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“One of the Men Who Most Shaped the History of Istria”: An Insight into the Reception of Tartini in Koper in the Nineteenth Century

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ABSTRACT

By examining a selection of documents from the Koper archives, this article offers an insight into the reception of Tartini in Koper in the nineteenth century. It deals with Luigi Biscontini's musical treatise *Trattatello dell'Arte del suono e del canto* [*Theoretical and Practical Treatise on the Art of Sound and Singing*], the correspondence between Manzoni and Stancovich, and documents from the Borisi family collection relating to the erection of the Tartini monument in Piran.

Keywords: Giuseppe Tartini, reception, Koper, nineteenth century

IZVLEČEK

Prispevek prek obravnave izbranih dokumentov iz koprskih arhivov ponuja vpogled v recepcijo Tartinija v Kopru v 19. stoletju. Obravnavani so glasbeni spis *Trattatello dell'Arte del suono e del canto* [*Traktatek o umetnosti zvoka in petja*] Luigija Biscontinija, korespondenca Stancovich – Manzoni in dokumenti, povezani s postavitvijo Tartinijevega spomenika v Piranu iz družinskega fonda Borisi.

Ključne besede: Giuseppe Tartini, recepcija, Koper, 19. stoletje

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Giuseppe Tartini is undoubtedly one of the most important and interesting musical personalities of the European Enlightenment: there are not many figures in the history of music who were known not only as first-class performers and composers, but also as music teachers and music theorists. Given Tartini's importance in all of these areas, questions naturally arise about his influence and the reception of his work.

As Sergio Durante notes in his introductory essay to the three-volume series *Tartini and the Musical Culture of the Enlightenment*, Tartini studies have only gained depth in recent decades, and the same is true of the performances of his compositions, most of which are still awaiting a much-needed critical edition.¹ What did the reception of Tartini look like before that? At first glance, it seems to have been limited to the more interesting events of his life (e.g., the well-known anecdote about the *Devil's Trill*) and (relatively rare) performances of his better-known compositions.

The aim of this article is to provide insight into the reception of Tartini in Koper during the nineteenth century by examining selected documents from the Koper archives. It is well-known that Koper played an important role in Tartini's early years: he was educated at Koper's *Scuole Pie* and probably acquired the foundations of a humanistic education during this period, which was undoubtedly of decisive importance for his later musical career.² But what was known about Tartini in Koper during the nineteenth century? To what extent was he present in the local consciousness, and which of the many areas of his musical activity were known in the local environment? In this context, the concept of reception is understood in its broadest sense: not merely as the performance or dissemination of Tartini's music, but above all as a comprehensive awareness of his life and work, as well as his position within a broader social and national framework.

For the present article, three groups of documents from the repositories of Koper were examined, suggesting possible directions of Tartini's reception in the nineteenth century. Although their limited number does not allow far-reaching generalisations, they nevertheless offer valuable insight into the understanding of Tartini's presence in the (emerging) local historical memory. The documents will first be analysed and their content presented; they will then be placed within a wider historical and cultural context, followed by an attempt to assess the form of Tartini's reception that emerges from them.

1 Sergio Durante, "Introduction: The Tartini Moment", in *In Search of Perfect Harmony: Tartini's Music and Music Theory in Local and European Contexts*, ed. Nejc Sukljan (Berlin: P. Lang, 2022), 13–24. Critical editions of Tartini's *opera omnia* are currently being published by Bärenreiter; two volumes have been published to date.

2 For basic information on Tartini's life, see Pierluigi Petrobelli, "Tartini, Giuseppe", in *Grove Music Online: Oxford Music Online* (2001), accessed August 26, 2025. A more detailed and up-to-date account can be found in Sergio Durante, *Tartini, Padova, l'Europa* (Livorno: Sillabe, 2017).

Trattatello dell'Arte del suono e del canto

The first of the documents discussed is *Trattatello dell'Arte del suono e del canto teorico e pratico* [Theoretical and Practical Treatise on the Art of Sound and Singing], which is kept in the Department of Local History of the Srečko Vilhar Central Library in Koper.³ Based on the sources examined, it is not possible to fully clarify the circumstances of the treatise's creation and authorship. The only available information about the author can be found on the cover of the manuscript, which states that it was written by "Maestro Don Luigi Biscontini", and adds that he was a "vicar and music teacher in Koper around 1800".⁴ On the inside cover of the treatise, the name Rosa Sindici appears under Biscontini's name, but no further information about her is given. The possible year of origin of the treatise is mentioned in the catalogue of the first Istrian regional exhibition (1910), where the manuscript was exhibited: it states that *Trattatello* was written in 1836 and that at the time of the exhibition its owner was Simeone Vascotti.⁵



Figure 1: *Trattatello dell'Arte del suono e del canto teorico e pratico*, title page.

- 3 Luigi Biscontini, *Trattatello dell'Arte del suono e del canto teorico e pratico*, MS (Koper, [1836?]).
- 4 "Cooperatore e maestro di musica a Capodistria nel 1800 circa." No additional reliable information about Biscontini could be found based on research conducted to date in the Diocesan Archives in Koper, the Diocesan Archives in Trieste and the Koper Regional Archives. Based on the title "don" written before his name on the cover of the treatise, we can assume that he was a priest who (if the information on the cover is to be believed) served as a vicar in Koper around 1800.
- 5 *Prima Esposizione provinciale Istriana* (Capodistria: Carlo Priora, 1910), 151. As can be seen from the note on the inside cover, Simeone Vascotti donated the treatise on 30 May 1911. (See Biscontini, *Trattatello dell'Arte del suono e del canto teorico e pratico*, cover.) When the manuscript was stored in the Srečko Vilhar Central Library in Koper after the Second World War, it was listed in the inventory book among the items taken from the archives of the Franciscan monastery of St Anne, which leads us to believe that Vascotti donated it to the Franciscans in Koper. (See *Inventarna knjiga Zbirnega centra knjižnic v Portorožu (1950–1953)*, 178; *Trattatello* is listed under no. 12451, which is also written on the manuscript.)

As indicated by the title, the treatise is broadly divided into two parts: one theoretical and one practical. The treatise begins with a definition of music: “Music is the art of arranging tones.”⁶ The first, theoretical part then introduces the basics of music theory and the science of counterpoint. It appears that the author himself relies on the initial definition of music, as the entire presentation centres on tones, their arrangement and their relationships. The following theoretical topics are discussed:

- Tones and their notation: note values and corresponding rests, extension of note values with dots, staves and clefs, names of tones in the diatonic scale, accidentals, tone formation (ornamentation, articulation, dynamics).
- Meter: perfect (binary) and imperfect (ternary), triplets as a rhythmic peculiarity between binary and ternary meter.
- Diatonicism and chromaticism, the diatonic scale.
- Consonances and dissonances, intervals (*accordi semplici*) and chords (*accordi completi*).
- The bass tone as the foundation of the chord, harmonisation of the diatonic scale.
- Fingering for C major (simple and in thirds), cadences.
- Harmonics, the origin of harmony by dividing the string into six parts: *sestupla*.
- Basso continuo (= *l'arte dell'accompagnare il Basso*): construction and notation of chords, use of dissonances, harmonic, arithmetic and mixed cadences, harmonic rhythm accompanying the melody, modulations.
- The theory of counterpoint: definition, basic concepts and forms (imitation, fugue), solmisation syllables, parallel minor.

The practical part of the treatise includes shorter vocal pieces (*solfeggio*) with accompaniment and piano pieces (technical exercises and piano miniatures) in all major and parallel minor keys, presented in various forms (waltz, march, *romanzetto*, *preludietto*, rondo, gavotte, *polacca*, *canzonetta*, *monferina*, *cavatina*, *arietta*, capriccio, romance, imitation, *anglais*, contredanse, minuet, theme with variations and *allemande*).

Given its content, the treatise was clearly intended for pedagogical purposes, as it has a practical character. However, it should be noted that in several places the theoretical part goes beyond simply presenting the theoretical foundations that a practical musician needs in order to perform musical works, also providing deeper theoretical explanations and the acoustic background for the individual theories discussed. In this respect, Biscontini demonstrates at least some familiarity with the most important music-theoretical considerations of

6 “La Musica è l’Arte di modificare i suoni.” Biscontini, *Trattatello dell’Arte del suono e del canto teorico e pratico*, 1.

the eighteenth century. Tartini is also mentioned in one such passage, in the context of a discussion on the origin and construction of chords and the justification of harmony based on dividing of the string into six parts.⁷

In his discussion of the origins of chords and harmony, Biscontini largely follows the views expressed in the writings of Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764), a leading French composer and music theorist of the first half of the eighteenth century.⁸ Biscontini's starting point is the belief that chords create harmony in music and support the melody, with all chords deriving from a single chord created by nature [*un unico e solo accordo ci additò la Natura*]: this is the perfect chord [*accordo perfetto*] or the original principle [*principio organico*].⁹ Biscontini then explains that the perfect chord is a major triad derived from the notes of the harmonic series, and that it has two inversions (3–5–1, 5–1–3) in addition to its basic form (1–3–5).¹⁰ In the major scale, we find the major triad on degrees I, IV and V, and with these three chords we can harmonise all of the notes of the diatonic scale. Biscontini justifies the major triad as the original source of all other chords, both consonant and dissonant, by dividing the string (in his case tuned to C) into six parts:



Musical figure 1: Division of a string tuned to C into six parts.¹¹

If we divide the string into three parts (aD), we get a fifth; if we divide it into four parts (aE), we get a fourth. If we divide the string into five parts (aF), we get a major third, and if we divide it into six parts (aG), the result is a minor third.¹² This division gives us six tones that form a *sextuple* [*sestupla*], which is

7 Ibid. The discussion in Biscontini's treatise is difficult to follow because the pages are clearly out of order. In several cases, the discussion on one page does not continue on the next but resumes only after several pages (e.g., page 14 should actually follow page 25). The disordered pages suggest that the treatise was cut apart and given new covers with information about the author and the exhibitor (owner) in order to present it at the 1910 exhibition. A detailed examination of the treatise's content, which is beyond the scope of the present article, would be necessary to definitively reconstruct the correct order of the pages.

8 The key points of Rameau's theoretical considerations are outlined in Graham Sadler and Thomas Christensen, "Rameau, Jean-Philippe", in *Grove Music Online: Oxford Music Online* (2001), accessed August 26, 2025.

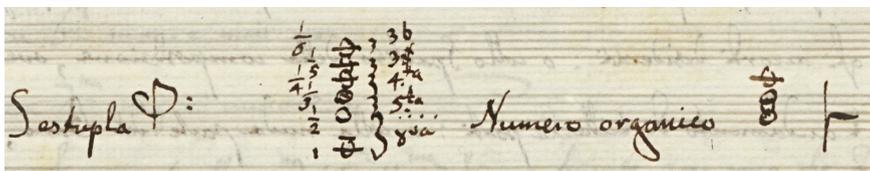
9 Biscontini, *Trattatello dell'Arte del suono e del canto teorico e pratico*, 36.

10 Ibid., 36–37.

11 Ibid., 21.

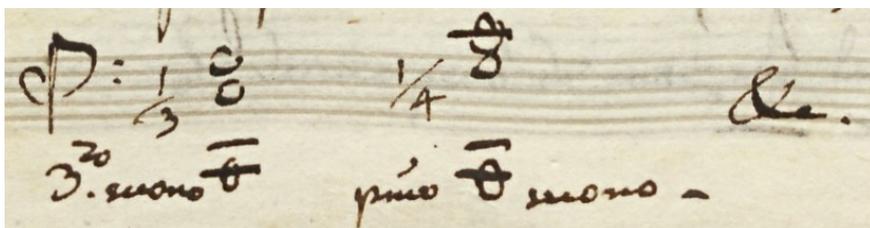
12 Ibid., 20–21. The interval ratios given by Biscontini for the division of the string into six parts have been well known since the ancient Greek theorists: 2:1 = octave, 3:2 = fifth, 4:3 = fourth, 5:4 = major third, 6:5 = minor third.

nothing other than the harmony of a third, a fifth and an octave, from which the original number [*numero organico*] is derived.¹³



Musical figure 2: The *sextuple* [*sestupla*] and the original number [*numero organico*].¹⁴

Having established this by dividing the string into six parts, Biscontini adds that the common principle of the origin of chords (and harmony) is also confirmed by the acoustic “phenomenon of the third tone [*terzo suono*] discovered by Mr Tartini”.¹⁵ The third tone of all intervals contained in the *sextuple* will always be the same, namely the lowest tone (no. 1 in Musical figure 2 above), which is therefore the first principle [*principio primo*] of all others.¹⁶



Musical figure 3: Biscontini’s representation of the third tone in intervals in the *sextuple*.¹⁷

Neither Rameau’s nor Tartini’s theoretical approach to the origin and justification of chords and harmony is presented in detail in Biscontini’s treatise, which is understandable given the work’s clearly practical and pedagogical purpose. On closer inspection, however, Biscontini’s conclusion appears to be correct. Both theorists base harmony on the bass note of the chord, which each derived in his own way: Rameau through his exploration of the overtones above it (and emanating from it), and Tartini through his exploration of the third tone that arises below through the resonance of two higher tones (or a combination of

13 Ibid., 22.

14 Ibid.

15 “[...] il fenomeno del terzo suono scoperto dal Sig. Tartini”. Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

their frequencies).¹⁸ Interestingly, Biscontini also referred to Tartini's third tone when explaining the origin of harmony: although this acoustic phenomenon was clearly presented in Tartini's treatises, it seems that ideas from Rameau's theoretical tradition were more widespread and accepted.

Correspondence between Stancovich and Manzoni

Another set of documents attesting to Tartini's reception in Koper in the nineteenth century is part of the correspondence between Pietro Stancovich (1771–1852), canon of Barban,¹⁹ and Giannandrea Manzoni (d. 1872), a nobleman, physician and philologist from Koper,²⁰ which is preserved in the Manzoni family collection in the Koper Regional Archives. Stancovich gathered information for his most important work, *Biografia degli uomini distinti dell'Istria* [*Biographies of Distinguished Istrians*, 1828–1829], partly through correspondence with several prominent Istrian (and other) intellectuals of the time. Among them was Manzoni, whom Stancovich asked for assistance in finding information for the entry on Tartini.

In a letter dated 11 November 1828, Stancovich explains to Manzoni that he would like to add some information to the entry on Tartini that he had read in the *Dizionario Biografico Universale di Parigi*²¹ at Count Grisoni's, specifically "about the creation of one of his sonatas, entitled The Devil's [*del Diavolo*], and

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- 18 For further details on Tartini's third tone, see Patrizio Barbieri, *Quarrels on Harmonic Theories in the Venetian Enlightenment* (Lucca: Libreria musicale italiana, 2020), 61–76. On the third tone as the bass foundation of a chord, see also Margherita Canale Degrassi, "The Orchestral Accompaniments of Giuseppe Tartini's Concertos for Violin and Orchestra and the Third-Tone Theory: Hypotheses for an Analysis", in *In Search of Perfect Harmony: Tartini's Music and Music Theory in Local and European Contexts*, ed. Nejc Sukljan (Berlin: P. Lang, 2022), 55–75.
- 19 Pietro Stancovich was a priest, archaeologist, historian and publicist from Barban in Istria. He attended secondary school in Rovinj, then studied philosophy in Udine and theology in Padua. He addressed scientific topics (including agriculture) as well as philosophy and historiography (among other things, he wrote about St Jerome). His best-known and most important work is *Biografia degli uomini distinti dell'Istria* [*Biographies of Distinguished Istrians*], Trieste, 1828–1829. See Peter Stoka, "Stancovich, Pietro", in *Obrazi slovenskih pokrajin*, accessed September 8, 2025, <https://www.obrazislovenskihpokrajin.si/oseba/stancovich-pietro/>, and Pietro Zovatto, "Stancovich, Pietro (1771–1852)", *Slovenska biografija*, accessed September 8, 2025, <https://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi946540/>.
- 20 The Manzoni family was admitted to the nobility of Koper in 1802, during the time of Giannandrea's father and uncle, judge Andrea and surgeon Domenico. Giannandrea served as a town and district physician and was also highly regarded as a philologist. Giannandrea's son Domenico (1844–1891) was a lawyer and the founder and editor of the newspaper *L'Unione*, which was published from 1874 to 1881. See Zdenka Bonin (ed.), *Vodnik po fondih in zbirkah pokrajinskega arhiva Koper* (Koper: Pokrajinski arhiv Koper, 2006), 472; and Paolo Giro and Cristina Bernich (eds.), *Blasonario giuliano: Raccolta di stemmi e notizie storiche delle famiglie dell'Istria e delle città di Fiume, Trieste, Gorizia e Grado* (Trieste: Unione degli Istriani, 2021), 698.
- 21 This refers to *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne* [*Ancient and Modern Universal Biography*]; the entry on Tartini is published in volume 44. See Prony, "Tartini (Giuseppe)", in *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne: STR–TAR*, vol. 44, ed. Louis Gabriel Michaud (Paris: Michaud, 1826), 578–586.

about the fact that his biography was written in French in Paris”.²² Stancovich says that he currently only has access to the Italian translation of the aforementioned work, in which the entries beginning with the letter T have not yet been published. He therefore asks Manzoni if he could transcribe at least the passages containing the information he needs from the original entry on Tartini.²³ Manzoni replies promptly²⁴ and fulfils his request: he transcribes the desired excerpts from the entry on Tartini in the *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne* [*Ancient and Modern Universal Biography*] and adds a transcription of the end of the entry on Tartini from the *Nuovo dizionario istorico* [*New Historical Dictionary*].²⁵

Stancovich then included the entry on Tartini in the second volume of his multi-volume work *Biografia degli uomini distinti dell'Istria*.²⁶ He devoted particular attention to the sonata “del Diavolo”, about which he had obtained information with the help of Manzoni, at the end of the text, where Tartini’s works are listed; in doing so, he refers to the “universal dictionary of Paris” [“dizionario universale di Parigi”] and summarises the well-known anecdote about its composition.²⁷ Stancovich’s entry on Tartini contains all of the essential information about Tartini’s life and work that is still found in texts of this kind today, although many details were understandably added and updated later. Stancovich reports on Tartini’s early training in Piran and Koper and his studies in Padua, also mentioning the complications surrounding his marriage and his stay in a monastery in Assisi. This is followed by an account of Tartini’s meeting with Veracini in Venice and his move to Ancona, where he discovered, among other things, the third tone. Next, Stancovich describes Tartini’s return to Padua, where he became the first violinist at the Basilica of St Anthony of Padua, and briefly comments on the years during which Tartini worked in Prague. He then mentions the founding of the violin school in 1728, after which he devotes a large part of the text to Tartini’s fame and the many invitations he received to leave Padua. More detail is then provided about Tartini’s theoretical ideas, with a presentation of his theoretical writings and their reception. Based on this, Stancovich also describes Tartini’s character, supporting his account with a list of the latter’s correspondents and quotations from the literature. The entry concludes with information on Tartini’s death

22 “[...] dell'origine di una sua Sonata, detta del Diavolo, e l'altra che la di lui vita fu scritta a Parigi in Francese”. SI PAK KP 304, Družinski fond Manzoni, t. u. 6, folder 9, letter from P. Stancovich to G. A. Manzoni, 11 November 1828.

23 Ibid.

24 SI PAK KP 304, Družinski fond Manzoni, t. u. 6, folder 9, letter from G. A. Manzoni to P. Stancovich, November 1828?.

25 “Tartini (Giuseppe)”, in *Nuovo dizionario istorico ovvero storia in compendio: SF-TA*, vol. 19 (Bassano, 1796), 300–301.

26 Pietro Stancovich, *Biografia degli uomini distinti dell'Istria: Tomo secondo* (Trieste: Gio. Marenigh Tipografo, 1829), 293–322.

27 Ibid., 319.

and funeral, as well as on the erection of the Tartini monument in Prato della Valle in Padua. At the end is a list of Tartini's published and unpublished musical and scientific works.

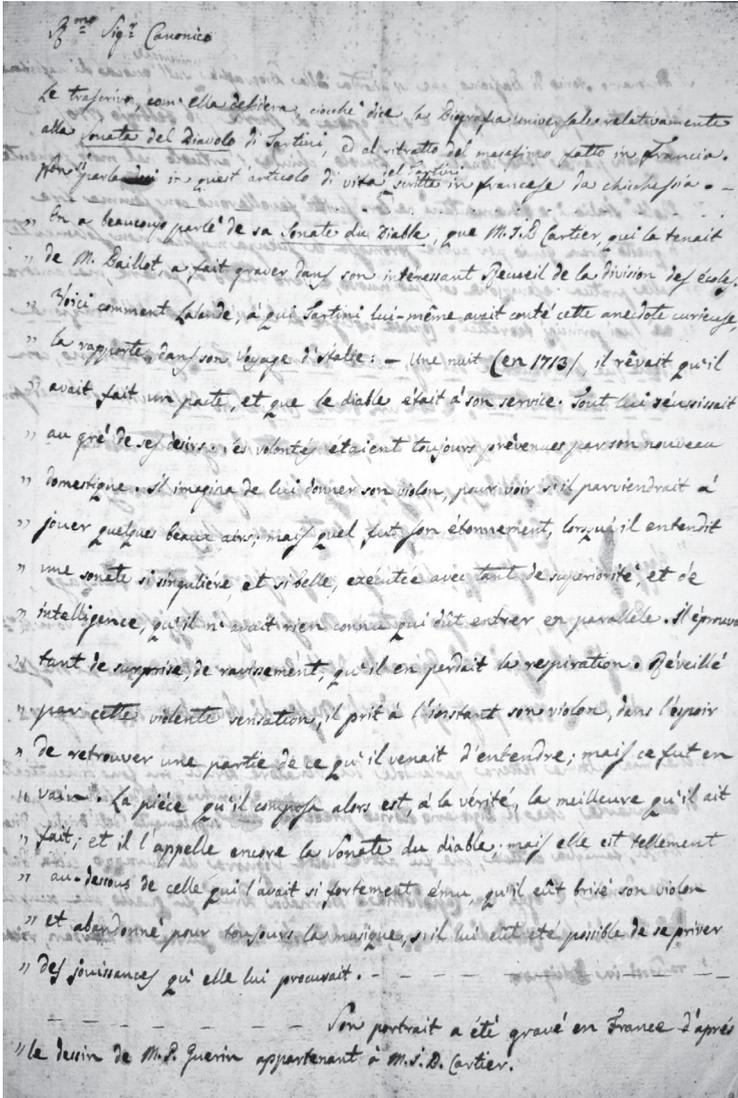


Figure 2: First page of G. A. Manzoni's letter to P. Stancovich.²⁸

28 SI PAK KP 304, Družinski fond Manzoni, t. u. 6, folder 9, letter from G. A. Manzoni to P. Stancovich, November 1828?.

When reading Stancovich's text, one inevitably gains the impression that the author was primarily concerned with portraying Tartini and his work in the most positive and noble light possible. Tartini's character and fame are described in superlatives, and although the sources from which Stancovich draws are correctly quoted, they are uncritically summarised (in many cases even copied) and arranged to serve the author's purpose. Such a text would undoubtedly rank Tartini among the most important Istrians, which was the author's intention: Stancovich's *Biografia degli uomini distinti dell'Istria* was very influential and established a canon, so to speak, of prominent Istrians. This is not surprising, as the author explains in the introduction to the first volume that the purpose of the work is:

[...] *to provide descriptions of the nature, character, and deeds of all men who have excelled in morals, science, art, labour, honour, valour and every other branch of human endeavour, whether they followed virtue or fell into vice and unbridled passions.*²⁹

Then he adds the following:

*The interest and benefit, however, are greater when we read about the deeds and events of our own citizens. The prospect of their virtues enlivens and expands our minds in a certain way, nourishes and intoxicates us with a divine savour of homeland that gently stirs our hearts, and the love of virtue and honour within us is warmed and inflamed with an eager desire to follow in their footsteps.*³⁰

The entry from Stancovich's *Biography* is thus one of the works that shaped the image of Tartini as one of the key figures of Istria in the public consciousness, even though the focus was obviously not on actual knowledge of his music. In the decades after the publication of Stancovich's book, Tartini became a symbol of Istrian culture, and with the rapid rise of national movements in the second half of the nineteenth century, he increasingly became one of the symbols of Italian culture in Istria. The Italian national movement regarded this area as one of the unredeemed territories [*terra irredenta*] and sought to annex it to a united Italy. In this context, the erection of a monument to Tartini in his hometown of Piran, which is the subject of the third series of documents, is also significant.

29 “[...] darci relazione dell'indole, del carattere, e delle gesta tutte degl'uomini che si distinsero nella morale, nelle scienze, nelle arti, negl'impieghi, negli onori, nel valore, ed in ogni e qualunque altro ramo dell'umano operare, sia seguendo la virtù, sia inciampando nel vizio e nelle sregolate passioni”. Pietro Stancovich, *Biografia degli uomini distinti dell'Istria: Tomo primo* (Trieste: Gio. Marenigh Tipografo, 1828), 9.

30 “L'interesse e l'utile però ci si presentano maggiori, quando noi leggiamo le gesta e le vicende de'proprii cittadini. Al prospetto delle loro virtù si accende ed allarga in certo modo l'animo nostro, si pasce e s'inebria di un sapore divino di patria, che il cuore dolcemente ne scuote, e l'amore alla virtù ed agli onori in noi si riscalda e s'infiamma, col vivo desiderio di seguirne le traccie.” *Ibid.*, 10.

Documents about the Tartini Monument in Piran

As Duška Žitko writes, "the awakened citizenry [in the predominantly Italian coastal towns within the framework of the Austrian Adriatic Littoral] was looking for suitable personalities who would be sufficiently important to satisfy the meaning and purpose of memorials with a deep national emotional charge".³¹ Tartini undoubtedly fit this profile, as indicated by the aforementioned entry in Stancovich's *Biografie*. The monument was planned for 1892, the 200th anniversary of the composer's birth. Preparations began in the late 1880s, but for various reasons the erection was delayed, and the monument, designed by the Venetian sculptor Antonio Dal Zotto, was not officially unveiled until 2 August 1896.³² The documents relating to the Tartini monument in Piran are kept in the Borisi family collection³³ in the Koper Regional Archives and provide insight into the beginnings of the construction process.

The first document is a printed letter from the administration [*la direzione*] of the Provincial Committee for the Centenary of Tartini [*Comitato provinciale pel Centenario "Tartini"*] dated 26 June 1890.³⁴ The text serves both to present the project to erect a monument to Tartini and to invite all of the recipients to provide support and assistance. It begins with an account of Istria and its glorious past, and then explains that 1892 marks the 200th anniversary of Tartini's birth, placing the composer firmly within the Italian cultural context. The authors are convinced that it is the duty of everyone in Istria to honour Tartini with a monument in his hometown that will remind future generations of his importance. For this reason, representatives of the entire region of Istria have joined together in the Regional Committee to honour Tartini with a monument worthy of his name and, at the same time, to demonstrate the region's advanced cultural awareness. The letter ends with an appeal to all municipalities, companies, associations and newspapers in Istria, Trieste, Gorizia and Trentino,

where the highest sense of national consciousness has not yet been extinguished (and hopefully never will be), the undersigned committee gladly believes, and indeed firmly holds the conviction, that even on this solemn occasion the province will give magnificent and

31 Duška Žitko, *El Tartini in piassa* (Piran: Pomorski muzej "Sergej Mašera", 2019), 43.

32 See *Ibid.*, 51–55, 69, 77–78.

33 SI PAK KP 390 Družinski fond Borisi. The Borisi family was a noble family admitted to the High Council of Koper at the beginning of the seventeenth century; from the early eighteenth century, the family held the title of count. See Giro and Bernich, *Blasonario giuliano*, 215–217; Bonin, *Vodnik po fondih in zbirkah pokrajinskega arhiva Koper*, 415.

34 SI PAK KP 390 Družinski fond Borisi, t. u. 8, "Letter from the Provincial Committee for Tartini's anniversary, 26 June 1890". The members of the administration of the Provincial Committee who signed the letter are President Giuseppe Bubba, Vice-Presidents Attilio Hortis and Pietro de Madonizza, Secretaries Michele Depangher and Domenico Vatta and Treasurer Nicolò Zarotti.

*solemn proof of its desire to preserve intact that glorious heritage which no people educated in civilizing intentions could ever do without.*³⁵

The following document is a handwritten letter from Giuseppe Bubba, chairman of the Provincial Committee for Tartini's anniversary, to committee member Giovanni Battista De Franceschi of Umag, dated 8 July 1890. In the letter, Bubba informs De Franceschi that the administration has prepared a letter addressed to the province and beyond³⁶ to emphasise that the erection of a monument to Tartini is of both provincial and supra-regional importance, as Tartini was "one of the men who most shaped the history of Istria"³⁷ and the project therefore requires broader support. To this end, Bubba encloses several copies of the letter and asks De Franceschi to distribute them to those he believes would be most supportive of the project and willing to contribute the necessary funds. He also suggests that De Franceschi consider whether the funds should be raised through a public collection or perhaps by organising a charitable cultural event.

The next document from the Borisi family collection shows that the necessary funds for the erection of the Tartini monument were in fact also raised through the organisation of various cultural events: it is an invitation to a grand concert [*grande concerto*] held on 19 March 1891 at the Rosetti Multipurpose Theatre [*Politeama Rosetti*] in Trieste, accompanied by an admission ticket and a cover letter. In the letter, the Trieste Promotional Committee for the Tartini Monument [*Comitato promotore del Monumento a Giuseppe Tartini*] invites all fellow citizens to attend the concert, stating that it is their duty "to contribute to honouring the genius and thus our region, which is rightly proud of the noble minds who have brought it fame".³⁸

35 "[...] dove non è spento ancora (e speriamo non sarà mai) il sentimento supremo della coscienza nazionale, l'infrascritto Comitato ama di credere, anzi tiene per fermo, che anche in questa solenne occasione la Provincia darà prova splendida e solenne di voler serbare intatto quel patrimonio di gloria, a cui nessun popolo educato a civili intendimenti, ha potuto mai rinunciare". SI PAK KP 390 Družinski fon Borisi, t. u. 8, "Letter from the Provincial Committee for Tartini's Anniversary, 26 June 1890", 2.

36 This refers to the printed letter from the administration of the Provincial Committee for Tartini's Anniversary presented above.

37 "[...] uno degli uomini che più illustrarono la storia dell'Istria [...]". SI PAK KP 390 Družinski fond Borisi, t. u. 8, "Letter from Giuseppe Bubba to Giovanni Battista De Franceschi, 8 July 1890", 1.

38 "[...] di contribuire all'omaggio fatto al genio e per esso a questa regione nostra, che meritamente si vanta di que' nobili intelletti che le diedero rinomanza". SI PAK KP 390 Družinski fond Borisi, t. u. 8, "Cover letter to the invitation to a concert to raise funds for the construction of a monument to Giuseppe Tartini, March 1891." The letter names Gustavo Wieselberger, Ruggero Berlam, Antonio Boccardi, Attilio Hortis, Giangiacomo Manzutto and Alberto Puschi as members of the Promotion Committee.



Figure 3: *Ticket to the concert to raise funds for the construction of a monument to Giuseppe Tartini, 19 March 1891.*³⁹

The last document from the Borisi family collection related to the erection of the Tartini monument contains the text of the hymn to Piran, written by Nazario Stradl for the ceremonial unveiling of the Tartini monument in August 1896.

As the documents show, the erection of the Tartini monument was not solely a project of the town of Piran; the committee for the monument's erection sought the broadest possible support. The committee justified this by arguing that Tartini was one of the most important and prominent Istrians, having made a significant contribution to the identity and recognition of the region, a conviction evident even in the aforementioned entry in Stancovich's *Biografie*. As part of its efforts to gain broad support for the erection of the Tartini monument, including financial support, the committee apparently also approached Istrian noble families who were potential candidates for providing much-needed funding and other support, including the Borisi family. Unfortunately, it is not clear from the documents reviewed how the family responded or how much they may have contributed to the project.

39 SI PAK KP 290 Družinski fond Borisi, t. u. 8, *Ticket to the concert to raise funds for the construction of a monument to Giuseppe Tartini, 19 March 1891.*

The unveiling of the monument to Tartini in Piran, although four years late, was undoubtedly a significant event that demonstrates that by the end of the nineteenth century, Tartini had truly become one of the central icons of Istrian cultural history. Cultural institutions from across Istria participated in the all-day cultural programme that accompanied the unveiling; numerous newspapers reported on the event and more than 4,660 passengers arrived in Piran for the ceremony by steamboat and other vessels. Finally, the monument itself bears the inscription that it was erected to Tartini by Istria [*L'Istria*].⁴⁰ The fact that the Trieste Conservatory was named after Tartini,⁴¹ although, as far as we know, he had no connection with Trieste and never visited the city, also shows that Tartini had attained extraordinary, pan-Istrian significance by the end of the nineteenth century.

Conclusions

Although we cannot generalise based on the limited number of documents examined, their presentation allows us to conclude with some certainty that Tartini was relatively well known in Koper in the nineteenth century, at least among the upper classes. The sources examined address all of the main areas of Tartini's musical activity – music theory, composition, performance and teaching – and identify him as one of the central cultural figures in Istria (and beyond) until the beginning of the twentieth century.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that each of the three sets of documents discussed reveals different aspects of and approaches to Tartini's reception, which changed significantly from the beginning to the end of the nineteenth century. Biscontini's *Trattatello* highlights one of Tartini's key theories, but only within a music-theoretical discussion and without broader social or national connections. Such connections are, however, very present in Stancovich's entry, in which Tartini is presented as one of the most prominent Istrians and a symbol of Istrian culture, and is thus included in the process of strengthening local (Istrian) identity. At the same time, in the context of building national (Italian) identity, he is presented as an integral part of Italian cultural heritage.

Social and national motives were ultimately at the forefront of the erection of the Tartini monument at the end of the nineteenth century, which can be seen as one of the most important events in strengthening the Italian cultural presence in Istria. At a time when the process of nation building was at its peak, often turning into increasingly aggressive nationalism, the search for and recognition of "great personalities" responsible for the existence and

40 Žitko, *El Tartni in piassa*, 77–78.

41 The Trieste Conservatory was founded in 1903 as a music lyceum [*liceo musicale*]. For more on the Trieste Conservatory, see Giuseppe Radole, *Le scuole musicali a Trieste e il Conservatorio "Giuseppe Tartini"* (Trieste: Edizioni Italo Svevo, 1992), 87–113.

legitimation of a nation and its culture was not unusual, and Tartini was by no means an isolated case in this respect. Similar processes of mythologisation and national appropriation occurred elsewhere; for example, the interest of Germans in Johann Sebastian Bach and Slovenians in Jacobus Handl - Gallus, around whom a national myth was also created, can largely be placed within this framework. The problem with such nineteenth-century historiographical paradigms was primarily that they labelled historical figures with national tags and placed them in contexts that were not relevant to the time of their actual activity.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that while knowledge of Tartini was limited to a relatively small circle of experts at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by the end of the century, Tartini was recognised as an important Istrian figure in the wider public consciousness. This raises the question of how deep the knowledge of his work actually was, and whether it was largely limited to recognition of Tartini's name and general awareness that he was an important musician. In this regard, it should also be noted that the documents discussed focus primarily on the reception of Tartini's life and work in the broadest sense, without providing any information about the dissemination or performance of his compositions, or their possible use in violin teaching in Koper in the nineteenth century. The question of the reception of Tartini's music and the performance of his works is undoubtedly interesting, but it would require much more extensive research, which goes beyond the scope of the present article.

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SUMMARY

The article explores the reception of Giuseppe Tartini in Koper during the nineteenth century through three selected groups of archival documents. It begins from the observation that Tartini – one of the central musical figures of the European Enlightenment – became an important cultural symbol of Istria several decades before the emergence of modern musicological research. The study shows that his reception throughout the nineteenth century was closely tied to broader social and national processes, especially the formation of local and, later, Italian national identity.

The first group of sources is the musical-pedagogical treatise *Trattatello dell'Arte del suono e del canto* [*Theoretical and Practical Treatise on the Art of Sound and Singing*] by Luigi Biscontini, probably written around 1836. Intended for teaching singing and the piano, the work also includes chapters on the theoretical foundations of harmony and counterpoint. When explaining the origins of chords, Biscontini adopts Rameau's ideas and refers to Tartini's "third tone", indicating that, in this case, Tartini was seen primarily as a theorist embedded in the broader context of eighteenth-century thought, rather than as a cultural emblem.

The second group of sources derives from the correspondence between Pietro Stancovich and Giannandrea Manzoni, who exchanged information for Stancovich's *Biografia degli uomini distinti dell'Istria* [*Biographies of Distinguished Istrians, 1828–1829*]. Stancovich's entry on Tartini emphasises the composer's moral virtues and fame, as well as his contribution to the prestige of Istria. Although the author follows the Enlightenment biographical model, he already hints at emerging processes of regional self-definition. Tartini is presented as one of the most distinguished Istrians, even though the focus remains on his life story rather than on a detailed knowledge of his music.

The third set of sources consists of documents related to the planning and erection of the Tartini monument in Piran (1896). These reveal strong national motivations: Tartini had become a symbol of Italian cultural presence in Istria, and the monument was conceived as a collective project of the entire province. Appeals for support stress Tartini's role as "one of the men who most shaped the history of Istria", transforming his image into a national myth characteristic of the era of intense nationalism.

Taken together, the three source groups show that Tartini's reception in the nineteenth century evolved from technical, music-theoretical reference to regional iconisation, and ultimately to national appropriation. Although the documents demonstrate significant interest in Tartini's personality, the actual knowledge and performance of his music in this period remains an open question.

POVZETEK

“Eden od mož, ki so najbolj zaznamovali zgodovino Istre”: vpogled v recepcijo Tartinija v Kopru v 19. stoletju

Članek odpira vprašanje recepcije Giuseppeja Tartinija v Kopru v 19. stoletju ob obravnavi treh izbranih skupin dokumentov iz koprskih hranišč. Izhaja iz ugotovitve, da je Tartini – ena osrednjih glasbenih osebnosti evropskega razsvetljenstva – postal pomemben kulturni simbol Istre že nekaj desetletij pred začetkom sodobnih muzikoloških raziskav. V razpravi je ob tem prikazano, da je bila recepcija Tartinija v 19. stoletju tesno povezana s širšimi družbenimi in nacionalnimi procesi, zlasti z oblikovanjem lokalne in kasneje italijanske nacionalne identitete.

Prvi obravnavani dokument je glasbeno-pedagoški traktat *Trattatello dell'Arte del suono e del canto* [Traktatek o umetnosti zvoka in petja] Luigija Biscontinija, ki je morda nastal okoli leta 1836. Spis, v osnovi namenjen poučevanju petja in klavirja, vključuje tudi poglavja o teoretičnih temeljih harmonije in kontrapunkta. Pri pojasnjevanju izvora akordov Biscontinij prevzema Rameaujeve ideje in omenja Tartinijev »tretji ton«, v tem okviru je bil Tartini obravnavan predvsem kot teoretik, vpet v širši kontekst glasbenoteoretske misli 18. stoletja, in ne kot kulturni ali nacionalni simbol.

Druga skupina virov je del korespondence med Pietrom Stancovichem in Giannandreo Manzoniem, ki sta si izmenjavala informacije za Stancovichovo delo *Biografia degli uomini distinti dell'Istria* [Življenjepisi izstopajočih Istranov, 1828-1829]. Stancovichevo geslo o Tartiniju poudarja skladateljeve moralne vrline in slavo ter njegov prispevek k prepoznavnosti Istre. Čeprav avtor pri pripravi gesla sledi razsvetljskemu biografskemu modelu, je njegovo besedilo že moč umestiti v okvir procesov oblikovanja regionalne in nato nacionalne identitete. Tartini je predstavljen kot eden najbolj uglednih Istranov, pri čemer poudarek ostaja na predstavitvi njegove življenjske zgodbe in ne na podrobnem poznavanju njegove glasbe.

Tretji sklop obravnavanih virov so dokumenti, povezani z načrtovanjem in postavitvijo Tartinijevega spomenika v Piranu (1896). Ti razkrivajo močne nacionalne motivacije: Tartini je postal simbol italijanske kulturne prisotnosti v Istri, spomenik pa je bil zasnovan kot skupni projekt celotne dežele. Pozivi k podpori izpostavljajo vlogo Tartinija kot »nega od mož, ki so najbolj zaznamovali zgodovino Istre«, s čimer se je njegova podoba spremenila v nacionalni mit, značilen za vrhunec obdobja oblikovanja modernih narodov.

Čeprav spričo omejenega števila obravnavanih virov zaključke težko posplošimo, vsebina dokumentov vendarle precej jasno kaže, kako se je recepcija Tartinija v 19. stoletju razvila od tehnične, glasbeno-teoretske obravnave do regionalne in slednjic nacionalne ikonizacije in apropiacije. Pri tem se v obravnavanih dokumentih izpostavlja predvsem recepcija Tartinijevega življenja in dela v najširšem smislu, zaradi česar ostaja vprašanje o recepciji njegove glasbe (poznavanje in izvedbe glasbenih del) v tem času odprto.

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