

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: An Investigation of the Influence of Central Italian Folk Music on Composers' Use of Bassoon in Select Symphonic and Large Chamber Works of the Nineteenth Century

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This study has investigated the influence of Central Italian folk music in select compositions of Ottorino Respighi, Peter Tchaikovsky, Felix Mendelssohn, and Jean Sibelius. Through the titles of these pieces, one can infer that they were influenced by the composer living in Italy, or visiting, on holiday. This study also includes a brief history of the *serenade*, from the traditional Italian folk practice to Antonín Dvořák's treatment of the more modern 19th-century genre. A review of the evolution of the state of ethnomusicology in Italy, including discussion of art and folk-music instruments, poetry, *carnevale*, and processions within the region of Italy is included. Further, I provide information on tonal and instrumental characteristics and specific folk dances to aid in the investigation of the treatment of folk melodies within 19th-century pieces. The result of this research not only provides a more accurate interpretation of stylistic issues when 19th-century works containing Italian folk-music attributes are performed, but also the knowledge that the title of a piece does not necessarily indicate a musical significance. Some works exhibit a direct musical influence while others are "Italian" in name only.