

This scene comes from *Sport* (1897), the final ballo grande of choreographer Luigi Manzotti (1835-1905) and composer Romualdo Marenco (1841-1907), and the pantomimic interlude with the cyclist is a short divergence from the main narrative: a thin plot of schemes and subterfuges at sporting events around the world involving a clichéd love triangle. In a ballet with scenes of mountaineering, ice skating, horse racing, fencing, and rowing at a grand regatta in Venice, the bicycles stand out as a pre-eminently modern and potentially politicized gesture.

In the last half of the nineteenth century, ballo grande emerged in Italy as a larger-than-life genre of ballet, notable for its gargantuan productions with lavish sets and hundreds of performers. The genre included classical dance and pantomime performed in both ensembles and solos; it required an

[1] Robert Ignatius Letellier, *Romualdo Marenco: Excelsior and Sport* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

enormous corps-de-ballet and array of supernumeraries trained in disciplined and intricate choreography; and it employed extravagant scene changes and technical effects, including specialist acrobatics for such feats as stage fighting and bicycling.[2] The productions, typically performed at major theatres after the evening's opera, could feature exotic animals, elaborate costumes, and enormous stage apparatuses, while treating subjects such as love, hope, sport, and fashion, as well as historical topics, with intense seriousness.[3]

In the first half of the nineteenth century the term "ballo grande" simply indicated a five-act structure of a ballet, and the specifics of the production were listed after the title with adjectives such as "fantastico", "storico", "allegorico", "tragico".[4] Gradually, the term "ballo grande" referred more specifically to the extravagant spectacles of Manzotti and others where "spectacular effects reigned supreme," at the expense of artistic quality.[5] The scale of these productions grew exponentially through the nineteenth century, while the absolute number of ballets created and produced declined sharply as the fortunes and financial support for municipal theatres waned.[6] Manzotti and Marenco's epic trilogy of *Excelsior* (1881), *Amor* (1885), and the above-mentioned *Sport* (1897) constituted the

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[2] Poesio's article provides a fascinating exploration of the Tramagnini company of gymnasts, mimes, stage fighters and eventually cyclists who provided extra effects for various theatrical events in Italy across the 19th century, including a well-known collaboration in Manzotti's Amor. Giannandrea Poesio and Anthony Brierley, "The Story of the Fighting Dancers," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 8, no. 1 (April 1, 1990): 28–36.

[3] Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," in *Opera on Stage*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, trans. Kate Singleton, vol. 5, 6 vols., *The History of Italian Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 177–308. The customary positions of ballets as an entre-acte changed to be after the opera had concluded post-unification period.

[4] Matilda Ann Butkas Ertz, "Nineteenth-Century Italian Ballet Music before National Unification: Sources, Style, and Context" (Ph.D., United States -- Oregon, University of Oregon, 2010), 86.

[5] Letellier, *Romualdo Marenco,* 14; Poesio and Brierley, "The Story of the Fighting Dancers," 33;

[6] Manzotti in particularly has been poorly received by dance history. Letellier has begun to rehabilitate the perception that he was popular rather than sophisticated, and lacking cultural refinement. Dance scholar Patrizia Veroli suggests that Manzotti invented ballo grande in the 1880s, and that the successful formula of grand spectacle and thin narrative circulated widely through the end of the century, but I follow Kathleen Hansell's view that the genre was in fact present earlier in the nineteenth century and reached an apotheosis with Manzotti's productions at the fin-de-siècle. Patrizia Veroli, "Dance," in *Handbook of International Futurism*, ed. Günther Berghaus, E-book (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018); Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," 288.

apotheosis of the genre in the 1880s and 90s. By the onset of World War I almost no new ballets were created, and certainly not at the scale of ballo grande. Furthermore, theatres rarely restaged the existing nineteenth-century repertoire. Musicologist Kathleen Hansell views Manzotti's trilogy and its success as "an epilogue to a drama that was essentially over."[7]

The full life cycle of ballo grande — its dramatic rise and fall — is contained from 1860 to 1914, the period bookended by Italian unification and World War I, and commonly considered the initial phase of the country's multifaceted modernization. Modernization projects took many forms during this era, with goals of transforming the Italian landscape, culture, and the very notion of Italian-ness. Italian politicians and intellectuals such as Massimo D'Azeglio and Francesco DeSanctis proclaimed that after "making Italy" they must "make Italians."[8] The regions of Italy had been unified politically, but lingering allegiances to the local over the national left the population culturally divided. DeSanctis and writers such as Angelo Mosso saw education as a means of addressing these divisions and correcting the pre-modern Italian nature, which was seen to be effeminate, melodramatic, and weak in mind and body.[9] They believed that art, physical culture, and politics all contributed to "bodily reform and subject formation" in the cultivation of properly modern Italians.[10] Additionally, Italy began to embark on enormous economic and technological transformations with the construction of national railroad networks, increased industrial manufacturing, and colonialist projects in East Africa.[11]

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[7] Ibid.
[8] Stephanie Malia Hom, "On the Origins of Making Italy: Massimo D'Azeglio and 'Fatta l'Italia, Bisogna Fare Gli Italiani,'" *Italian Culture* 31, no. 1 (March 1, 2013): 1–16.
[9] Susan Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect: On Making Italians (1860-1920),* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 140.
[10] Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect,* 141.
[11] Denis Mack Smith, *Italy : A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015015198552; Luca Cottini, *The Art of Objects: The Birth of Italian Industrial Culture, 1878-1928*, The Art of Objects (University of Toronto Press, 2018); Giuseppe Finaldi, *A History of Italian Colonialism, 1860-1907 : Europe's Last Empire* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017).

By positioning ballo grande among four discourses of modernization — hygiene, industrialization, mechanization, and militarism — this dissertation argues that these ballets can be read not simply as empty spectacles, but as modern multimedia representations of the contested and tumultuous transitional moment in Italian history.

Modernization: Bicycles

The presence of bicycles on stage in *Sport* helps situate these ballets amidst the sweep of modernity. The introduction of the bicycle in Italy is a micro-example of modernization that demonstrates some of the anxieties about, and enthusiasm for, technological, cultural, and economic changes at the time. In the modernization of Italian society, the bicycle carried huge symbolic significance.[12] In a later "boom" of popularity than in France and England, the bicycle took off in Italy in the 1880s and 90s, due in part to the success of Edoardo Bianchi's innovative 1885 "safety bicycle" and after intense promotion by the industrial bourgeoisie.[13] Bicycling was both physical and cultural, and some saw in bicycles a chance to "shape a collective [Italian] imagination... and establish a bond of comradeship among Italians."[14] As a new spectator sport (velocipedismo) and leisure activity (biciclettismo), bicycling generated intense excitement, or cyclomania.[15] But opposite this cultural enthusiasm was cyclophobia, a fear that bicycling could deform both one's body and one's morality. Positivist scientists warned that cycling would cause moral decline among women and enable criminal activity.[16] Finally, the success of the earliest Italian bicycle manufacturers like Bianchi

[12] Stefano Pivato, "The Bicycle as a Political Symbol: Italy, 1885–1955," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 7, no. 2 (1990): 173–87.
[13] Cottini, 75; Carlo Mari, "Putting the Italians on Bicycles: Marketing at Bianchi, 1885-1955," ed. Prof. Jonathan Morris, *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 2015): 133–58.
[14] Cottini, 75. Cottini cites the Milanese cycling club in particular.
[15] Ibid. The market for bicycles was actively developed and promoted by the Northern Bourgeoisie. It went from being a luxury item, to a sought-after cultural symbol.
[16] Ibid, 75-76.

(1885), Fiat (1899), and Torpedo (1908) propelled the nation economically from its predominantly artisan and agrarian past into a modern capitalist marketplace.[17]

Italian ballet commonly engaged with cycling and other kinetic ways of knowing and experiencing the modern world. In this way, ballo grande is demonstrative of what dance scholar Randy Martin has conceptualized as a kinestheme — a sort-of episteme of physical movement. Kinesthemes, he argued, are the governing structures of social kinaesthetics — the norms, practices, and expectations for movement —for a given culture or historical period, not only for dance and theatre, but also in more quotidian forms of movement.[18] Kinesthemes suggest porous boundaries between forms of movement within and beyond the theatre, and provide a means of reconciling the choreographed motion on stage with changing attitudes and forms of movement in society at large. Through its scenes of dancing, pantomime, and activities such as bicycling or stage fighting, ballo grande chronicles Italy's shifting kinetic and ultimately kinaesthetic modernity. By uniquely bringing cultural discourses alongside economic, mechanical and social ones, Italian ballet—I shall argue—can serve as a focal point in the study of the tensions surrounding modernity. The mixing of media in ballo grande — with its staging of human and non-human, spectacle and athleticism, technology and art —makes it exemplary of a kinaesthetic modernity.

Background and Impact

The corpus of post-unification balli grandi, with the exception of *Excelsior*, remains mostly unknown to musicologists, and dance scholars have privileged the history of ballet in France and Russia over that of Italy, though the peninsula supported a lively tradition of theatrical dance. [19]

[17] Ibid.
[18] Randy Martin, "A Precarious Dance, a Derivative Sociality," *TDR the Drama Review* 56, no. 4 (2012): 62–77.
[19] The following musicologists have investigated Italian ballet and are exceptions to this trend. Ertz, "Nineteenth-Century Italian Ballet Music before National Unification"; Ellen Lockhart, "Circuit Listening,"

Italian ballet of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had both practical and theoretical importance to the transnational practice of ballet: its reputable schools of dance trained some of the most well-known ballerinas of the nineteenth century, and its choreographers-turned-dance-theorists created works and treatises that greatly influenced subsequent generations of dancers.[20] In scholarship, the "particular neglect" of Italian ballet is not without reason.[21] There are material constraints pertaining to the lack of a standard choreographic notation, or detailed program booklets, and there is no living performance tradition of these ballets.[22] In addition, musicologists have been reluctant to investigate these ballets due to the perceived inferiority of their music, which is mimetic, gestural, and lacking in large-scale formal plans, prompting historians to call the ballets

in *Nineteenth-Century Opera and the Scientific Imagination*, ed. David Trippett and Benjamin Walton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 227–48; Gavin Williams, "Excelsior as Mass Ornament The Reproduction of Gesture," in *Nineteenth-Century Opera and the Scientific Imagination*, ed. David Trippett and Benjamin Walton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 251–68; Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera"; Letellier, *Romualdo Marenco*; Sergia Adamo, "Dancing for the World: Articulating the National and the Global in the Ballo Excelsior's Kitsch Imagination," in *Moving Bodies Displaying Nations: National Cultures Race and Gender in World Expositions Nineteenth to Twenty-First Century* (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Universita di Trieste, 2014), 143–72; George Dorris, "Two Balletic Sensations: Excelsior and the Ballet of the Nuns," *Dance Chronicle* 23, no. 3 (January 1, 2000): 329–37; Rodney Stenning Edgecombe, "Manzotti's Excelsior, the Tableau Vivant and the Cantata Scenica of the Primo Ottocento: An Essay on Form and Influence," *The Musical Times* 159, no. 1945 (January 2018): 43–58; Flavia Pappacena, ed., *Excelsior : Documenti e Saggi = Documents and Essays* (Roma: Di Giacomo, 1998).

[20] Roberta Albano, "Salvatore Viganò and His Activity at Fondo's Theater in Naples," *Danza e Ricerca* 10, no. 10 (December 1, 2018): 11–36; Lilla Maria Crisafulli, "'A Language in Itself Music': Salvatore Viganò's Ballet En Action in Shelley's Prometheus Unbound," *DQR Studies in Literature; Leiden* 55 (2015): 135-159, 320-321; Alberto Rizzuti, "Vigano's 'Giovanna d'Arco' and Manzoni's 'March 1821' in the Storm of 1821 Italy," *Music and Letters* 86, no. 2 (May 18, 2005): 186–201; Stefania Onesti, "Gasparo Angiolini's «danza Parlante» through Italian Ballets Librettos," *Danza e Ricerca* 11, no. 11 (December 1, 2019): 49–74; Carlo Blasis, *L'uomo Fisico, Intellettuale e Morale* (Lucca: Libreria musicale italiana, c2007); Carlo Blasis, *Manuel Complet de La Danse : Comprenant La Théorie, La Pratique et l'histoire de Cet Art Depuis Les Temps Les plus Reculés Jusqu'à Nos Jours.*. (Paris: L. Laget, 1980).

[21] Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," 302.

[22] Anna Pakes, *Choreography Invisible : The Disappearing Work of Dance* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020). The legal history of choreographic rights informs Anna Pakes work on dance ontology. Choreographers and composers were often embroiled in legal battles over the rights to produce and stage their works, but unlike Verdi and other composers who published detailed *disposizione scenica*, choreographers lacked a standard form of choreographic notation from which to exercise control over future productions. Choreographers often printed their claim to legal rights or reproduction are often stated in the piano score of the ballets.

"elephantine", "baroque" and "banal".[23] Finally, fewer and fewer original dance works were produced through the nineteenth century, leading to the scholarly conclusion that the genre of ballo grande was in decline. When compared to the success and cultivation of opera across Italian theatres and abroad, not to mention the endurance of Italian opera today, ballo grande appears to have little relevance musically or dramatically.

At the most general level, my dissertation rehabilitates these ballets by situating them as attentive cultural products grappling with the ebb and flow of Italy's tempestuous debates around national identity in modernity. More specifically, my dissertation makes interventions in musicology, dance studies, and Italian historiography.

Regarding musicological discourse, I build upon a plethora of exciting recent musicological studies that ask how we can learn about embodied performance through close readings of scores, photographs and other archival sources before audio and visual recording technologies documented those performances.[24] I probe the ways in which musical accompaniment for non-human objects in these dances—whether props, stage machines, or bicycles — can tell us something about the relationship between sound, movement, and corporeality. Sergia Adamo has suggested that *Excelsior's* "spectacularization of the moving body" served a didactic function beyond the theatre,

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[23] Letellier, *Romualdo Marenco*, p14. Quoted from Gino Tani, *Storia Della Danza Dalle Origini Ai Nostri Giorni* (Firenze: Olschki, 1983).

[24] For example, James Q. Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Jonathan De Souza, *Music at Hand : Instruments, Bodies, and Cognition* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017); Samuel N. Dorf, *Performing Antiquity : Ancient Greek Music and Dance from Paris to Delphi, 1890-1930* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018); Roger Freitas, "Singing Herself: Adelina Patti and the Performances of Femininity," *JAMS* 71, no. 2 (2018): 287–369; Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body : An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Mary Simonson, *Body Knowledge : Performance, Intermediality, and American Entertainment at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Mary Ann Smart, *Mimomania : Music and Gesture in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Holly Watkins and Melina Esse, "Down with Disembodiment; or, Musicology and the Material Turn," *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 19, no. 1 (September 10, 2015): 160–68.

instructing audiences how to navigate the 1881 Milan exhibition.[25] I expand her findings, suggesting that the multimedia nature of ballo grande, particularly the directions for movement provided in the score, can similarly serve a didactic purpose by modeling appropriate interactions of humans with technologies, as one component of the ideal organization of the social body in post-unification Italy.

My intervention to dance studies is twofold. Firstly, whereas dance studies (a recent addition to the academy) has focused primarily on dance of the twentieth and twenty-first century when video recordings and a more stable tradition of notating dances emerged, I explore less well-documented genres of dance. More specifically, I further the work of Marian Smith in demonstrating the utility of musical scores for the study of nineteenth-century dances that might otherwise be lost.[26] For example, Marenco's music is noted for being "closely molded to the choreographic action."[27] The music expresses the details of the choreographic action beyond what is indicated in the score's annotations or the program booklet with the ballet libretto, such as the timing of the bicyclist falling off his bicycle in example 1.

Secondly, I push back against the influence of broader historiographical narratives of nineteenth-century Italy on dance studies. The project of modernization from Risorgimento through the present has been marked by a specific discourse in Italian historiography: that of backwardness. A number of historians have commented on the tension within Italy's pursuit of modernity: its "lagging behind" other European economies (most commonly those of England and France) and retention of sacred and familial traditions and norms over more scientific, secular, and objective values.[28] John Agnew and others have questioned the rhetoric of backwardness (backwards in

[25] Adamo, "Dancing for the World," 153.
[26] Marian Elizabeth Smith, *Ballet and Opera in the Age of Giselle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[27] Letellier, Romualdo Marenco, x.
[28] Maurizio Isabella, "Review ArticleRethinking Italy's Nation-Building 150 Years Afterwards: The New Risorgimento Historiography*," *Past & Present* 217, no. 1 (November 1, 2012): 247–68; Salvatore DiMaria, "Towards a Unified Italy: Historical, Cultural, and Literary Perspectives on the Southern Question," electronic resource, Springer EBooks, Italian and Italian American Studies, 2018.

relation to what?), and recent scholars have turned away from such comparative language.[29] In spite of this wider shift, ballo grande has heretofore been discussed as emblematic of the backwardness of Italy, and as a foil to the more modern projects such as the ballets russes.[30] By contrast, I contend that the genre is more modern than previously imagined, emblematic of the specifically Italian modernization that should be examined on its own terms. When we take these ballets beyond the limits of the theatre, into a broader political and cultural milieu, the idiosyncratic genre provides a new way of looking at the intermedial relations of Italian modernity.

Finally, my integration of ballo grande into the wider cultural field of Italian modernity has consequences for the historiography of modern Italy. Historians of Italy have recently begun to explore a more expansive array of textual sources. The new critical school, beginning with Alberto Mario Banti, initiated a form of historical research that engaged with novels, popular histories, operas and theatre productions.[31] These historical projects uncovered shifts in language and writing at turning points such as Unification that revealed the many facets to the construction of ideologies and national myths. However, the literary perspective is incapable of fully engaging with the notions of entrainment and corporeality that primary sources demonstrate were crucial to the project of modernization.[32] By attending closely to the corporeal elements of modernization within and beyond

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[29] John A. Agnew, "Modernization and Italian Political Development," in *Place and Politics in Modern Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 59–76; Rosario Forlenza and Bjørn Thomassen, "Gramsci and the Italian Road to Socialist Modernity," in *Italian Modernities: Competing Narratives of Nationhood*, ed. Rosario Forlenza and Bjørn Thomassen, Italian and Italian American Studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016), 91–118; Silvana. Patriarca and Lucy Riall, eds., *The Risorgimento Revisited : Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); DiMaria, "Towards a Unified Italy."

[30] Veroli, "Dance." Italian dance scholar Patrizia Veroli positions ballo grande as a foil to futurist dance and the schools of "modern dance" of the 20th century.

[31] Alberto Mario Banti, *La Nazione Del Risorgimento : Parentela, Santità e Onore Alle Origini Dell'Italia Unita* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 2000); Patriarca and Riall, *The Risorgimento Revisited.*

[32] Stewart-Steinberg, "Introduction," 16. "Knowledge and culture must be acquired in the new Italy **by the sweat of one's brow** in order to be transformed into a national patrimony. It is for this reason that realism must become the new great education, realism and all the new sciences of the physical and moral orders such as economics, pedagogy, and sociology" emphasis added.

ballo grande, I argue that the next step beyond the literary aesthetic is a consideration of kinaesthetic cultural products as evidence of historical and political transitions. I ask how dance reflects in corporeal terms the shifting paradigms and attitudes brought on by modernity. For example, I will investigate the repeated inclusion of bicycles in ballets in the 1890s and how their multimedia representation musically and visually might signal a greater cultural acceptance of the new technology. What do these theatrical and musical enactments of modernity in ballo grande suggest about national identity—what it meant to be Italian or be made Italian— during Italy's long and "irregular" process of modernization? How do the ballets respond to ongoing debates of the beneficial versus corruptive impact of renewed education, sports, technologies, and military campaigns? Will a focus on ballet and, by extension, on bodies emerge as an important revision of "notions of Italy"?[33]

Chapter Summaries

Expanding on this prospectus, my dissertation introduction will foreground my methods and key terms, such as kinaesthetics and modernity, situate my research within existing discourses, and summarize the extant English and Italian language literature on ballo grande. The body of the dissertation will consist of four chapters of ballet case studies and an epilogue. Four kinaesthetic topics will form the backbone of the four chapters: 1) hygiene and subjectivity, 2) industrialization, 3) mechanization and sport, and 4) militarism and colonialism. I anticipate considerable dialogue across chapters, in particular with regards to the theme of Italian identity and subjectivity.

[33] John Dickie, "The Notion of Italy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture*, ed. Rebecca J. West and Zygmunt G. Baranski, Cambridge Companions to Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 17–33. "For many people across the political spectrum, Italy is deemed to be unique because of its endlessly repeated failure to achieve putative standards of nationhood and institutional maturity or modernity. A great deal of historical work remains to be done on the specific nature of the **notions of Italy** and of political normality which inform such laments." 29-30 emphasis mine.

The first chapter explores the process of modernizing Italians in both mind and body through ballet and the hygienist gymnastics movement. In the project of physical education initiated by Francesco DeSanctis, gymnastics was legislated to serve as a cure for the weakness of the Italian character, an agreed-upon problem with variously attributed causes: theatricality, "latin effeminacy," or the increasing mechanization of society.[34] Subjectivity and corporeality were understood as inextricably intertwined, and physical education was an attempt through scientific and medical interventions to modernize Italian subjectivity and character. In this context, I will place the earliest ballets of Manzotti, who was lauded for his choreographic innovations for the corps de ballet and later knighted by the Minister of Education.[35] Both Manzotti's ballets and gymnastics are grounded in an overwhelming positivism and faith in scientific discovery.

Evolving theorizations of the relationships between music and movement is a central theme of this chapter that will carry through the dissertation in various forms. The chapter will introduce several key historical interlocutors who will help address the contemporary beliefs in the overlap of art, physical culture, and politics. First, I contend with the writings of Francesco DeSanctis, who initiated the gymnastics movement with the mandatory physical education in schools in 1878 and whose writings on Italian identity are awash with references to music and the theatre.[36] I will analyze the beliefs on the corporeal nature of the Italian subject of leading figures in the gymnastics movement such as Emilio Baumann and Angelo Mosso.[37] Next, I will follow this theme of music and movement into the nascent gymnastics' movement, ballet choreography, and the more globalized phenomenon of a kinaesthetic matching of music and movement in the school of Dalcrozian eurhythmics (1903-present), where movement and music together are seen to have

[34] Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect*, 272.
[35] Letellier, *Romualdo Marenco*. Manzotti was named "Cavaliere della Republicca" by the Minister of Education and Agriculture Guido Baccelli.
[36] Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect,* 15.
[37] Ibid, 141.

similarly hygienic potential to Italian gymnastics.[38]

My second and third chapters each take up anxieties of Italian identity from chapter one with a specific focus on technological aspects of modernization. **Chapter two** concentrates on large-scale technologies and infrastructures in the Italian kinestheme: industrial factories, tunnels, and trains. The central case study will focus on Manzotti's *Excelsior* and the contrasting northern and southern Italian reception of the ballet. This chapter will build on work by Francesca Vella on trains and opera in Italy, Ellen Lockhart on the electrical aesthetic in Italy, Gavin Williams on the mechanization of society in *Excelsior*, and Felicia McCarren on the mechanized corporeality of French ballet and the growing musicological body of literature on the interaction of humans and technologies.[39] This chapter thus expands Richard Leppert's research on what he calls aesthetic technologies by considering ballet an equal to opera as a filtering lens of Italian modernity.[40]

Bicycles, as mentioned above, are a central object of Italy's debates around modernity and corporeality and are the focus of **chapter three.** To my knowledge, at least three ballets from the 1890s featured bicycles: Manzotti's ballet *Sport* (1897), Marenco's ballet *Venus* from 1895 and Danesi's *Il Trionfo della moda* (1895) in Naples.[41] Bicycling as an activity and spectator sport was imagined as a culturally cohesive activity, even as the moral and physical consequences of riding such

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[38] Lawrence W. Haward and Reinhard Ring, "Jaques-Dalcroze, Emile," in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Selma Landen Odom, "Delsartean Traces in Dalcroze Eurhythmics," *Mime Journal*, 2004, 136–51; Daniel. Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent : Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 103. Albright considers Dalcroze as an early modernist which in my research will prompt questions of the modernist status of Italian ballet.

[39] Felicia M. McCarren, *Dancing Machines : Choreographies of the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[40] Richard D.. Leppert, *Aesthetic Technologies of Modernity, Subjectivity, and Nature : Opera · Orchestra · Phonograph · Film* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015).

[41] A. Andreoli and Luigi Danesi, *Il trionfo della moda : ballo brillante - allegorico - sportivo in 5 quadri* (Torino : Tipografia Matteo Artale, 1899). Andreoli's ballet premiered in Naples in 1895. *Il Trovatore*, Vol. 42, No. 28 (13 July 1895): 8. Marenco's ballet was choreographed by Giorgio Saracco with a libretto by B. Do Rego. Whether bicycles were more prevalent in ballets and other theatrical productions in Turin, where a company of gymnast/ cyclists were based is a question I hope to address if archival research is possible for this dissertation.

a mechanism were actively debated.[42] This chapter will be in dialogue with scholarship on later examples of music and sports, such as that of Anthony Bateman and John Bale.[43]

The fourth chapter will consider debates around the modern Italian character through the lens of militarism and colonialism, with specific attention to the ideas of race in Italy on theatrical stages and political pulpits. One thread in this chapter will be the increasingly mechanical metaphors of the human body such as humans as motors, in contrast to the more anthropomorphizing metaphors of nation states as living bodies.[44] The kinaesthetic of military and colonial-themed ballets will be in dialogue with both. The political resonances of opera and the nation state are well established, but nationalist tendencies have not been explored in Italian ballet. I will specifically examine military-themed ballets of Paulo Taglioni (1808-1884), an Italian choreographer whose spectacular nationalist ballet pantomimes had success within Italy and Central Europe. This chapter will build on the earlier study of gymnastics by considering how the Italian military adopted gymnastics training for its troupes, and will also return to the subject of the bicycle and the Italian bicycle regiments of World War I.[45]

As a conclusion to my dissertation, I will reflect on Italian ballet's influence and artistic legacy globally and nationally. I contextualize ballo grande as a whole, first, as one theatrical tradition amongst other European variants such as the innovations of the ballets russes and second, as a

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[42] 2024-11-29 7:36:00 PMAnthony Cardoza, "'Making Italians'? Cycling and National Identity in Italy: 1900–1950," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 15, no. 3 (2010): 354–77; Pivato, "The Bicycle as a Political Symbol."
[43] Anthony Bateman, "Ludus Tonalis: Sport and Musical Modernisms 1910-1938," in *Sporting Sounds: Relationships between Sports and Music* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 145–63; Patricia Anne. Vertinsky and John. Bale, eds., *Sites of Sport: Space, Place, Experience* (London: Routledge, 2004); Jeffrey O. Segrave, "Music as Sport History: The Special Case of Pietro Metastasio's L'Olympiade and the Story of the Olympic Games," in *Sporting Sounds: Relationships between Sports and Music*, by Anthony Bateman and John Bale (New York: Routledge, 2009), 128–51.
[44] Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor : Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Rhiannon Noel Welch, Vital Subjects: Race and Biopolitics in Italy (Oxford: Liverpool University Press, 2016); Lucia Re, "Italians and the Invention of Race: The Poetics and Politics of Difference in the Struggle over Libya, 1890-1913," *California Italian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010).
[45] Similar studies have been conducted on French and Russian contexts particularly with attention to dance, but once again, the Italian context is lacking.

pretext to the emergence of film and growing militarization of Italian society. **My epilogue** will reflect on the four previous themes of hygiene, technology, sport, and militarism by looking forward to the technological innovations in film, and rise of futurism and then fascism in Italy, and making explicit these themes' spectral presence across all three previous chapters. In particular, it will examine the remaining film of Luca Comerio's *Excelsior* in 1913 as the final transition from ballo grande to filmic spectacle at the height of the *anni d'oro* (golden years) of Italian film before the interruption of World War I.[46] Finally I will explore parallels with futurism and fascism in theatrical manifestos of the former and military and political spectacles of the latter.[47]

Sources

The extant sources on ballo grande provide tantalizing glimpses of the Italian kinestheme. Various textual, photographic, and symbolic representations of the elements of the ballets (choreography, staging, and music etc.) allow me to piece together a story of the kinaesthetic shifts that accompany modernity.[48]

As the principle printer of piano reductions for ballets, Giovanni Ricordi's publishing house is a crucial source on the music of these ballets. Its printed piano reductions are widely available in North American libraries. The John and Ruth Ward's Italian Ballet Collection at Harvard University has a great number of Ricordi's printed ballet scores, and the New York Public Library houses roughly sixty printed scores in piano reduction of collaborations between fourteen different composers and fifteen choreographers. Musicologists Mary Ann Smart and Ellen Lockhart have

[46] Pappacena, *Excelsior : Documenti e Saggi = Documents and Essays*.
[47] Umbro Apollonio*, Futurist Manifestos*, trans. Robert Brain (New York: Viking Press, 1973), 128, 195. "10. The Variety Theatre is a school of heroism in the difficulty of setting records and conquering resistances, and it creates on the stage the strong, sane atmosphere of danger. (eg. Death diving, looping the loop' on bicycles, in cars, and on horseback.)."; "The Futurist Theatre will be a gymnasium to train our race's spirit to the swift, dangerous enthusiasms made necessary by this Futurist year."
[48] Simonson, *Body Knowledge*.

already demonstrated how musical scores can serve as a rich site for exploring movement, gesture and aesthetics in their capacity to preserve a sense of motion across time.[49]

The Harvard Ward collection also houses roughly thirty manuscript scores of ballets from 1860–1914. These manuscripts take various forms: répétiteurs or rehearsal scores, other short scores, stage-band scores, and full scores, as well as several manuscripts with choreographers' production notes.[50] Each type of manuscript suggests a different perspective on the performance of the ballets, whether from the orchestra, podium, or wings of the stage. The role of dancers and other performers such as conductors in my dissertation will become clearer as I begin my archival research, but I can foresee how sources such as performer correspondence can contribute to the reconstruction of aesthetic ideals for movement.

The Harvard Ward collection additionally has a number of illustrations, images, and the costume and property designs for several ballets. Combined, these two North American libraries have hundreds of printed ballet scenarios, the published stories of the ballets, often with information on specific dancers but without musical notation. These ballet scenarios are helpful for tracing the evolving trends and topics of the genre, and can often serve as a point of comparison to opera and grand opéra, as well as point to broader changing aesthetic idea.[51]

Additional visual material and contemporary audience accounts can be gathered from various journals such as the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* and *Gazzetta musicale di Napoli*, with a particularly rich series of illustrations found in *Il teatro illustrato (*1880-1892). *Ars e labor* (1906-1912) contains a number of ballet reviews and illustrations from the beginning of the twentieth century, and has in its

[49] Ellen Lockhart, *Animation, Plasticity, and Music in Italy, 1770-1830* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017); Smart, *Mimomania*.
[50] Marenco's early ballet Amore ed Arte includes choreographers' production notes, as do three Pallerini ballet's from the 1870s.
[51] Smith, *Ballet and Opera in the Age of Giselle*; Lockhart, "Circuit Listening." Smith provides a model of comparison and exchange with ballet and grand opera in the French theatrical tradition. Lockhart suggests such a reading from the ballet scenario of *Il Telegrafico elletrico* which only has a scenario and no extant score.

second issue a long discussion of dance, morality, and the natural body. These critics' accounts are important sources on the multimediality of the ballets that the ballet scenarios may not fully capture, such as the success or failure of stage mechanisms, animal appearances, bicycle troupes, acrobats, and lighting effects.[52] The cultural importance of these ballets is clear from the inclusion of *Sport* in a series of six rich illustrations on printed trading cards advertising Justus Liebig's meat extract, and the monumental effort to document *Excelsior* on film in 1913.[53]

I have completed the language proficiency exam in Italian and feel prepared to begin examining primary sources. I will apply for travel fellowships such as the MacMillan grants, AMS travel funds, and Enders grant for summer research in the hopes of conducting targeted archival research in Italy. Archival research in Turin and Milan on the companies that provided supernumeraries for gymnastics stunts and bicycling could refine the arguments of Chapter 1 on gymnastics and Chapter 3 on bicycles. Chapter 2 on industrialized technology could be enriched with archival research in Milan and Turin on the specific stage technologies and mechanisms that were employed in the ballets of the 1880s and 1890s. However, I can envision a version of my dissertation that could reasonably be completed without any archival trips abroad.

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[52] Simonson, *Body Knowledge*; Gundula Kreuzer, *Curtain, Gong, Steam : Wagnerian Technologies of Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).

[53] Pappacena, *Excelsior : Documenti e Saggi = Documents and Essays*; Williams, "Excelsior as Mass Ornament The Reproduction of Gesture"; Elena Mosconi, "La Pantomima Nel Cinema Muto Italiano: Il Caso de 'Il Ballo Excelsior,'" in *A Nuova Luce : Cinema Muto Italiano 1 : Atti Del Convegno Internazionale*, Bologna, 12-13 Novembre 1999, ed. Michele Canosa (Bologna: CLUEB, 2000), 1000–1015, https://access-torrossa-com.yale.idm.oclc.org/en/resources/an/2270488. Four scenes of Excelsior in a revised choreography by Cesare Coppini are preserved in a 1913 film by the renowned Italian cinematographer Luca Comerio (who also had directed a film on the Giro D'Italia in 1910). Gavin Williams 2019 and Flavia Pappacena have done considerable work on this source.

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