

# EL GRUPO MUSICAL UNIVERSITARIO DE TURÍN DESDE LA FUNDACIÓN HASTA EL FASCISMO (1921-1928)

## THE UNIVERSITY MUSIC GROUP OF TURIN. FROM THE FOUNDATION TO FASCISM (1921-1928)

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**Resumen:** El primer Grupo universitario musical (GUM) fue establecido en 1918 en la Universidad de Roma por el profesor V.N. Zabughin. La asociación, difundida en varias sedes universitarias italianas, fue fundada por un grupo de estudiantes en Turín en 1921. El estatuto indicaba como su objetivo principal la difusión de la cultura musical: con este fin, el GUM organizó conferencias y una temporada de conciertos cada año, así como estableció una biblioteca, una orquesta y un coro, compuestos por sus miembros. En 1927, el Grupo universitario fascista (GUF) convirtió el GUM en su sección musical, y es bajo esta nueva estructura organizativa como continuó funcionando hasta la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Este artículo se pone como objetivo el de reconstruir los primeros años de la organización, centrándose en el momento en el cual fue absorbida por el GUF. El análisis de las temporadas musicales, los documentos y las noticias de época sobre el grupo permitirá de verificar la importancia que este giro político tuvo en sus actividades culturales y en sus estrategias organizativas.

**Palabras clave:** Grupo fascista universitario (GUF), Grupo musical universitario (GUM), Universidad y Politécnico de Turín, música en Italia durante el fascismo, V.N. Zabughin.

**Abstract:** The first University Music Group (GUM) was established by professor V.N. Zabughin at the University of Rome in 1918. The association, widespread in several Universities, was founded by the students in Turin in 1921. The statute indicated the dissemination of musical culture as its main purpose: each year were organised conferences and a concert season; were soon founded also a library, an orchestra and a choir, composed by the same associates. The GUM was absorbed by the University Fascist Group (GUF) and transformed into its musical section in 1927. Under this new organisation it continued operating until World War II. This paper reconstructs the early years of the organisation, focusing on its annexation to the GUF. The analysis of the concert programs, the records and the chronicles of the time will permit to verify the impact this political turn had on its cultural activities and organisational strategies.

**Keywords:** University Fascist Group (GUF), University Music Group (GUM), University and Polytechnic University of Turin, Music in Fascist Italy, V.N. Zabughin.

This essay is part of a larger study on the activities of the Turin University Music Group – in Italian “Gruppo Universitario Musicale”, usually identified with the acronym GUM – between the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s<sup>1</sup>. The reconstruction of the historical events of the association necessarily starts from the University of Rome. Here, the professor Vladimir Zabughin, born in Russia but Italian by adoption, founded the first University Music Group<sup>2</sup>. An obituary and the records in his personal file at the Sapienza University of Rome Archives place the start of the association in 1918 and confirm the subsequent establishment of seven sections in the Universities of Bologna, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Pavia, Padua and Turin<sup>3</sup>. Although critics have delved into Zabughin’s studies, the role he played in the foundation of the club, from the original group in the University of Rome to the construction of the system on a national level, still remains to be probed. The same goes for the concerts he promoted in the capital and the project of the book *Berlioz e Vergilio*, announced on the occasion of the application for the “libera docenza” in History of Music in 1922 and remained unfinished due to his sudden death<sup>4</sup>.

The first evidence of the GUM of Turin into the local newspaper dates back to 15 December 1921. Founded by the students of the Polytechnic University probably at the beginning of the academic year 1921–22, in the first assembly of December the statute was

<sup>1</sup> TESTA, Marco: “Il Gruppo universitario musicale di Torino. Dalla fondazione alla fascistizzazione (1921–1928)”, in *Subsidia musicologica 2*. Lucca, 2019, pp. 195–220.

<sup>2</sup> For Vladimir Nikolaevič Zabugin’s biography (Pargolovo [St. Petersburg], 21 June (4 July) 1880 – Solda [Bolzano], 14 September 1923), also reported as Wladimiro Zaboughine or Vladimiro Zabughin: TAMBORRA, Angelo: “Vladimir Zabughin e l’Italia religiosa del primo Novecento”, *Europa Orientalis*, 2, 1993, pp. 289–302; CAMPANA, Augusto: “Vladimiro Zabughin”, in *Vergilio nel Rinascimento italiano da Dante a Torquato*. Trento, 2000, t. I, pp. IX–XVI; TAMBORRA, Angelo: *Esuli russi in Italia dal 1905 al 1917. Riviera ligure, Capri, Messina*. Soveria Mannelli, 2002, pp. 253–64; GIOVANARDI, Alessandro: *Vladimiro Zabughin pensatore di confine tra Oriente e Occidente. Un profilo intellettuale*. University of Siena (doctoral dissertation), 2011–12; BASILE, Bruno: “Zabughin: una biografia”, in *Storia del Rinascimento cristiano in Italia*. Napoli, 2011, pp. 29–36; GIOVANARDI, Alessandro: “Vladimiro Zabughin, Aby Warburg e il Rinascimento: breve nota su due iconologie parallele”, *Schifanoia*, 42–43, 2012, pp. 241–6; CASTELLI, Gian Paolo: “Il Gigante folle di Vladimiro Zabughin: un Post Scriptum”, in *Il gigante folle. Istantanee della Rivoluzione russa*. Torino, 2019, pp. 13–54.

<sup>3</sup> Zabughin was “libero docente” of Literature of Humanism at the University of Rome, from 1911 to his death. Sapienza University of Rome Archives, series 26 “fascicoli personale docente”, file AS 311 “Vladimiro Zabughin”, curriculum vitae with a list of publications, undated [post 1921]; KOROLEVSKIJ, Cirillo, “Vladimir Nicolaevitch Zabughin (1880–1923)”, *Stoudion*, 4, 1923–24, pp. 124–7. Both already mentioned in GIOVANARDI, Alessandro: *Vladimiro Zabughin pensatore di confine*, op. cit., pp. 203, 237.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, pp. 161–83, 223–4, 236–45 CAMPANA, Augusto: *Vladimiro Zabughin*, op. cit., p. XV;; BASILE, Bruno: *Zabughin: una biografia*, op. cit., pp. 32–3.

approved and the Directory was named, composed of “*sigg. Bona, Bonicelli, Codrig, Gozzana, Patetta, Vinca*”<sup>5</sup>. The engineering student Carlo Felice Bona<sup>6</sup> was designed to preside over it: he held uninterruptedly the leadership until 1927<sup>7</sup>. Due to the reporting, limited exclusively to surnames, it was possible to identify with certainty only Giorgio Codrig, graduated at the Polytechnic University as Bona. However, it cannot be excluded the presence, both among the affiliates and the members of the board of directors, of students of the University and other University Schools. Lastly, the article indicates the promotion of musical culture among young people as the primary objective of the association, carried out through conferences, concerts and assemblies.

The debut of the University Music Group took place on the following March 24<sup>th</sup>. It was a conference dedicated to the evolution of the lute between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries and to the Baroque and modern guitar, aimed at illustrating the history of these instruments through a didactic introduction followed by the execution of selected pieces<sup>8</sup>. Between the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1922 the Directory of the GUM of Turin attended the National Congress of University Music Groups, held in Rome. The delegates of the various universities, among them Turin, Milan, Pavia, Bologna, Florence and Genoa, joined the meeting. In this occasion they wrote the Statute and the Collaboration agreement between the association’s branches<sup>9</sup>. The primary purpose of the network of music groups was to establish a close collaboration between the young Italian music lovers and to promote the music studies in the universities<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> “Gruppo universitario musicale”, *La Stampa*, 15 December 1921, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Carlo Felice Bona (1898-1970) studied Mechanical engineering at Polytechnic University of Turin. He graduated with full marks in 1921 and then attended the advanced course of electrotechnics “Galileo Ferraris” (Polytechnic University Archives, series “Libri Matricola Studenti”, MA-I 1, 1916-17, 31). The following year, he was hired into the technical offices of FIAT, initiating a brilliant career that drove him to the direction of “Ufficio tecnico motori avio”. In occasion of the re-opening of the entries to National Fascist Party (1932) he enrolled the section of Turin, renewing the registration from 1933 to 1943 (Archivio di Stato in Turin, Sezioni Riunite, fonds Fascist National Party (ASTO, PNF), folder 1.305, file 24.515). “Ing. Carlo Felice Bona”, *Illustrato Fiat*, 8-9, 1970, p. 23; CATELLA, Mario: “Ricordo di Carlo Felice Bona”, in *Restauri di opere d’arte in Piemonte. Lascito di Carlo Felice Bona*. Turin, 1981, pp. 5-9; BASSO, Alberto: “Per una valorizzazione del patrimonio musicale subalpino”, in *Miscellanea di studi I*. Turin, 1988, pp. 9-14; GIACOSA, Dante: *I miei quarant’anni di progettazione alla Fiat*. Turin, 2004, p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> University of Turin Archives, fonds Giacomo Mottura, sub-fonds University Music Group - G.U.M. 1926-1928 (ASUT, GUM), file 4, memoir of Guido Bachi, undated [1927?].

<sup>8</sup> “Vita musicale - Lettera da Torino”, *Il Pianoforte*, 4, 1922, p. 121.

<sup>9</sup> “Primo Congresso Nazionale del Gruppo universitario musicale”, *La Stampa*, 18 April 1922, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> “*Stringere in un’organica collaborazione gli Universitari italiani amanti e cultori della musica allo scopo di acquistare e diffondere la cultura musicale; inquadrare lo studio e l’esercizio dell’arte musicale nei vasti orizzonti della cultura generale; sviluppare sempre più nelle Università la cultura musicale, parte essenziale dello spirito*”. DODO: “Il Gruppo Universitario Musicale (1922-1934)”, *La Stampa della Sera*, 10 January 1934, p. 3. Here, the foundation of the Roman section is erroneously placed on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1922. This date would instead be connected to the first national conference.

In the 1930s the GUM of Turin launched numerous and excellent initiatives and grew rapidly and consistently. On the contrary, the sections of the other universities gradually disbanded<sup>11</sup>. The group organized accurately its structure during the Twenties, opening a library, founding an orchestra and a choir, animated by the members, and promoting a concert season every year, with artists on engagement<sup>12</sup>. The newspaper articles show that the University Music Group increased its prestige in Turin, attracting the attention of the critics of *Gazzetta del Popolo*, *Il Momento* and *La Stampa*, as well as carving out a place among the musical associations of the city<sup>13</sup>. Despite the interest of the press, especially in the early years of the period under examination, the activities of the GUM remained substantially limited. As regard music magazines, in fact, only the Turin's *Il Pianoforte*, later converged in *La Rassegna Musicale*, and the Bolognese *Il Pensiero musicale* gave an account of its initiatives, with continuity but only into the local chronicles.

An extract from the Statute of the GUM of Turin, published by the newspaper *La Gazzetta del Popolo* in 1923, shows that the general principles defined in the Rome conference were acknowledged:

“Il G.U.M. vive di arte e per l'arte; esso è erede dell'Alleanza di David, auspicata da Roberto Schumann; dichiara perciò guerra ad ogni sorta di esibizionismo, di pedanteria, di virtuosismo e di faciloneria presuntuosa. Ogni gumista che ha un filo di voce deve iscriversi al Coro universitario; se ha abilità strumentistica all'Orchestra universitaria; chi non può cantare e suonare, cerchi almeno di educare il proprio gusto e di intendere il linguaggio musicale come altri impara una lingua viva o defunta”<sup>14</sup>.

An educational mission moved the association, which devoted to the musical education of its members through meetings and concerts extended to population too. The reference to the Davidsbündler, the league funded by Robert Schumann to defend the cause of contemporary music, is to be limited because no particular polemic intent towards the Turin musical scene has emerged in the GUM activity and in the press releases. A similar educational commitment had already been expressed in the first article of the Statute of the music section of the Pro Cultura Femminile, the women cultural association founded in the city in 1919, a few years before<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> DODO: *Il Gruppo Universitario Musicale*, op. cit., p. 3; ROGGERI, Edoardo: “Panorama musicale”, *Torino rivista mensile municipale*, 11, 1933, pp. 36-8.

<sup>12</sup> DIONISOTTI, Carlo: *Ricordi della scuola italiana*. Rome, 1998, p. 593.

<sup>13</sup> About the several musical associations in Turin: BALDI, Stefano: “Cronologia di eventi musicali torinesi (1911-1940)”, in *Musica e musicisti a Torino 1911-1946*. Turin, 1998, pp. 33-49; BASSO, Alberto, “La musica (1916-1998)”, in *Storia di Torino. Gli anni della Repubblica*. Turin, 1999, t. IX, pp. 546-9).

<sup>14</sup> “Nel Gruppo Universitario musicale”, *Gazzetta del Popolo*, 14 December 1923, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> “È costituita una Sezione Musicale Autonoma della Società Pro Cultura Femminile di Torino. Essa ha lo scopo di diffondere la coltura musicale per mezzo di serie audizioni della migliore musica da camera antica

The National Conference was the first extra-Turin occurrence to which the GUM participated. For the occasion, the students performed with great success and their concert was then repeated in Turin at the beginning of May: the chronicles report sonatas of Scarlatti, Paradisi, Galuppi, Bach and Beethoven in the program<sup>16</sup>. The foundation of the first orchestra is placed shortly thereafter: it was mentioned in an article about a conference-concert on the Italian melodrama held by Luigi Torri, director of the National University Library of the city, in the second part of the month<sup>17</sup>.

After these first sporadic events, a musical season dedicated to Romanticism was articulated for the 1922-23: Beethoven (I evening), Schubert (II - III), Weber, Field, Czerny, Cramer, Fanna, Hummel (IV), Mendelssohn (V - VI), Schumann (VII - VIII) and Chopin (IX) were the protagonists of the concerts. In addition, an appointment was dedicated to Russian music between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and two concerts to Chopin's piano works<sup>18</sup>.

The dynamism and good organizational capacity that animated the 1922-23 season continued the following year, when the library was opened and the orchestra was re-founded. The 1923-24 program shows a particular interest to the eighteenth century repertoire, but was open to other horizons too. The Baroque music (Bach, Frescobaldi and Veracini), the contemporary French piano compositions (Chevallard, Fauré, Wormser, Chabrier, Widor, Pierné, Saint-Saëns), works for piano by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Mendelssohn, the violin school of Piedmont of eighteenth century, the compositions for piano by Beethoven, Schumann, Albéniz, Da Venezia, Debussy and Chopin and the popular songs of Piedmont were the protagonists of the appointment. Four other evenings were reserved for eighteenth century music, the first dedicated to Boccherini, Clementi and Leo, the second to Vivaldi, Sammartini, Galuppi, Veracini, Pugnani, Sandoni and Durante and the third to Pergolesi. In the last appointment, the orchestra of the association made its debut: probably composed of only strings, under the direction of Gaetano De Napoli it played works by Corelli, Händel, Vivaldi and Tartini<sup>19</sup>.

*e moderna*". BASSI, Ennio: *La Pro Cultura e la musica a Torino 1919-1974*. Turin, 1974, p. XI. BASSI, Ennio: "L'attività musicale della Pro Cultura Femminile", in *Ghedini e l'attività musicale a Torino fra le due guerre*. Turin, 1986, pp. 241-66.

<sup>16</sup> "Il Gruppo universitario musicale", *La Stampa*, 6 May 1922, p. 5; "Notizie in breve", *Il Pianoforte*, 5, 1922, p. 159.

<sup>17</sup> "Una conferenza-concerto", *La Stampa*, 19 May 1922, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> TESTA, Marco: *Il Gruppo universitario musicale di Torino*, op. cit., p. 202.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 203-4.

The same artistic line was maintained for the following season, with recurrent forays in the eighteenth-century repertoire and an appointment dedicated to Bach's organ compositions. In the 1924-25 program there were names already present in the previous years (Pergolesi, Bach, Boccherini and Vivaldi) and new proposals (Locatelli, Alessandro Canavasso, Corelli, Scarlatti and Mozart). Other events dedicated to the piano pages by Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Ravel, Mozart and Martucci, to the sixteenth-century madrigals by Palestrina, Marenzio, Orlando di Lasso, Donati, Victoria and Gastoldi, and to chamber music and Russian opera arias completed the season<sup>20</sup>.

With the aim of educating the members, as well as involving them in the organization of musical events, under the direction of Giorgio Federico Ghedini the GUM choir was founded in the second half of 1924. Similarly, the string ensemble was also enlarged to some wind instruments, with the participation of professional musicians alongside the students. Directed by Gaetano De Napoli, two orchestral concerts were held in February, in Turin and in reply in Cuneo; in June, at the end of the season, the choir debuted in an event dedicated to Italian popular songs<sup>21</sup>.

The 1925-26 concert season shows no particular changes compared to previous years. For the opening night, the tenor Grigorij Raisov accompanied on piano by Ghedini interpreted vocal lyrics and opera arias by Mussorgsky, reiterating the attested interest in Russian music of the GUM. Then, a concert of the violinist Giuseppe Barison (Stradella, Borghi, Locatelli and Bach) and an appointment with the pianist Elena Marchisio and the string quartet Pagliassotti, Siritto, Girard and Gedda (Brahms and Franck); an organ and violin concert held by Ulisse Matthey and Carlo Zino, an event with the Budapest quartet (Reger, Mozart and Borodin), a performance by pianist Alexander Borovsky (Bach, Beethoven, Prokofiev and Stravinsky) and a concert of Italian and Lower Brittany folk songs by the GUM choir, already active at the end of the previous season<sup>22</sup>.

An intervention in a musical-political controversy, which broke out in the city in 1926, also demonstrated the dynamism of the group<sup>23</sup>. In February, the German govern-

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, p. 204.

<sup>21</sup> D[ELLA] C[ORTE], A[ndrea]: "I concerti di musica da camera", *La Stampa*, 9 February 1925, p. 3; "Un concerto del G.U.M. a Cuneo", *Gazzetta del Popolo* 22 February 1925, p. 2; "Vita musicale - Lettera da Torino", *Il Pianoforte*, 3, 1925, p. 55; D[ELLA] C[ORTE], A[ndrea]: "I concerti di musica da camera", *La Stampa*, 22 June 1925, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> TESTA, Marco: *Il Gruppo universitario musicale di Torino*, op. cit., pp. 205-6.

<sup>23</sup> "La prima del «Parsifal» al Regio fissata per domenica", *Gazzetta del Popolo*, 5 March 1926, p. 5.

ment criticized the “Italianization” in forced stages of Alto Adige by the Italian Government, invoking the Wilson’s principle concerning the autonomy of population identity. Mussolini suppressed every foreign controversy on the borders but the chronicle presented the question as a regurgitation of anti-Italian sentiment<sup>24</sup>. Wagner's *Parsifal* was going to be staged at the Teatro Regio in Turin and it was announced that the performance would be booed as a sign of protest. Although praising Mussolini, the Music University Group reaffirmed its sharp opposition to any kind of nationalist criticism in the music field, declaring that art, as such, had to be judged only for its aesthetic values.

In 1927 the GUM was absorbed by the University Fascist Group (GUF), which, thanks to greater stability, initiated the "conquest" of the youth associations of Turin. However, the 1926-27 season does not show any differences compared to the previous years nor signs of the passage, because it was organized before the political change of the Directory. A similar horizon can be seen by examining the demonstrations promoted by the GUF in the second half of 1926, which show no trace of this annexation. The GUM does not even figure among the student societies associated with the GUF in the first fascist university circle inaugurated in December 1926<sup>25</sup>.

The 1926-27 season counted seven concerts. For the opening night, piano works by Bach and Beethoven performed by Nino Rossi; then an appointment dedicated to Beethoven's cello compositions, held by Rossi and Gilberto Crepax, and an evening with the Poltronieri Quartet, which brought on stage Boccherini, Mozart and Debussy. To follow, a concert by pianist Alexander Borovsky on pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Ravel, Ferruccio, Fauré and Liszt, an appointment dedicated to lyrics by Mussorgsky accompanied by compositions by Ghedini and Jewish songs, and an evening with Ulisse Matthey, already engaged in the previous years, dedicated to the organ works by Bach, Schumann, Franck and Liszt. To close the season the usual choral concert was held, which saw in association the vocal formations of the GUM and the Società Corale Valdese - directed by Ghedini - with a program of sacred music by Schütz, Händel and Carissimi<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Compare the speech “Difesa dell’Alto Adige” of Mussolini, held to the *Camera dei Deputati* on 6 February 1926, following the declarations of the Prime Minister of Bavaria Heinrich Held. SUSMEL, Edoardo, SUSMEL, Duilio: *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini. Dall’attentato Zaniboni al discorso dell’ascensione (5 novembre 1925-26 maggio 1927)*. Florence, 1957, t. XXII, pp. 68-73; SCARANO Federico: *Tra Mussolini e Hitler. Le opzioni dei sudtirolesi nella politica estera fascista*. Milan, 2012, pp. 41-9.

<sup>25</sup> “L’inaugurazione del Circolo universitario fascista”, *Gazzetta del Popolo*, 27 December 1926, p. 5; TESTA, Marco: *Il Gruppo universitario musicale di Torino*, op. cit., pp. 206-7.

<sup>26</sup> TESTA, Marco: *Il Gruppo universitario musicale di Torino*, op. cit., p. 208.

The chronicle diffused the news of the incorporation of the musical association by the University Fascist Group belatedly and in a summary way, only on the presentation of the 1927-28 season. The records of the GUM conserved in the fonds Giacomo Mottura<sup>27</sup> at the University of Turin Archives allow to anticipate the date of this passage and to specify the dynamics of the process<sup>28</sup>. Mottura, student of medicine and member of the GUF, was the secretary of the renewed Directory of the University Music Group, composed of the president Guido Bachi (Economics), who succeeded Carlo Felice Bona, the vice-president Aldo Mamini (Law), the cashier Santino De Ambrogio (Economics) and the councilors Menotti Tomaselli (Law) and Domenico Abrate (Engineering)<sup>29</sup>. Among his documents, there is the only preserved part of the archive of the federation, dated between the end of the 1926-27 season and the conclusion of the following year. The first records of April 1927, concerning the engagement of the musicians for the following autumn, allow anticipating the annexation to the GUF already in the first months of the year.

A memoir of the new president Bachi shows that the hand-over probably occurred without clashes<sup>30</sup>. Carlo Dionisotti - humanities student at the University of Turin - confirmed the facts, indicating that there was no assembly of the associates on this occasion.

<sup>27</sup> Giacomo Mottura (1906-1990) studied Medicine and surgery at University of Turin and he graduated with full marks and publication recommended in 1930. He enrolled the University Fascist Group and consequentially the Fascist National Party from 1927 to 1942, without holding specific political office into the section of Turin. ASTO, PNF, folder 946, file 6.307. CASSATA, Francesco: "Mottura, Giacomo", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Rome, 2012, t. LXXVII, pp. 364-7 [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giacomo-mottura\_(Dizionario-Biografico)/ - 30 September 2019].

<sup>28</sup> For several records of the University Music Group of Turin, part of the Mottura's body of materials: University of Turin Archives, fonds Giacomo Mottura, sub-fonds University Music Group - G.U.M. 1926-1928 (ASUT, GUM) [http://atom.unito.it/index.php/gruppo-universitario-musicale - 30 September 2018].

<sup>29</sup> ASUT, GUM, file. 4, list of the members of the Directory of the GUM, undated [1927]. In addition to Mottura's one, I found the Fascist National Party membership card of other two members of the Directory: Guido Bachi (ASTO, PNF, folder 1.082, file 507 - dated 1927) and Santino De Ambrogio (ASTO, PNF, folder 1146, file 3.068 - dated 1925). Probably, the other students signed up to the University Fascist Group too. About Bachi and particularly his activity during the Resistance: LUZZATTO, Sergio: *Partigia. Una storia della Resistenza*. Milan, 2013 (about GUM: p. 49). About the activity of Mottura during the Resistance, his participation in the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale and in the first Council of Turin after the Liberation refer to his profile in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* and to the records at ASUT.

<sup>30</sup> "Chiamato dal consiglio dimissionario del Gruppo Universitario Musicale, e dal Gruppo Universitario Fascista, assumo oggi la Presidenza del Gruppo Universitario Musicale, e, mentre ringrazio coloro che della loro fiducia mi han onorato, rivolgo il mio saluto e il pensiero riconoscente ai membri del consiglio dimissionario che così degnamente hanno fino ad oggi retto le sorti della fiorente associazione. E questo saluto e questo pensiero vanno in modo particolare all'amico Ing. Bona che dalla fondazione del GUM ad oggi ha, come Presidente, in sei anni di sapiente ed appassionata opera, contribuito potentemente a che il Gruppo sorto da un piccolo nucleo di giovani entusiasti, prosperasse e diventasse numerosa accolta, e si conquistasse con la simpatie e il favore del pubblico un posto di primissimo ordine tra le società musicali di Torino". ASUT, GUM, file 4, memoir of Guido Bachi, undated [1927?].



The Directory carried out negotiations, without changes to the Statute<sup>31</sup>. The concerts program brochure of 1927–28 presents a summary of the previous year activity and the organization balance, in a deficit of little less than 500 lire<sup>32</sup>. According to Dionisotti, this financial deficit and the need for a new location caused a crisis and the resignation of the Directory. The new management therefore encouraged the passage of the GUM under the control of the University Fascist Group<sup>33</sup>. The following pages show the list of musical events, facilities for members and other federation data about the orchestra, the library, the composition of the Directory and the grant of the new head office by the Podestà. Sion Segre-Amar, science student, evoked that most of the members of the musical group were more interested in the great privileges offered, such as the free access to Riccardo Gualino's Teatro di Torino<sup>34</sup>, to the GUF membership card<sup>35</sup>.

This brochure does not present any specific declaration regarding the fascism of the GUM. The only reference can be seen in the heading on the cover, which is also repeated on the first page (Fig. 1):

GRUPPO UNIVERSITARIO FASCISTA  
Delegazione artistica  
GRUPPO UNIVERSITARIO MUSICALE

The cover is completed by the logo of the musical federation, which represents an angel with a portable organ into a frame with the motto “Ubi melos nec ibi mali / G.U.M.” (Fig. 2). The contours are accentuated and the graphic sign is rigid and schematized, as a xylographic plate. The presence of the same logotype on the headed paper of the Milan-Pavia University Music Group shows that the GUMs shared the same emblem at least for a period<sup>36</sup>. Even if the inventor remains anonymous, the visual source allows advancing a hypothesis about the authorship of the work. This angel musician was extrapolated from a panel of the chapel of San Michele Arcangelo at Malatesta Temple in Rimini (Fig. 3-4). A photograph of the same work by Agostino di Duccio - a full-size photograph - is reproduced in the second half of the thirties on the programs of the Amici della Musica, section of the

<sup>31</sup> DIONISOTTI, Carlo: *Ricordi della scuola italiana*, op. cit., pp. 593–5.

<sup>32</sup> ASUT, GUM, file 6.2.

<sup>33</sup> DIONISOTTI, Carlo: *Ricordi della scuola italiana*, op. cit., pp. 593–5.

<sup>34</sup> BALDI, Stefano, BETTA, Nicoletta, TRINCHERO, Cristina: *Teatro di Torino di Riccardo Gualino (1925-1930). Studi e documenti*. Torino, 2013.

<sup>35</sup> SEGRE-AMAR, Sion: *Sette storie del «numero 1»*. Turin, 1979, pp. 90–1.

<sup>36</sup> A memoir of the new president Guido Bachi, written on the letterhead paper of the GUM, shows the new header “Gruppo universitario fascista” added by typewriter. It is possible to assume that the updated version of the letterhead paper was not ready yet when it was written. ASUT, GUM, file. 4, memoir of Guido Bachi, undated [1927?]; for the letterhead with the logo of the GUM of Milan-Pavia please refer to ASUT, GUM, file 6.6, letter from Alberto Orefice to Giacomo Mottura, 17 July 1927.

Società Amici dell'Arte of Turin<sup>37</sup>. Considering the humanistic studies of Vladimir Zabughin, who dedicated a particular interest to Malatesta Temple<sup>38</sup>, the hypothesis of involving him in the design of the symbol is fascinating but still to be verified. The first concert programs of the Turin's GUM which can be traced, relating to 1924 and 1925, have no logo, which appears only since 1926.

The 1927-28 season does not show any developments in the artistic direction of the group. For the opening night the Quartetto Veneto del Vittoriale played works by Haydn, Borodin and Ravel. To follow, an appointment with Beethoven's lieder, performed by the pianist Nino Rossi and the singer Laura Pasini and an event with the piano sonatas of Franck, Scarlatti, Galuppi, Chopin, Bossi, Martucci, Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Liszt interpreted by Augusto d'Ottavi. Then, the concert of ancient Italian music taken from the Mauro Foà collection of the National University Library had a great echo, both in the local news and in the music magazines. The program consisted in works by Vivaldi, Giardini and Stradella, transcribed and harmonized by Alberto Gentili, first professor of History of Music at the University of Turin. The program continued with a concert by the pianist Guido Agosti (Bach-Busoni, Zipoli-Benvenuti, Debussy, Grečaninov, Scriabin and Chopin) and, on the occasion of the first centenary of Schubert's death, a cycle of four concerts was dedicated to the musician. At the end there was the annual appointment with the group's string orchestra, conducted by maestro De Napoli on a Baroque repertoire, followed by a concert for piano and violin by Mario Corti and Ernesto Consolo (Beethoven, Schumann and Franck) and by an evening dedicated to Franck's work and to Baroque compositions for organ<sup>39</sup>.

No other reference to the GUF besides the heading of the concerts programs. A clue can be found in the articles published by the local chronicle in order to present the

<sup>37</sup> The relationships between the two associations still needs further investigations. In September 1936 the president of the Società Amici dell'Arte Andrea Gastaldi, deputy (1934-39) and former secretary of the Fascist Federation of Turin (1931-34), founded the section Amici della Musica. In order to extend the moral-educational goals already pursued in the artistic field by the association to the musical one, the new group promoted chamber music auditions open to members and citizenship of Turin. The program of the first season (1936-37) was published in October and the first concert was held in November. "Una sezione musicale degli Amici dell'Arte", *La Stampa*, 25 September 1936, p. 4; "Il programma concertistico degli «Amici della Musica»", *La Stampa*, 23 October 1936, p. 4. University of Turin Archives, Marco Albera Collection (ASUT, Albera), series "Associazioni culturali e politiche", sub-series "Amici dell'Arte" [<http://atom.unito.it/index.php/amici-della-musica> - 30 September 2019].

<sup>38</sup> GIOVANARDI, Alessandro: "Un Edificio cristiano della Rinascenza. Vladimiro Zabughin e il Tempo Malatestiano", *L'Arco*, 1-2, 2006, pp. 26-30.

<sup>39</sup> TESTA, Marco: *Il Gruppo universitario musicale di Torino*, op. cit., pp. 212-4.

musical season, in November 1927. At the request of the GUM, these underlined the Italian origin of the musicians selected<sup>40</sup>. The list of performers, however, shows that many of them had already been engaged in the previous seasons and demonstrates that the declaration of intent did not involve any specific changes dictated by ideological reasons<sup>41</sup>. In an article on the *Rivista universitaria*, the magazine of the University Fascist Group published in the academic year 1927-28, the humanities student Noemi Gabrielli, talking about the activity of the musical association, made no reference to the political change of the GUM or to new goals imposed by fascist students. Instead, she confirmed its closeness to the principles of the statute: the educational mission carried out among university students, the conferences, the concerts, the courses of History of Music and the library<sup>42</sup>.

A letter from the pianist Augusto d'Ottavi, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1927 and concerning the organization of the concert of 15<sup>th</sup> February 1928, provides further evidences on the path of fascism of the GUM and confirms what emerged from the analysis of the chronicle and the seasons<sup>43</sup>. The musician requested a change in the program of the event in homage to the recent provisions of Minister Fedele, without better specifying the reasons. The concert brochure confirms that the Directory accepted the new program without modification<sup>44</sup>. It emerges unequivocally that Augusto d'Ottavi asked for a new one, recalling the circular 111/1927 of the Minister of Education Pietro Fedele<sup>45</sup>. This latter has a clearly protectionist nature and prepares the prefect intervention in favour of national music production. At least half of the musical programs of concert halls, cinemas and cafes would have to host works of Italian musicians:

“Ai Sigg. Prefetti del Regno.

Viene assai spesso lamentata, e non a torto, l'ingiustificata preferenza che in molti locali di pubblico spettacolo si dà alla musica estera, danneggiando così notevolmente gli autori e gli editori italiani.

Richiamo perciò l'attenzione delle SS. LL. II. affinché vogliano impartire disposizioni a chi di ragione perché nelle varie sale di concerti, nei cinematografi e nei pubblici ritrovi in genere, almeno una metà di ciascun programma sia dedicata a musica italiana, e ciò non solo

<sup>40</sup> “Le manifestazioni musicali del G.U.M.”, *Il Momento*, 6 November 1927, p. 5; “I concerti del Gum”, *La Stampa*, 8 November 1927, p. 7; “La musica da camera a Torino. I programmi della Pro Cultura e del G.U.M.”, *Gazzetta del Popolo*, 12 November 1927, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> The activity of the GUM of Turin was in line with national music trends in the 1920s, without particular ideological conditioning. NICOLODI, Fiamma: *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*. Fiesole, 1984, pp. 94-5.

<sup>42</sup> GABRIELLI, Noemi: “Per la coltura musicale”, *Rivista Universitaria*, 8, 1928, pp. 15-6.

<sup>43</sup> ASUT, GUM, file 6.11, letter from di Augusto d'Ottavi to Giacomo Mottura, 22 December 1927.

<sup>44</sup> ASUT, GUM, file 6.11, brochure “L'Orchestra e il Coro del G.U.M.”, 15 February 1928.

<sup>45</sup> Until today, only Fiamma Nicolodi mentioned the circular n. 111/1927 in her studies about the Italian musical contest in the inter-war period: NICOLODI, Fiamma: *Musica e musicisti nel ventennio fascista*, op. cit., p. 95.

per quel senso di alta dignità nazionale che deve presiedere sempre a qualsiasi manifestazione, ma nell'interesse stesso dei nostri musicisti e di coloro che danno opera quali editori alla divulgazione dei loro lavori.

S'intende che in tale obbligo non vengano comprese le manifestazioni dedicate appositamente ad onorare la memoria d'insigni musicisti stranieri, e nemmeno, per ora, le rappresentazioni teatrali, nelle quali, del resto, si segue di massima un tale criterio. Alla limitazione predetta potrà farsi qualche eccezione per i concerti organizzati dalle maggiori Associazioni o Accademie del Regno le quali abbiano già dato prova di sapere interpretare le esigenze dell'alta cultura musicale con un largo spirito d'italianità, o che abbiano, tra le finalità loro, quella di incoraggiare e promuovere anche l'esecuzione dei lavori di nostri autori viventi e particolarmente dei giovani.

Gradirò dalle SS. LL. II. un cortese cenno di riscontro. Roma, 10 dicembre 1927 - Anno VI”

Il Ministro: Fedele”<sup>46</sup>

In two articles, Alfredo Casella recalled that the circular was interpreted in a too zealous way by prefects, finding soon application also in symphonic and lyric fields. For this reason, he wrote, the musician put pressure on the minister Giuseppe Belluzzo - succeeded to Fedele in 1928 - to cancel the circular. The revocation took place, according to his memoirs, in the space of a few months<sup>47</sup>. With the exception of the concert by Augusto d'Ottavi, in the short period in which the provision remained in force no trace demonstrates its effective application by the Directory of the GUM of Turin, confirming the trend emerged.

In the second half of the 1920s the University Fascist Group, strong of the stabilization of its organization, reached a position of predominance among the youth associations of the University and of the University School, gradually dissolving or annexing them. The comparison between the events of the GUM and those of the Associazione Torinese Universitaria (ATU), subjected in the same period, further highlights the detachment from any political demonstration maintained by the music section. In contrast to the pressing propaganda of the "conquest" of the University by the GUF, the political change imposed to the musical section was only reported later by the press and did not dictate any substantial

<sup>46</sup> Circular n. 111/1927 “Tutela del patrimonio musicale nazionale”, in *Bollettino ufficiale*, 1 - Leggi, regolamenti e disposizioni generali, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 52, 1927, p. 4320.

<sup>47</sup> “As far as the present rumor is concerned, it must be said that about a year ago, Prof. Pietro Fedele, then Minister of Public Instruction and of Fine Arts, drew up a circular which was sent to all the prefects of the realm, in which all the cinematographs, cafés, variety theaters and music halls of Italy were ordered to limit the foreign music performed in their productions to 50 per cent. But the circular also declared, in terms that seemed extremely clear, that the lyric theatres and symphonic and chamber music society were excluded from this regulation”. CASELLA, Alfredo: “On Artistic «Protection»”, *Christian Science Monitor*, 5 January 1929; CASELLA, Alfredo: *Scambi musicali, in Atti del primo congresso internazionale di musica. Firenze, 30 aprile-4 maggio 1933*. Florence, 1935, pp. 223-6. I have not found already the disposition indicated by Casella that revokes the circular 111/1927.

alteration in the concert seasons and in its activities. The heartfelt participation in the ideal instances of fascism by the ATU, clearly expressed in the *Rivista Universitaria*, contrasts to the substantial disinterest of the GUM, which did not show any significant slippage in relation to the path beaten in previous years. In the same period, the two organizations took parallel directions that did not cross, demonstrating the possibility of carrying out cultural programs based on different objectives under one roof<sup>48</sup>.

Going a few years beyond the chronology examined, a jump into the 1930s allows us to grasp the effective control role of the University Fascist Group on the GUM activities. The last pages of 1934–35 concerts brochure, in addition to the delegates of the GUF coordinating the music section, present the competitions of the Prelittoriali of Turin and of the Littoriali of Rome<sup>49</sup>. The Littoriali della cultura e dell'arte of Rome took place for seven editions from 1934 to 1940. After the testing of the first edition, the leadership of the National Fascist Party (PNF) directly supervised the organization, which involved the GUFs of the entire country in an Olympiad in which the students challenged each other in different fields of culture, scientific, humanistic and strictly political<sup>50</sup>. With the start of the Littoriali a new chapter began in the world of fascist youth cultural production. The local initiative was mobilized in view of the national competition through preliminary stages of training and selection of competitors (Prelittoriali) within the universities.

Even if new records discoveries could anticipate the involvement of the Turin GUM in the musical competitions of the first edition of Littoriali held in Florence and in the local preselection already to the previous year<sup>51</sup>, only at this date the University Fascist Group succeed in directing the activity of the music section towards new goals. An incidence that cannot be seen directly in the articulation of the concerts, which with the exception of a greater presence of contemporary Italian authors - like Alfredo Casella, Ottorino Respighi

<sup>48</sup> The activity of the University Music Group of the 1930s still remains to be explored. The association remained active at least until 1939, offering a concert season every year. "Concerti della «Pro Cultura»", *La Stampa*, 11 November 1939, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> ASUT, Albera, brochure "G.U.M. 1934 1935", 1934.

<sup>50</sup> LAZZARI, Giuseppe: *I Littoriali della cultura e dell'arte*. Naples, 1979; ALFASSIO GRIMALDI, Ugoberto, ADDIS SABA, Marina: *Cultura a passo romano. Storia e strategie dei Littoriali della cultura e dell'arte*. Milan, 1983; LA ROVERE, Luca: *Storia dei Guf. Organizzazione, politica e miti della gioventù universitaria fascista 1919-1943*. Turin, 2003, pp. 265-89.

<sup>51</sup> In musical field, the catalogue of the first edition of the Littoriali della cultura e dell'arte in Florence (1934) reports the following competitions: "convegno e concorso di critica musicale, concorso di composizione, concorso di esecuzione". The presence of Ottorino Respighi, Ildebrando Pizzetti, Guido Guerrini, Alfredo Casella e Vito Frazzi in the jury of the contest reveals the importance of the university competition in the project of creating the new 'fascist culture'. *Littoriali della cultura e dell'arte. Catalogo delle mostre. Firenze 22 aprile-5 maggio 1934-XII*. Florence, 1934, p. 20.

and Franco Alfano - remained in line with the previous seasons, both in the choice of composers and musicians. It is instead indirectly, through the involvement of the GUM within the system of the Littoriali della cultura e dell'arte, that the active participation to the initiatives promoted by Fascist National Party can be seized. The strategy is similar to the one adopted by the artistic section of the GUF, that every year promoted an art exhibition for the selection of competitors at national competitions.

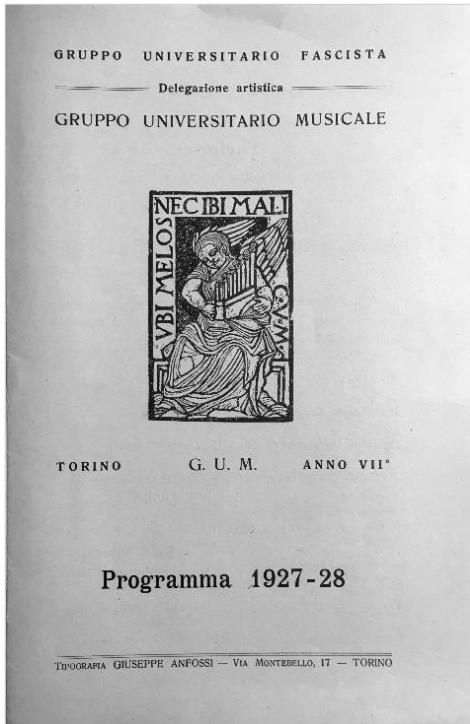


Fig. 1. *Brochure of the musical season 1927-28*, 1927, ASUT, GUM, fasc. 6.2.

Fig. 2. *Logo of University Music Group, [before 1924]*, ASUT, GUM, fasc. 6.2.

Fig. 3. - Fig. 4. *Angels with harp and portable organ*, Agostino di Duccio, mid-fifteenth century, chapel of San Michele Arcangelo at Malatesta Temple in Rimini.

