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*Abstract*

The Neapolitan song is one of the first examples of an “urban” musical genre, based on that hybridization of different styles and matrices (art music, traditional music and music for dance) today usually called popular music. The first development of this repertoire took place between 1824, date of publication of Guglielmo Cottrau’s *Passatempi musicali*, which contained the first Neapolitan songs, and 1879, date of the death of Teodoro Cottrau, Guglielmo’s son, also a composer and publisher of Neapolitan songs. This paper analyses the small corpus of Neapolitan songs written by Gaetano Donizetti in the “embryonic” phase of this period (particularly in the 1830s), placing them in the context of the first Neapolitan *canzoni d’autore* by other composers such as Maria Malibran, Luigi Siri and Francesco Florimo. Regarding this repertoire, detailed information on the various editions, dating and attribution of the lyrics is provided, thanks to the cross-checking of the various primary sources. An essential discography of Donizetti’s Neapolitan songs, performed by various Italian and foreign singers, is included.