

Il Pesceballo

This reconstruction and revival of *Il Pesceballo* is a by-product of a much larger study of Francis James Child's life and major work, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-1898). The data for the larger project have been predominantly epistolary; and some of those letters have provided, cumulatively, interesting materials on Child's interest in and creation of the pastiche opera, *Il Pesceballo*.

In addition to the letters, the primary document for reconstructing the opera was Child's own 1862 publication of his Italian libretto, with James Russell Lowell's loose English translation, and Child's manuscript annotations indicating the arias to which he set his libretto. It was this publication that planted the seeds of a revival in my mind. It had also stimulated Dale Cockrell's 1994 publication (*Pasticcio and Temperance Plays in America*): Cockrell reprinted the libretto and provided period scores of most of the arias; but he did not provide a performance score for Child's work or integrate Child's libretto with the music. E-communication with Cockrell encouraged me to proceed, but initial attempts were partially stymied by the lack of recitatives and interludes which I subsequently uncovered at the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The 1862 edition's annotations, plus Cockrell's 19th century music scores, the interludes and recitatives (originally, tradition avers, created by John Knowles Paine) provided the essential building blocks for the score, the work of Eric Thomas Knechtges whom I asked to work with me in creating a viable performance edition.

To those sources, Knechtges added research into other musical editions to create a new performance score for piano and voices, inflected with Child's Italian libretto. That score, in turn, was expanded for piano, voices, and string quartet. The musical notes provided here were written to accompany the original score for piano and voices.

As with all pastiche works, this one has a long list of creative participants and **any** performance must acknowledge all who have participated in the cumulative creation:

Francis James Child—"creator" of *Il Pesceballo* and author of the Italian libretto
James Russell Lowell—English translation of the libretto
John Knowles Paine—composer of the recitatives/interludes
"Maestro Rossibelli-Donimozarti"—the specific authors of the originals of the arias
Eric Thomas Knechtges—transcription, adaptation, composition of the 21st c. score
Mary Ellen Brown—historical research, discovery, coordination

The 19th century performances were held to raise money for various charities relating to Civil War humanitarian aid; the 21st century revival collected food for the local food bank in lieu of an admission price. **Any** future performances should also have a charitable component.

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As a courtesy, please inform Mary Ellen Brown (brown2@indiana.edu) of any use/performance of the materials provided here.

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