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1. Marechiare
2. Na Sera 'E Maggio
3. 'A Vucchella
4. Tu Ca Nun Chiagne!
5. Torna A Surriento
6. Core 'Ngrato
7. Guapparia
8. Senza Nisciuno
9. Maria Mari
10. Voce 'E Notte
11. I' Te Vurria Vasà
12. Chiove
13. 'O Sole Mio
14. Malafemmena
15. Parlami D'Amore Mariù



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Napulitano

NEAPOLITAN SONGS

ANDREW MORRIS
&
ANDREW KEEPING



Album Programme Notes

Canzone Napoletana are settings of poetry in Neapolitan, a Romance language, spoken in much of Southern Italy.

Neapolitan Song became a formal institution in the 1830's through the Annual songwriting competition for the festival of the Madonna of Piedigrotta. The Festival ran regularly up until the 1950's when it was abandoned.

In 1875 Francesco Paolo Tosti came to Britain where he was introduced to the higher levels of English society. In 1880 he was appointed singing teacher to the Royal Family. Tosti spent many summers at the Grand Hotel in Folkestone. A *vucchella* was composed there in 1907. The playful text focuses on a woman's mouth. "Give me a little kiss from your small mouth, like a little rose, just a bit withered".

Marechiaro is an area of Naples next to the sea. In the song *Marechiare* the poet says his passion leads him to a window. "Wake up Caroline, the air is sweet, to accompany my voice this evening I've brought a guitar."

'Na sera e maggio describes the end of a relationship. "On an evening in May you swore, with hand on heart, that you loved me. I'm still in love with you but you're thinking of another and forgetting about me."

Tu can nun chiagne and *Torna a Surriento* are inspired by the beauty of the Bay of Naples.

"Why do you want to leave Sorrento, the beauty of the sea, the smell of the orange groves? Come back to this land of love and let me live".

Tu ca nun chiagne describes the volcano Vesuvius, calm and beautiful in the moonlight. "You, who do not cry but make me cry, where are you tonight? I want you, these eyes need to see you again once more"

Salvatore Cardillo, the Neapolitan composer emigrated to the USA in 1903. *Core 'ngrato* tells of rejected love. A man confesses all to a priest who

advises him to let the girl, Catari, go. "Ungrateful heart, you've taken my life, it's all over and you no longer think about it."

Libero Bovio was an important figure in the rejuvenation of the Neapolitan language. He was a Director of the publishers Canzonetta, a firm dedicated to the promotion of Neapolitan music. Bovio's poem *Guapparia* or "the gang" tells how its leader has lost his honour and power because of his love for Margherita, the most beautiful woman in Arenella. Tonight he has drunk wine and hired a band of musicians to let her see his humiliation.

In *Senza nessuno* a boy has disobeyed his mother causing her grief and ultimately her death. He is now left alone without anyone.

Vincenzo Russo, the author of *Maria Mari* and *I te vurria vasa*, was in love with Henrietta Marchese, the daughter of a wealthy jeweller. In spite of their mutual love the family objected to her relationship with a poor poet. The songs are autobiographical. A man stands in the street hoping to catch a glimpse of Maria. He can't rest, his thoughts are only of hugging her. In *I te vurria vasa* Rosa is asleep in a beautiful garden. Her nice body and black hair arouses many sinful thoughts. "I want to kiss you but my heart for won't let me. I would like to fall asleep beside your breath for just one hour."

Voce e notte is also autobiographical. The poet Eduardo Nicolardi was in love with Anna Rossi. Her father insisted that she marry the 75 year old Pompeo Corbeo, a wealthy client. There was, however, a happy ending. After two years Corbeo died and Anna and Eduardo were able to marry.

In the song, the man says that, if in the night you are awoken by a voice as you lie in your husband's arms, pretend to be asleep. The voice is mine, the same voice I used when we began to speak intimately.

Bovio was inspired to write the song *Chiove* by the Neapolitan singer Elvira Donnarumma. She was known as the Capinere Napulitana. The capinere is a small songbird. "It has been raining for nine days. You are ill and dying and yet you still sing. You are a canary, you are my love, who even in death sings new songs."

"What a beautiful thing a sunny day is, the calm air after the storm". This is the opening of perhaps the most famous of Neapolitan songs *'O sole mio*. A lover's face is compared with that of the sun.

Malafemmena or bad woman was written by Antonio De Curtis in 1951 and dedicated to his ex-wife Diana Bandini. De Curtis was a Neapolitan actor who worked under the name Toto. A known philanderer, his relationship with his wife was difficult. "Woman, you are worse than a viper, you have intoxicated my soul. You are the most beautiful woman. I love you and I hate you. I can never forget you."

Although *Parlami, d'amore Mariu* is not a Neapolitan song, its composer was born in Naples. Cesare Bixio was one of the most prolific and popular Italian songwriters of the first half of the 20th Century. The song is dedicated to his wife Mariu or Mary. "Speak to me of love, Mary. You are my whole life."

Andrew Morris (2017)