48

Così fan tutte

On his return to Vienna, Mozart set to work at once on the first of the six quartets that Friedrich Wilhelm II had commissioned from him: K575 in D major was completed in June and sent off to Berlin, eliciting in return a gold snuffbox containing one hundred friedrichs d'or and a flatteringly worded accompanying letter.[1] None the less, Mozart's situation was by now extremely desperate, with Constanze so ill that he was 'constantly torn between fear and hope' and had to send her to the health resort of Baden, incurring an expense that weighed increasingly heavily on him, not least because his attempts to organize subscription concerts at his own home proved unsuccessful. The hopelessness of his situation is clear from his letters to his friend Michael Puchberg, to whom we find him writing on 12 July:

> God! I wouldn't wish my present situation on my worst enemy; and if you, most beloved friend and brother, abandon me, I shall *unfortunately – and through no fault of my own* – be lost, together with my poor sick wife and child. – Only recently, when I was with you, I wanted to pour out my heart to you – only I didn't have the heart to do so! – indeed, I still wouldn't have the heart . . . were I not certain that you know me and are aware of my circumstances and are fully convinced of my *innocence* as far as my unfortunate and utterly deplorable situation is concerned. O God! instead of thanks, I come to you with fresh entreaties! . . . If you really know me, you will share my anguish at having to do so.[2]

A few days later, Constanze seemed to be getting better:

> I am now feeling more inclined to work – but on the other hand I see myself faced by misfortunes of another kind, even if only for the present! – Dearest, most beloved friend and brother – you know my *present circumstances*, but you *also* know *my prospects*; let things remain as we agreed; *thus* or *thus*, you understand me; – meanwhile I'm writing 6 easy keyboard sonatas for Princess Friederika and 6 quartets for the king, all of which Kozeluch is engraving at my expense; at the same time, the 2 dedications will bring me in something; within a couple of months my fate must have been decided *in every detail*, and so, my dearest of friends, you won't be taking a risk with me; now, my only friend, it depends simply on whether you're willing and able to lend me another 500 florins.[3]

1. *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung*, x/5 (30 January 1856), 35. ◆ This claim is incorrect: although Mozart entered K575 in his thematic catalogue in June 1789, there is no evidence that a copy was sent to Berlin or that he received payment for it. When he sold the three quartets K575, 589 and 590 to Artaria in 1790, Mozart wrote to Puchberg, 'I have now been obliged to give away my quartets (those very difficult works) for a mere song, simply in order to have cash in hand to meet my present difficulties' (letter of 12 June 1790, *Briefe*, iv.110). He is unlikely to have done so if the work had been commissioned – and paid for – by Friedrich Wilhelm II. In any event, Mozart – as Abert notes – had written to Puchberg as early as 12 July 1789 that he expected an honorarium from the king only after the quartets' publication.
2. *Briefe*, iv.92 (letter of 12 July 1789).

Although Mozart promised to repay this sum at a rate of ten florins a month until his affairs were settled – he seems to have pinned his hopes either on Berlin or on an imperial commission in Vienna – Puchberg was evidently not in a position to advance such a large sum of money. As a result he delayed replying for a few days, plunging Mozart into a further state of consternation:

> You must be angry with me as you haven't replied to my letter! – When I compare the proofs of your friendship with my present demands, I think that you're perfectly right. But when I compare my misfortunes (for which I'm not to blame) with your friendly attitude towards me, I think that I deserve to be forgiven. My dear friend, in my last letter I told you quite openly all that was burdening my heart, so there would be nothing left for me now but to repeat all that I said then; but I must add, 1st, that I'd not require such a large sum if I didn't have to pay the horrendous expenses of my wife's treatment, especially if she has to go to Baden; 2nd, I'm sure that my circumstances will soon change for the better, and so the sum that I have to repay is a matter of great indifference, but for the present I'd prefer it to be a large sum, which would make me feel more secure; 3rd, I must ask you – if it really is completely impossible to help me with this sum on this occasion – to show your friendship and brotherly love for me by supporting me now with *as much as you can spare*, for I really am in great need; you certainly can't doubt my integrity, you know me too well for that; – nor can you distrust what I say or question my behaviour and way of life, as you know my lifestyle and conduct; – forgive me, then, for confiding in you.[4]

'I really am very unhappy!' he added in a postscript. And this mood refused to leave him:

> Since the time you did me such a great favour as a friend, I have been living in such *misery* that for very grief I have not only been unable to go out, I have also been unable to write. – She [Constanze] is now calmer . . . she is extraordinarily resigned to her fate and awaits recovery or death with true philosophical composure, I'm writing this with tears in my eyes. – Come and visit us, my dear friend, if you can; and if you *can*, help us in word and deed in the matter *of which you know*.[5]

Constanze had indeed gone to take the waters at Baden, where she quickly recovered, as emerges from a letter that Mozart wrote to her during the first half of August,[6] a letter that is also eloquent proof of the fact that whenever the typical Weber temperament was spurred into action by some external occurrence she immediately lost sight of all sense of moral duty. Her frivolous behaviour in Baden merely added to Mozart's burden of care. 'I'm delighted when you're happy, of course I am,' he wrote to her, 'I only wish you didn't carry on in such a vulgar way.' And he went on to complain that an acquaintance of his who normally had the greatest respect of women had written

3. ◆ *Briefe*, iv.92 (letter of 12 July 1789).
4. *Briefe*, iv.94 (letter of 17 July 1789). At the foot of the letter, Puchberg added the note: 'Replied to same on 17 July and sent 150 florins.'
5. ◆ *Briefe*, iv.95 (letter of second half of July 1789).
6. *Briefe*, iv.96–7 (letter written before mid-August 1789). On the chronology of this and the following letters, see Spitta, 'Zur Herausgabe der Briefe Mozarts', 401–5 and 417–21.

'the most disgusting and crudest sottises' about her. In a moving appeal, he asked her to forgive him for being so honest,

> but my peace of mind demands it as much as our mutual happiness. . . . Remember, too, the promise that you gave me – O God! – just try, my love! – be happy and contented and do what you can to please me – don't torment us both with unnecessary jealousy – trust in my love, you've enough proof of it – and you'll see how happy we'll be, believe me, only by her prudent actions can a wife bind her husband to her.[7]

Mozart went to visit Constanze at Baden, evidently in order to discuss his feelings in person, but no sooner had he returned to Vienna than he was already writing again to express his fears: 'My love! – *Never* go out walking alone – the very thought of it appals me.'[8]

This period of financial misery and personal unhappiness coincided with the revival of *Le nozze di Figaro* in Vienna on 29 August, for which Mozart wrote an additional aria for Adriana Ferrarese del Bene.[9] In the course of the next three months he also wrote three insertion arias for Louise Villeneuve: 'Alma grande e nobil core' K578 for Cimarosa's *I due baroni*, 'Chi sà qual sia' K582 for Martín y Soler's *Il burbero di buon cuore* and 'Vado, ma dove?' K583 for the same work. For his sister-in-law Josepha Hofer he wrote the aria 'Schon lacht der holde Frühling' K580 for insertion in Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*; and for Francesco Benucci he wrote the aria 'Rivolgete a lui lo squardo' K584, which he originally intended for *Così fan tutte*. Otherwise, this bleak period produced only a meagre crop of works that consisted of the keyboard sonata in D major K576 of July 1789 (the only one of the six that he completed for Princess Friederike of Prussia); the clarinet quintet in A major K581 that he completed on 29 September 1789; and twelve minuets and twelve German dances dating from the December of that year (K585 and 586).

The success of *Le nozze di Figaro*[10] served to remind the emperor of Mozart's existence, with the result that he was invited to write a new opera. The result was a setting of Da Ponte's *Così fan tutte ossia La scuola degli amanti*.[11] 'It was not in his power to turn down the commission, and the libretto was expressly forced upon him', Niemetschek wrote, half apologetically.[12] By December we find Mozart hard at work on the score. The two hundred ducats that he was promised for it and that he later received were enough for him to approach his friend Michael Puchberg with the request for a further loan, which he claimed to need urgently in view of the 'apothecaries and

7. ◆ *Briefe*, iv.96–7.
8. *Briefe*, iv.97 (letter of ?19 August 1789).
9. ◆ 'Al desio di chi t'adora', K577.
10. It was performed 11 times in 1789 (on 29 and 31 August, 2, 11 and 19 September, 3, 9 and 24 October, 5, 13 and 27 November). In 1790 it was seen 14 times, and in 1791 3 times. ◆ In 1790, *Figaro* was performed on 8 January, 1, 7, 9 and 30 May, 22 and 26 June, 24 and 26 July, 22 August, 3 and 25 September, and 11 October; in 1791 it was given on 4 and 20 January and 9 February. See Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna*.
11. Da Ponte mentions it only briefly in his *Memorie*, ii.109.
12. Niemetschek, *Leben des k. k. Kapellmeisters Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart*, 29. According to Heinse, *Reise- und Lebens-Skizzen nebst dramaturgischen Blättern*, i.184–5, the libretto was based on a real-life incident that the emperor explicitly wanted to have dramatized. ◆ The idea that *Così* was inspired by a real-life incident is now generally discredited. By the same token it is likely that Mozart, who was apparently not the first choice to set Da Ponte's libretto, welcomed the commission: probably it was originally intended for Salieri, who wrote one trio and the vocal line of another before giving up the composition; see Bruce Alan Brown and Rice, 'Salieri's "Così fan tutte"'. According to a later reminiscence of Constanze's, 'Salieri first tried to set this opera but failed, and the great success of Mozart in accomplishing what he could make nothing of is supposed to have excited his envy and hatred, and have been the first origin of his enmity and malice towards Mozart'; see Medici and Hughes, *A Mozart Pilgrimage*, 127.

doctors' who would have to be paid in the New Year.[13] In the same letter he also invited Puchberg and Haydn to attend 'a little opera rehearsal' in his rooms on 31 December, ending by mentioning 'Salieri's plots which have, however, already come to nothing'. The first orchestral rehearsal took place in the Burgtheater on 21 January 1790, followed on the 26th[14] by the first performance, with the following cast:

Fiordiligi Dorabella	Dame Ferraresi e sorelle abitanti in Napoli	Sgra. Ferraresi del Bene. Sgra. L. Villeneuve.
Guillelmo Ferrando	amanti delle medesime	Sign. Benucci. Sign. Calvesi.
Despina cameriera		Sigra. Bussani.
Don Alfonso vecchio filosofo		Sign. Bussani.

The opera appears to have been a success,[15] even though it did not remain in the repertory for long.[16] Zinzendorf noted in his diary: 'La musique de Mozart charmante et le sujet assez amusant.'[17] Otherwise we know nothing about the opera's genesis and staging. The plot is as follows:

Two young officers from Naples,[18] Ferrando (tenor) and Guglielmo (bass), are engaged to be married to the sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella. At the local coffee-house the officers become embroiled in an argument with their friend Don Alfonso, who doubts whether their fiancées, if put to the test, will prove faithful. Women's fidelty, he maintains, is a phoenix that no one has yet seen.[19] Finally they decide on a wager, with the two officers promising to do all that Don Alfonso tells them to do in the next twenty-four hours in order to test the two women, but without giving anything away. A day is long enough for Don Alfonso to prove his point and tempt the women into being unfaithful. The two officers are confident of success and already look forward to the celebrations that they plan to hold with their winnings of one hundred zecchini.

We now meet the two young women, who are lost in rapt contemplation of portraits of their lovers. Don Alfonso enters to report that the latter have to go off to the front with their regiment, resulting in a touching farewell accompanied by the most impassioned assurances that they will

13. *Briefe*, iv.100 (letter of December 1789). ◆ Although Mozart claimed to have been offered 200 ducats, records show that he received only 100, the standard fee for an opera at the time; see Edge, 'Mozart's fee for "Così fan tutte"'.
14. The date of 16 January in the *Wiener Zeitung*, ix (30 January 1790), appendix [*Dokumente*, 318, *Documentary Biography*, 362], is a printing error; see Wlassak, *Chronik des k. k. Hof-Burgtheaters*, 67.
15. See *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (March 1790), 148–9: 'I can again announce an excellent work to you, which has been taken up by our theatre. Yesterday, that is, it was given for the first time at the I. & R. National Theatre. It is entitled *Cosi* [*sic*] *fan tutte, o sia, la Scuola degli Amanti* . . . . That the music is by Mozart says, I believe, everything' [*Dokumente*, 318–9, *Documentary Biography*, 363].
16. It was performed on 26, 28, 30 January, 7, 11 February, then – following the period of national mourning following the death of Joseph II – 6, 12 June, 6, 16 July and 7 August, after which date it disappeared from the stage. ◆ This was not, however, a reflection on the success of the opera, as is sometimes claimed; rather it it was a result of the court theatres' reorganization under the new emperor, Leopold II; see Rice, 'Emperor and impresario: Leopold II and the transformation of Viennese musical theater, 1790–1792' and 'Leopold II, Mozart, and the return to a Golden Age'. Records show that the first performance of *Così* was more heavily attended than any other première in the 1789/90 operatic year; see Edge, 'Mozart's reception in Vienna, 1787–1791'.
17. Pohl, *Joseph Haydn*, ii.125.
18. 'Trieste', mentioned in act one, scene nine, was later changed to 'Napoli'.
19. Alfonso's words 'È la fede delle femmine / Come l'araba fenice: / Che vi sia, ciascun lo dice, / Dove sia, nessun lo sa' ('Woman's constancy is like the Arabian Phoenix: everyone swears it exists, but no one knows where') are taken from act two, scene three of Metastasio's *Demetrio*, where 'delle femmine' appears as 'degli amanti'. The lines were set as a canon by Metastasio himself.

remain faithful. A military march with chorus[20] frames the officers' departure. The sobbing of the lovers is accompanied by Alfonso's gloating laughter.

Despina, the sisters' maid, advises them not to take their separation too seriously but to find ways of amusing themselves: men's inconstancy deserves no better.[21] Alfonso bribes Despina into helping two strangers, who are in love with the sisters, to gain entry to the house. Ferrando and Guglielmo now appear, disguised as Albanian noblemen with long beards, and proceed to declare their love for the horrified young women. In spite of all attempts to mediate on the part of Don Alfonso, who pretends to be a good friend of the two strangers, the women remain steadfast and finally refuse to have anything more to do with their suitors. To the delight of the two officers, the first assault on their virtue has successfully been fought off, leaving Alfonso to hatch a new plot with Despina.

While the two sisters are strolling around their garden, lost in thoughts of their lovers, the two Albanians come rushing in and, to the women's horror, pretend to take poison. Alfonso and Despina hurry off in search of a doctor, while pity for the two men, who appear to be in the throes of death, begins to stir in the sisters' hearts. Alfonso returns with Despina, now disguised as a doctor, and the two sisters have to hold the patients' heads while Despina attempts to cure them by magnetizing out the poison à la Mesmer. The two men return to life, twitching convulsively, and finally ask for a kiss. The first-act finale ends with the women's indignation at this request and a scene of general confusion.

The second act begins with Despina attempting to persuade her employers to abandon their restraint and indulge in a little flirtation. Immediately afterwards Dorabella tells Guglielmo that she is not averse to the idea, a declaration echoed by Fiordiligi in conversation with Ferrando. In a garden by the sea, the Albanians greet the sisters with a serenade, after which Alfonso and Despina bring about a reconciliation. Guglielmo has no difficulty in winning Dorabella's love. He gives her a golden heart and in return receives Ferrando's portrait. Ferrando has more difficulty winning over Fiordiligi: although she is inwardly torn, she finally spurns his advances and vows to resist temptation.

The two friends exchange experiences, which causes great distress to Ferrando, who is still devoted to Dorabella. Don Alfonso demands a new assault on Fiordiligi, who bitterly reproaches her sister for her infidelity and decides to disguise herself as a man and follow her lover into battle. But while she is preparing to leave, Ferrando rushes in, begging her to kill him before she abandons him. This is too much for Fiordiligi, who is overcome by compassion, with the result that, vanquished, she sinks upon his breast. Now it is Guglielmo's turn to be beside himself with anger. Both men decide to break off their engagements, and it is only with difficulty that Don Alfonso persuades them to accept his philosophical credo: 'Così fan tutte' ('All women are like that'). They agree to marry their fiancées but first plan to punish them for their infidelity. At that point Despina announces that the women have decided to marry their new lovers that very evening and that she has been sent to find a notary.

It is in fact Despina herself who now arrives disguised as a notary in order to read out the terms of the marriage contract at the ensuing banquet. Scarcely has it been signed when we hear the march and chorus from the opening act and Alfonso announces the return of the sisters' old

20. In the autograph score the march is initially played by the orchestra alone, entering *piano*, with a crescendo in its second section; only at the repeat does the chorus enter *forte*.
21. This scene was originally intended to begin with a cavatina for Despina, or so it would appear from a note appended to the recitative, 'Dopo la cavatina di Despina'. But Mozart then deleted these words, evidently because a better place had been found for Despina's aria.

lovers. The Albanians and the notary are quickly concealed, and the women, mortified and embarrassed, welcome back their fiancés. Don Alfonso then pretends to discover the notary in the next room, and Despina reveals her true identity, claiming that she is on her way home from a masked ball. But when Guglielmo comes across the marriage contract, the sisters are forced to confess. Their lovers then reveal themselves as the Albanians, with Guglielmo returning Ferrando's portrait to the melody of his earlier love duet with Dorabella, and with both men acknowledging Despina as the ostensible doctor. Alfonso reconciles the lovers and brings the opera to an end on a note of Enlightenment morality:

Fortunato l'uom che prende
Ogni cosa pel buon verso,
E tra i casi e le vicende
Da ragion guidar si fa.
Quel che suole altrui far piangere
Fia per lui cagion di riso,
E del mondo in mezzo i turbini
Bella calma troverà.

[Happy is the man who looks at everything on the right side and through trials and tribulations makes reason his guide. All that makes another man weep will for him be a cause of mirth and amid the tempests of this world he will find sweet peace.]

During Mozart's lifetime, the opera was staged in both Prague, by Guardasoni,[22] and in Dresden, where it was the first of his operas to be performed.[23] On both occasions it was given in the original Italian. Shortly afterwards Guardasoni took the Prague production to Leipzig. The Berlin production opened on 3 August 1792 under the title *Eine macht's wie die andern* (literally, 'One woman is just like the rest')[24] and was merely the first in a long series of German translations and adaptations. In 1805, for example, the work was published in Berlin in Bretzner's translation as *Weibertreue, oder Die Mädchen sind von Flandern* ('Women's Fidelity, or The Girls are from Flanders') – this version was first heard in Leipzig in 1794.[25] In 1820 Carl Alexander Herklots's adaptation appeared under the title *Die verfängliche Wette* ('The Insidious Wager'). In 1825 the older version was used for a production at the Königstädtisches Theater,[26] but in 1831, 1832 and 1835 this was replaced by a new one by Carl August Ludwig von Lichtenstein.[27] This in turn was followed by Louis Schneider's version, *So machen es alle* ('That's how they all do it'), of 1846.[28] Much the same story was found in Vienna, where Gieseke's translation – staged at the Theater auf der Wieden in 1794 as *Die Schule der Liebe* ('The School of Love') – gave way to *Mädchentreue* ('Girls' Fidelity') at the Hoftheater on 19 September 1804. By 1814 the Theater an der Wien was staging Treitschke's adaptation *Die Zauberprobe* ('The Magic Trial'). In 1819 and 1840 the earlier translation was again used, with Schneider's version being preferred in 1863 and again on 18

22. Teuber, *Geschichte des Prager Theaters*, ii.268.
23. *AmZ*, xiv (1812), 189, and xvi (1814), 154.
24. Louis Schneider, *Geschichte der Oper und des Königlichen Opernhauses in Berlin*, 61.
25. Schneider, *Geschichte der Oper*, 76.
26. *AmZ*, xxviii (1826), 26; *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, iii (1826), 12–13.
27. Wolzogen, 'Mozarts "Così fan tutte" auf der deutschen Bühne', 137–8.
28. *AmZ*, xlviii (1846), 870.

October 1872 – the first performance in the new house. In Prague the opera was staged in 1808 as *Mädchentreue*[29] and in 1823 as *Die Zauberprobe*,[30] on both occasions in evident emulation of Vienna. In 1831 it was heard in Czech[31] and in 1839 in Italian, this time in a performance by pupils from the local conservatory.[32] In Leipzig, too, it was staged as *Weibertreue* in 1805,[33] reaching Dresden in Italian in 1830.[34] Of other German towns and cities, suffice it to mention: Breslau on 16 January 1795 (in Bretzner's version);[35] Frankfurt in 1796 (Stegmann's adaptation, *Liebe und Versuchung* ['Love and Temptation'], had already been staged in the city as early as 1791);[36] Stuttgart on 16 May 1796 as *Die Wette oder Mädchenlist und Liebe* ('The Wager or Girls' Cunning and Love') (in 1816 it was revived in a version by Krebel as *Mädchen sind Mädchen* ['Girls are Girls']);[37] and Weimar, where the opera was adapted by Christian August Vulpius as *So sind sie alle, alle* ('That's how they all are, all of them') and first staged on 10 January 1797.[38] In Paris it was performed by the Italian Opera at the Odéon in 1811, 1817 and 1820, each time to great acclaim.[39] In 1863 Barbier and Carré attempted to adapt the music to a new text based on Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. Needless to say, the result, *Les peines d'amour perdues*, was a failure.[40] In England *Così fan tutte* was first heard in Italian in 1811, followed in 1828 by an English version [probably] by Samuel James Arnold.[41] The Italian Opera staged it in 1842[?]. Italy itself proved typically resistant to the work. La Scala performed it on 19 September 1807, when it was a success, and again on 31 May 1814, when it was a failure.[42] It was seen at the Teatro del Fondo in Naples during the 1815 carnival[43] and in Turin in 1816.[44] The Teatro del Fondo made a further attempt to revive the work during the summer of 1870.[45]

Although the music was much admired, the text soon came in for criticism. It found a number of eulogists among the Romantics,[46] it is true, foremost among whom was E. T. A. Hoffmann, who considered it genuinely operatic.[47] But the anonymous judgement passed on the piece in 1792 continues to affect perceptions of it even today: 'The present singspiel is the silliest thing in the world, and audiences attend performances of it only out of respect for the admirable composi-

29. *AmZ*, x (1808), 409.
30. *AmZ*, xxv (1823), 428. ◆ Probably the second Prague staging (as *Die Zauberprobe*) was on 7 March 1815, not in 1823; see Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera*, 477.
31. *AmZ*, xxxiii (1831), 222.
32. *AmZ*, xl (1838), 440; Branberger, *Das Konservatorium für Musik in Prag*, 60.
33. *AmZ*, viii (1806), 240.
34. *AmZ*, xxxii (1830), 375; Heinse, *Reise- und Lebens-Skizzen*, i.183–4.
35. Schlesinger, *Geschichte des Breslauer Theaters*, 75.
36. Carl Valentin, *Geschichte der Musik in Frankfurt am Main vom Anfange des XIV. bis zum Anfange des XVIII. Jahrhunderts*, 25–6.
37. Krauß, *Das Stuttgarter Hoftheater von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart*, 102. ◆ According to Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera*, 477, the translation was by Johann Baptist Krebs and the opera opened on 7 January 1817.
38. On 15 May 1797 Goethe's mother wrote: 'The opera Cosa van Tutti [*sic*] – or that's how they all are – is said to have gained so much in Weimar through the improved text – the one we have here is frightful – and so it's this improved text that Herr Bernhardt asks you to send him'; see Burckhardt, *Das Repertoire des Weimarer Theaters unter Goethes Leitung*, 144; and *Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft*, iv (1889), 126.
39. *AmZ*, xiii (1811), 526 and 720; xix (1817), 550; xxii (1820), 813.
40. Wilder, *Mozart: L'homme et l'artiste*, 270.
41. Under the title *Tit for Tat*; see Pohl, *Mozart und Haydn in London*, 146–7; Parke, *Musical Memoirs*, ii.259. ◆ Further, see Angermüller, 'Von Salieris und Mozarts "Così fan tutte" über "Die zwey Tanten aus Meyland" – "Tit for tat; or The Tables Turned" – "Die Guerillas" – "Winzer und Sänger" zu "Dame Kobold". Metamorphosen eines Librettos'. Concerning an early American adaptation, see Clark, 'The enlightened transposition: "Così fan tutte" in colonial America, Philadelphia, 1785'.
42. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778–1906*, 300 and 304.
43. Florimo, *La scuola musicale di Napoli e i suoi conservatorii*, iv.368.
44. *AmZ*, xviii (1816), 895. ◆ According to Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera*, 454, *Così* was first given at Turin in the autumn of 1815.
45. Florimo, *La scuola musicale di Napoli*, iv.398.
46. Notably in the 'Musical Correspondence' published in the *Berlinische musikalische Zeitung*, i (1805), 293–4, where the opera is hailed as the epitome of genuine irony.
47. Hoffmann, *Die Serapionsbrüder*, i/2.1.

tion.'[48] Improbability and frivolousness were the chief reproaches traditionally levelled against the text, and the various adaptations have all attempted to counter what they perceived as this twofold 'evil'. In his *Zauberprobe*, Treitschke turned Alfonso into a sorcerer and Despina into a spirit of the air, while Krebs had the two men make their bet only after their return from a long journey and before they had seen their fiancées again. In this version, Despina undertakes to cure them herself, without assuming any disguise, and at the end a real notary appears, whom she later introduces as her lover. The plot was completely changed in this way, and virtually all the musical numbers were traduced and wrenched from their context. In Herklots's version[49] the sisters are not even tested by their lovers but – with their agreement – by two friends. A servant Pedrillo appears as doctor and notary. In Lichtenstein's version, the maid reveals the whole of Alfonso's plan to her employers right at the very outset, so that it is the men who are now led by the nose. Much the same is true of Arnold's version.[50] In the adaptation by Louis Schneider, this betrayal takes place only in the second act, with the sisters now feigning weakness in order to punish their lovers.[51] These are all desperate remedies that effectively destroyed the piece. Among other suggestions that deserve to be taken more seriously is the one by Oulibicheff,[52] who proposed that the sisters' second choice be regarded as definitive, thereby making good a twofold injustice and allowing the work to end on a traditional note, with the tenor ultimately marrying the prima donna and the baritone being paired off with the seconda donna (an arrangement which is, in fact, not true in the case of *opera buffa*). In the version that he published in Stuttgart in 1858, Bernhard Gugler had each of the officers test his own lover, a change that likewise required a number of alterations to the musical numbers.[53] The most radical adaptations are those by librettists who set the existing music to completely different texts: here one thinks above all of the Shakespearean setting by Barbier and Carré (see above) and, more recently, the version of Karl Scheidemantel, whose *Die Dame Kobold*, first staged in Dresden in 1909, borrowed its subject matter from Calderón.[54]

All these attempts to adapt the piece commit the same basic mistake of trying to salvage Mozart's music by more or less depriving it of its actual basis, namely, its text. In the case of a dramatist like Mozart, this can only be a bad thing. Whatever we may think of the libretto, this is the text that fired his imagination and inspired this particular music, with all its specific qualities, so that we shall not salvage the music by robbing it of this basis but will merely render it meaningless and, by preferring some cheap and superficial solution, deprive ourselves of the pleasure afforded by an organic, unified work of art.

Every reader familiar with *opera buffa* will have no difficulty in rejecting the two main charges of frivolity and implausibility. We need to stop demanding that such operas should be moralistic in tone. Women's fickleness was one of its oldest and most popular themes, and one to which it repeatedly brought new variants with its typical lack of moral scruples. Martín y Soler's successful

48. *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (1792), 404; see also Hanslick, *Die moderne Oper*, 45.
49. In this form the opera was staged in Berlin in 1820; in Braunschweig in 1822 (*AmZ*, xxiv (1822), 378); in Kassel and Stuttgart in 1823 (*AmZ*, xxv (1823), 450 and 766); and in Munich in 1824 (*AmZ*, xxvi (1824), 588).
50. Hogarth, *Memoirs of the Opera*, ii.188–9. The Danish version by Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger turned the subject matter on its head; see Oehlenschläger's *Meine Lebens-Erinnerungen*, i.121 and iv.43–4.
51. This version continues to enjoy the greatest success even today and is the one published by Breitkopf & Härtel in its series of opera librettos (no. 230).
52. Oulibicheff, *Mozarts Opern*, 254ff.
53. Gugler's translation remains the most successful. Among more recent versions, two that deserve to be mentioned here are those by Carl Friedrich Niese for the complete edition and by Schletterer for Breitkopf & Härtel's *Textbibliothek* edition (no. 19).
54. ◆ Further concerning early adaptations of the text, see Gruber, *Mozart and Posterity* and Goehring, *Three Modes of Perception in Mozart: The Philosophical, Pastoral and Comic in Così fan tutte*, especially 1–28. For French adaptations specifically, see Angermüller, 'Bemerkungen zu französischen Bearbeitungen des 19. Jahrhunderts'.

Una cosa rara falls effortlessly into this category. But even the most implausible twists of the plot were not only accepted as part of the deal, audiences even took a positive delight in them, always assuming, of course, that they were theatrically effective and powerful in their impact. And it is here that the most egregious weaknesses of the present text are to be found, with the plot being advanced in a way that is awkward, lame and wearisome in its repetitions. These shortcomings are particularly keenly felt in the second act, with its two similar seduction scenes[55] and its superficial treatment of the structurally important quartet ('La mano a me date'). Italian *opera buffa* is far less able to cope with these shortcomings than it can with even the worst violations of sound common sense, and from this point of view the criticisms of the libretto are fully justified. As such, it provides clear proof that Da Ponte was not a creative writer and that his strength lay in reworking and adapting other writers' ideas. Here we spend an entire evening in the company of the librettist responsible for the additions to Bertati's *Don Giovanni*, a poet familiar with the tried and tested stereotypes and motifs from *opera buffa* and able on that basis to develop a new plot requiring only modest skill and scant powers of invention. Apart from the basic idea, virtually everything is modelled on well-known prototypes, including the characters of the notary and doctor,[56] who acquires a contemporary gloss only through his association with Mesmer's magnetism. The other stock characters are the cunning chambermaid and the 'vecchio filosofo', whose insipid rationalism was still effective at this time. Other old friends are Guglielmo's diatribe against women ('Donne mie, la fate a tanti'), Despina's philippic against men ('In uomini! In soldati'), Dorabella's outburst against the rogue Cupid ('È amore un ladroncello') and Despina's thoughts on the right way to love ('Una donna a quindici anni'). Equally typical of *opera buffa* is the role played by eating and drinking, by *Tafelmusik*, serenades and individual examples of tone-painting such as beating hearts ('Il core vi dono' and 'È amore un ladroncello'), but above all we find one of the favourite themes of *opera buffa*, namely the parody of *opera seria*, a theme that is barely represented in *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. Among the features that appear under this heading are the quotation from Metastasio,[57] Dorabella's aria about the Eumenides ('Smanie implacabili che m'agitate'), Fiordiligi's simile aria ('Come scoglio immoto resta') and most of the scenes in which the two officers, in disguise, feign love and which were traditionally set as accompanied recitatives. Related to these scenes is the one is which the two men take poison, a popular idea that conceals a dig at death scenes in *opera seria*. A final feature that deserves to be mentioned here is the delight in learned mythological references, as in act two, scene thirteen.[58]

In short, Viennese audiences must have been struck by the libretto's distinct lack of novelty. And there was another reason why many listeners will have found it reactionary, as Da Ponte avoided

55. Here improvements can be made by means of cuts, as was the case under Leopold Sachse at the Stadttheater in Halle an der Saale in 1917, but this is the only way of making the work 'more accessible' to modern audiences without destroying its basic character.

56. Cf. the Dottore in act one, scene eleven of Piccinni's *Il curioso di se stesso* [presumably Abert means *Il curioso del suo proprio danno* of 1755/6]; in the first-act finale of Piccinni's *Lo sposo burlato*; and Luigi's aria in act two, scene three of Piccinni's *La bella verità*; and the notary in act two, scene ten of Piccinni's *La notte critica* and in act two, scene eight of Pietro Alessandro Guglielmi's *I cacciatori*.

57. Now a symbol of rejuvenation, the phoenix was then predominantly an emblem of something that had never existed or that was otherwise inconceivable; cf. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's setting of Johann Adolf Schlegel's *Der Phönix* (1782 or earlier) and the second-act finale of Guglielmi's *L'azzardo*. ◆ Abert's reference to *Der Phönix* is a mystery: no such work by C. P. E. Bach is known. Possibly, however, he means *Phillis und Thirsis*, published in 1766 and based on a text by Johann Elias Schlegel, brother of Johann Adolf. No other Schegel settings by Bach – by either brother – are known. I am indebted to Mark Knoll for this information.

58. ◆ Further, see Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna* and Farnsworth, '*Così fan tutte* as Parody and Burlesque'.

the element of sentimentality that had been traditional since Piccinni's day, preferring instead to restrict himself to the older, purer type of *opera buffa*. From this point of view, *La finta giardiniera* was a far more 'modern' piece.

How, one wonders, did the composer of *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* come to set such a text, especially since its lack of originality and dramatic skill could hardly have been lost on him? And did this opera represent no more than a return to a style that he had long since abandoned, just as was to be the case with *La clemenza di Tito* in the field of *opera seria*? Or does it reflect a new aspect of his artistry?

The unease that many people have felt both in the past and more recently is no doubt understandable, as it reflects the widespread tendency to see a great artist's development as a clearly visible straight line that always runs in the same direction. As a result, there have been the most varied attempts to excuse this apparent lapse from the straight and narrow. Foremost among such excuses, inevitably, is Mozart's allegedly uncritical attitude towards his texts, while others writers, taking their cue from Niemetschek, have drawn attention to the predicament in which the composer is said to have found himself at this time. But it is hard to accept that, if the libretto had not had some appeal for him, he would have accepted it unseen and not asked for some alternative. Nor does his score reveal the least sign of embittered forced labour. Rather, he took on the commission whole-heartedly, otherwise it would undoubtedly have suffered the same fate as *L'oca del Cairo* and *Lo sposo deluso*.

It is always dangerous to judge the work of a creative genius by the norms of lesser mortals. After all, there are plenty of examples in the history of art in which artists suddenly depart from the course that they have been following, appearing to play games with their life's work and leaving posterity to detect any sense of intellectual unity. That we cannot judge an *opera buffa* by its moral, we already know. Still less can we do so in the case of a composer like Mozart, given all that we know about his intellectual outlook. No more can his new opera be judged by non-artistic criteria: it no more preaches immorality than *Don Giovanni* preaches morality, so that it is impossible in this regard to claim that Mozart was 'untrue to himself'. All that we can say with any certainty is that, after the inspired flight of fancy of *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* constitutes a superior, playful game with the shadowy side of everyday human existence. Mozart does not take this world seriously, in which respect he differs radically from the composers of *opera buffa*, a genre which, no matter how much they may caricature it, is invariably rooted in the world around them. Rather, Mozart is always aware of the masklike, random, contingent aspect of characters and events, yet at the same time he takes immense pleasure in playing with this world of human inadequacy, a world familiar to him as an inspired observer of humankind. In this, he is not in the least concerned to follow Italian practice and paint it in its worst possible colours, hence the much reduced role of caricature in his music. Rather, he is himself acutely conscious of the confines and limitations of this world, which he measures by the yardstick of his own, far more Olympian view of the world, resulting in the typically Mozartian irony that we encountered in the case of the comic characters in his earlier operas, except that these earlier characters also included tragic features, whereas now it is irony that is uniquely dominant.[59] Mozart reveals a wonderful instinct in maintaining this basic tone, a tone which certainly brought him closer to *opera buffa* than before but which essentially belongs to a completely different world. In this way he created a work which, for all its

59. ◆ Also see Burnham, 'Mozart's *felix culpa: Così fan tutte* and the Irony of Beauty'.

novelty, is none the less quintessentially Mozartian. A genius does not repeat himself; and so we may accept this work, too, in a spirit of gratitude and seek to understand it as a reflection of Mozart's own spirit, instead of attempting to excuse it in a way that Mozart emphatically does not require.

The opera's basic theme provided a link with his earlier works: that theme is love and, more specifically, the relationship between men and women, which he had already treated from the most disparate angles, from the delightful fairytale innocence of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* to the demonic terrors of *Don Giovanni*. In *Così fan tutte*, too, love is the driving force, but on this occasion it does not turn its characters into either gods or demons. For that, they are far too much like everyday creatures, lacking in any real sense of destiny, with mere impulsiveness instead of willpower and capriciousness instead of any deeper feelings. The couples all have something instinctively primitive about them: they express their feelings with all the impulsiveness and inconstancy of people ruled solely by their five senses. In some ways, they are still children for whom laughter and tears, playfulness and earnestness are closely related. Even the two men repeatedly require outside help to prevent them from vacillating in the comedy that they themselves have sanctioned. The rational characters, by contrast, Don Alfonso and Despina, are unimaginative types with a concern for utilitarian principles that never extends beyond their most immediate interests. The result is a comedy of all-too-human concerns and superficialities in which the unconsciously superficial couples are led in circles by Alfonso and Despina, who turn superficiality into a principle and attempt to make capital out of it.

In consequence, the opera is essentially ironical in character, rather than being merely satirical in the manner of the Italians: the ironist is not only aware of the conditional nature of the world's phenomena, he also keeps a constant eye on life in its entirety. The fact that irony dominates an entire work – a work, be it added, that is so musically full-blooded – merely proves how powerfully developed was this aspect of Mozart's personality. There is more of it in this work than later writers, including Wagner,[60] were willing to concede. The result is an authentically Mozartian view of the world, rather than a more or less successful work of art wrung from his genius against his will. Given his basic belief that the opera librettist had to take account of musical considerations above all others, Mozart may have been fascinated by another outstanding quality of the text, the parallelism between the different groups of characters. On the one hand we have the two sisters, on the other the two men. Between them are the two like-minded, manipulative figures of Don Alfonso and Despina – such symmetry recalls the three groups of characters in *Die Zauberflöte* and promised to provide Mozart with ample opportunities for effective sonorities, not only in duets, but also in large-scale ensembles with their sharply contrasted groupings. As a result, *Così fan tutte* has more ensembles than any other opera by Mozart. In the opening act, Da Ponte divided up these numbers with undoubted skill, whereas in the second act he fell far short of this ideal with a monotonous sequence of five arias unique in Mozart's mature operas, all of them, moreover, based on the same idea.

But even this preponderance of ensembles over arias reflects Mozart's basic attitude towards his material. After all, the action as a whole takes place not between individual characters but between

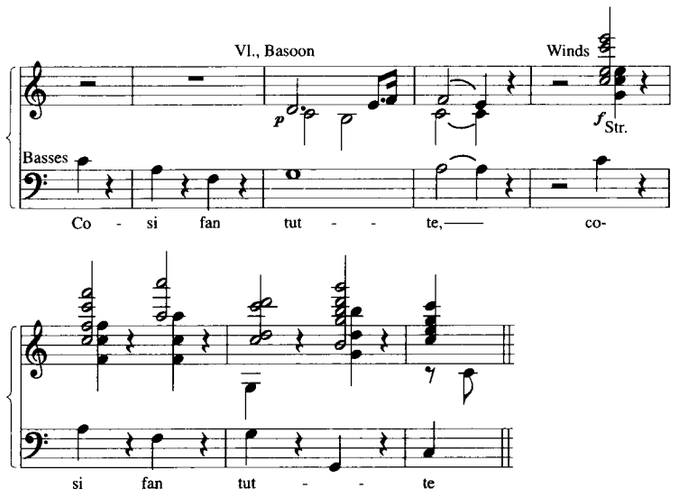
60. 'O how doubly dear and above all honour is Mozart to me that it was not possible for him to invent music for *La clemenza di Tito* like that of *Don Giovanni*, or for *Così fan tutte* like that of *Le nozze di Figaro*! . . . A frivolously artful librettist handed him arias, duets and ensembles for him to set to music, and he duly set them in a way that depended on the warmth that they were able to awaken in him, so that they always acquired the most appropriate expression of which they were capable in terms of their content'; Wagner, 'Oper und Drama', iii.247.

the three groups of individuals and, more especially, between the pairs of lovers. And Mozart treats these groups as self-contained entities at least until act one, scene nine, and then from scene fifteen of act two onwards, with only insignificant nuances between the various characters. But even in the middle section of the opera, where the characters are more sharply distinguished from each other, Mozart is concerned more with differences in temperament than with differences of character. Significantly, these differences emerge more clearly in the case of the two women than with the men.

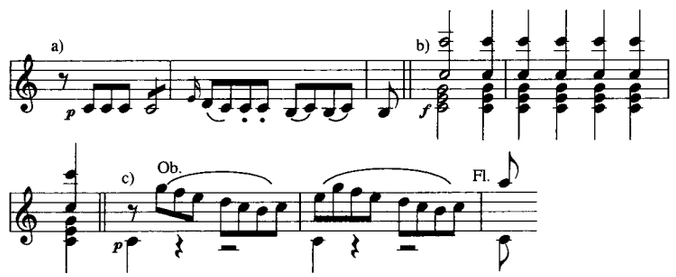
As a result, Mozart's usual approach to the drama, with its depiction of the living interplay between the characters, is ruled out in the case of *Così fan tutte*. Although his basic theme is still present in the guise of the love interest, it is acted out by puppets, unable to strike sparks from their souls or to become part of their living destiny. The result, therefore, is no more than a light-footed, *galant* contredanse in which the couple changes places, before returning to their former positions with the same ease as they left them. However superior their behaviour may be, the two individuals who arrange all this are little better than poor devils, for, although they may think that they know all about love, they know it only as a type of parlour game. Yet even here Mozart reveals his characteristic sense of irony by occasionally removing the masks and allowing us to see the human souls within these puppets and, at the same time, allowing the characters to feel love's *coup de foudre*, with all its joys and torments. This love is not to be interpreted tragically, however, as the characters themselves do not know what is happening to them. They merely have a vague awareness of a power which, with their limited horizons, they are unable grasp in its entirety. This emerges most clearly from the reconciliation at the end, a scene which musically speaking goes far beyond the trivial rationalism of the poem. Here the feeling of release from a game that had begun so light-heartedly and threatened to end so disastrously allows all hearts to beat more freely and with greater ease.

All these features take us far beyond the world of *opera buffa*. The Italians had no experience of this wistful humour that consists in the fact that grand feelings lead to utter humiliation in the hearts and souls of small-minded everyday types. But as a genuine humourist, Mozart had the gift of being able both to empathize and to observe and so he was unable to dispense with these aspects in the present piece, however much he may appear to step back from the seriousness of purpose that marks out his artistry in general and to produce not his usual type of drama but a light-hearted shadow-show that results in a temporary sense of liberation on his own part and helps to entertain others. Does this reflect a natural reaction on Mozart's part following the tremendous emotional upheaval of *Don Giovanni*? Or was it perhaps experiences in his own house at this time, with its lifeless quotidian round and dependency on base instincts, that prompted him to write this insane comedy of love and excess? Whatever the answer, we do not have the right to argue with Mozart over this. If Da Ponte's text paid tribute to its age, the new and original expression of Mozart's view of the world that it contains has not been lost to posterity. But we must now turn to the music itself.

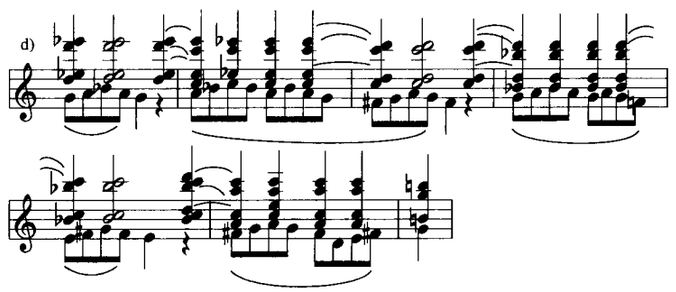
The overture corresponds in every way to the basic view of the work outlined above. The andante begins with a genuinely Mozartian melody in the oboes, expressive of love, their burgeoning longing recalling the world of Belmonte. But the tutti chords that interrupt it seem like interlopers, and after eight bars the enchanting figure disappears without trace. It is replaced in the consequent phrase by a shadowy shape in the basses with the 'Così fan tutte' motto from Don Alfonso's aria ('Tutti accusan le donne'). In its third bar – on the word 'tutte' – it is continued, half smiling and half wistful, with a suspension and interrupted cadence, before being repeated in a convulsive *forte* by the full orchestra:



It is as if the composer were slowly donning his mask in these first fourteen bars. Only with the presto does he introduce us to his real world of comedy. And here he is not entirely serious even on the level of musical form. Although it is possible to see in this section an example of sonata form in its general outlines, Mozart plays more freely with its structure than in any other of his overtures. It consists, in fact, of the lively interplay of three different themes:[61]



These are then joined by a fourth theme that is introduced in the manner of a trio, with a lower line reminiscent of the overture to *Le nozze di Figaro*:



61. In the earliest copies of the score and in the first engraved edition, motif (c) is eight bars shorter. On each occasion the passages in question are repeats, albeit differently instrumented. To judge from the autograph score, these cuts can hardly be by Mozart. In other passages, it is more difficult to reach a decision.

But this is the only point in common between these two overtures. Otherwise their relationship is that of a masquerade to a portrayal of the most elemental life. Even the themes of the later overture have something rigid and conventional about them, with the result that they lack the incomparable terseness of those of *Le nozze di Figaro*. Here, too, we find more temperament than character. But within this limited sphere Mozart reveals himself at his most high-spirited, and in this he is abetted above all by the instrumentation. Motif (a) remains the preserve of the strings, motif (c) that of the winds, with one of the overture's main attractions residing in this motif's unexpected visits to the most disparate desks. But motif (b) repeatedly interrupts the mysterious bustle with its booming laughter, assuming the most varied forms as it does so. Finally the whole masquerade is interrupted by the same motto that had called it into existence: 'Così fan tutte!' And the overture ends with a brilliant Mannheim crescendo rising up through a C major triad.

The introductory sequence of three trios for the same three men's voices ('La mia Dorabella capace non è', 'È la fede delle femmine' and 'Una bella serenata') was in itself a risk, but one that evidently fired Mozart's imagination. He construes them as a single whole – not, it is true, on a motivic level, but at least in terms of their underlying dramatic idea, showing in three relatively brief numbers the sort of people that these three men are. The most striking aspect of all this is that, although the discussion is about love and fidelity, we never hear a note of true passion on the lips of either of the two officers. Sanguine by nature, they get tremendously worked up, but this is as far as it goes. All the more, conversely, do they become preoccupied with trivia and superficialities. In the opening trio, for example, we are introduced to them as gallant gentlemen who regard their fiancées' fidelity as a question of honour and who are therefore immediately ready to engage in a duel in a particularly felicitous passage ('O fuori la spada'). As a result, this opening trio is predominantly belligerent and agitated in tone. In the second trio, Don Alfonso, with his light but patronizing irony, is highly effectively contrasted with these two spirited beaux as he delivers himself of his Metastasian dictum rather in the manner of an adult telling fairy stories to a child. Particularly delightful is the contrast between the 'ciascun lo dice', to which the garrulous winds keep returning, and the shadowy 'nessun lo sa', with its string accompaniment. Once again the two officers break free with their impulsive praise of their lovers, and there is something especially attractive about the way in which, at the end, they interject the names of their lovers *sotto voce* into Don Alfonso's speech, while the orchestra points out that it is the latter who has already been proved right. By the third duet the officers are convinced that they have won their wager and are completely obsessed by the idea of the pleasures that await them: serenade, *Tafelmusik* and cheers already resound in their ears, and with a courteousness befitting their rank they invite Alfonso to the celebrations. With a fine sense of irony he joins in their jubilation and the trio ends with the strains of festive music.

The duet for the two women ('Ah guarda, sorella')[62] deals with similar emotions but in far more tender tones and with far more of the sensuality that is typical of so many of the opera's more leisurely numbers that deal with the subject of love. After all, this is the first time since the overture that clarinets have appeared in the orchestra. This feature emerges with particular prominence in the andante, in which the two women praise their lovers' physical attractions. Yet even here there is a lack of depth and, above all, of the element of yearning that normally distinguishes love in Mozart's works. For all its charm, it tends rather in the direction of a sensually coloured

62. Between now and the first-act finale the upper voice in the ensembles is always Dorabella's, with Fiordiligi's appearing beneath it. Only later did Mozart reverse them. The original order was undoubtedly an error, as it is clear from the melodic line that the upper line was intended from the outset for Adriana Ferrarese, whose wide-ranging compass was uniquely suited to the part.

frivolousness that finds expression in the coloratura flourishes in the Andante and in the vocal writing for Dorabella, who even here is already the more impulsive of the pair. In the Allegro, this frivolousness then becomes the dominant mood thanks to the teasing syncopations and coquettish coloratura on the word 'amore'. Note the high-spirited way in which one note is sustained in each voice while the other slips gracefully past like a dancer in her lover's arms. This duet, too, reveals that for the sisters, as for the officers, love – however truthful within its own terms – is not so much a matter of the heart as a matter of temperament and, indeed, almost a gallant party game that never delves beneath the surface. In this, the sisters are entirely worthy of their lovers.

A character like Don Alfonso is bound to be largely impenetrable in terms of his musical persona. As a result he generally pretends to be a different person from the one that he actually is, changing his role in keeping with the situation in which he happens to find himself. His F minor aria ('Vorrei dir, e cor non ho') sets the basic tone for the farewell scene that follows, with all its contrasting moods. Here he plays the part of a man shocked beyond all measure, and so the music, clearly aiming to create a sense of exaggeration, comes particularly close in style to an *opera buffa*, while remaining limited to the briefest ternary form. Pretending to be the bringer of bad tidings, he rushes in like a hunted animal and gasps out his news in a stumbling, irregular metre, supported by a breathless orchestra. Only towards the end does he allow himself to repeat individual phrases. The real comedy begins with the quintet ('Sento oddio, che questo piede') in which the lovers say goodbye to each other. A free example of binary form, it is an atmospheric number that acquires an ironic overtone from its solemn opening in E flat major. There is something typically Mozartian about the extremely symmetrical and clear opposition between the different groups, of which each has its own independent musical ideas. With a well-acted display of *galant* emotion, the two officers launch into their farewells, keenly urged on by Don Alfonso's wise dictum. With the entry of the women's voices we again hear no genuine sounds of anguish, but nor do we hear any parodistic lament in the style of an *opera seria* that an Italian composer would almost certainly have introduced at this point. Instead we hear a restless, helpless lament that finally turns into heartbreaking sobbing of almost childlike intensity. For the present this is all that these everyday characters can bring themselves to express, and there is a certain irony to the fact that the text mentions daggers and death at this point. Of course, they are entirely serious when they speak of the pain of parting, but these thoughts of violent death are not much more than bombastic phrases on their lips: not for a moment would it occur to them to put these thoughts into practice. Here the humour lies in the fact that the two men are limited enough in outlook to believe in them and already begin to exult. In this opera, the characters not only deceive each other, they also delude themselves, and Mozart typically refuses to fall back each time on the Italian devices of caricature and parody, preferring instead to allow the nature of these people to create its due effect simply on its own terms. There is something particularly beautiful and truthful about the following climax on the words 'Il destin così defrauda le speranze de' mortali' ('Thus destiny confounds our mortal hopes'). At this coldly commonplace remark on the part of his librettist, Mozart responds with an outburst of intense agitation in the hearts of the two sisters, again without any sense of pretentious pathos: note the typically Mozartian *sotto voce* and the especially subtle way in which Ferrando, as the more sentimental of the two officers, breaks free from the group of menfolk and moves over to the women, no longer able to suppress his pity. Alfonso's ironic interjections ensure that things do not become too serious. Throughout the number Mozart – as masterful as ever – takes the listener to the very edge of emotional involvement, without ever stepping over that boundary, but surrounding the whole situation in an ironical chiaroscuro, while allowing us to glimpse the two officers' inner uncertainty as they waver

between fear and hope, very much in need of Alfonso's encouraging 'finem lauda'. The number is also perfect in its design and magical in its sheer beauty of sound. It is sufficient to recall the bitter dissonances of *Don Giovanni* to be aware of just how different the two works are in terms of their conception and style.

In the following duettino ('Al fato dàn legge') the two officers pull themselves together and offer their fiancées a few well-chosen words of comfort. They keep their remarks very short, while making a decent stab at wearing their heroic masks. Hence the entirely conventional character of this number, with even the sudden coloratura outburst on 'tornar' that Guglielmo takes over from Ferrando as if on command proving part of the picture. Immediately afterwards we hear the march with chorus ('Bella vita militar!'), a delightful number completely different from any of Mozart's other operatic marches and one, moreover, that acquires a hint of humour through its martial unison writing and the tone-painterly evocation of 'trombe e pifferi, schioppi e bombe' ('trumpets and fifes, guns and shells'). It is repeated after the actual farewell in the quintet ('Di scrivermi ogni giorno'), its original description in the autograph score of a 'Recitativo con stromenti' helping to explain its completely free form. In the fundamental change of mood following the previous march we again see the born dramatist in Mozart, and yet we feel that both numbers belong together. The pomp and circumstance of this warlike picture leaves the two women completely devastated. Like children, they begin to sob incoherently[63] – a realistic effect that was very popular in *opera buffa* – and it is not long before the men join in, half amused, half genuinely affected. But although this *buffa* atmosphere is heightened by Alfonso's 'io crepo se non rido' ('I'll burst if I don't laugh'), Mozart does not linger over it for long. A lament of such overwhelming inwardness breaks free from the sisters' hearts that even the men are moved by it and Alfonso's mockery is silenced. This is one of those moments when these everyday creatures are touched by rays of a higher reality and briefly rise above themselves, as Mozart reminds us that these characters of his are not just social beings but human beings, too. Admittedly, the veil descends again very quickly with Alfonso's renewed intervention, and the repeat of the march brings us unequivocally back to earth again with a bump. Yet the same note of radiance continues to affect the following terzettino ('Soave sia il vento'), which picks up the tradition of Italian numbers on the subject of wind and waves, differing from them only in its note of German Romanticism, which finds an unmistakable echo here in the evocation of nature and one of its moods. Here the actual pain of parting is overshadowed by the sisters' ardent desires that accompany their menfolk as they sail away, allowing the impassioned note of the quintet to mellow into tender yearning. Like all the sisters' outpourings, it has a powerful sensual element to it, as they abandon themselves to the new feeling with all the impulsiveness of their nature. A whole world of languorous sensuality lies in the surprising interrupted cadence on 'desir', with its keen-edged dissonance, that twice delays the actual closure. And how beautifully this interrupted cadence is prepared by the brief episode ('ed ogni elemento') with the wind trio and its insistent imitations. In much the same way, the murmured accompaniment in tender thirds in the muted strings that is initially conjured up by the image of a journey by sea comes imperceptibly to symbolize inner emotions. The wind instruments, too, are used in a typically Mozartian manner, entering only when the strings have filled in the outer picture and expressed the sisters' heartfelt desires. From then on they provide an almost constant accompaniment, bringing the whole trio to an end with a series of sustained chords.

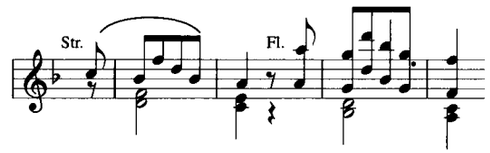
63. Particularly attractive here is the 'write soon' topos of the text, which is in delightful contrast to the heroic tirades of only a few moments earlier.

That Don Alfonso joins in the trio and even reveals a certain importunity in doing so is entirely logical, given his theory that the most passionate people are the first to fall. As a result, it suits him to confirm the sisters in their feelings and to strike a similar note. The following accompanied recitative, in which he expresses his true thoughts, even picks up and parodies the terzettino's tone-painterly portrayal of waves.

The whole of this second part of the exposition, with its extended farewell, is masterly in its design. It begins by striking the ironical note of a piece of harmless roguery that acquires a rousing brilliance with the entry of the chorus. But in the midst of this festive clangour, the fires of true emotion are kindled at the most farcical point, in the quintet ('Di scrivermi ogni giorno'), casting their radiance over all that follows, before gradually fading away. The early ensembles all include a climax of one sort or another. Only in the case of the last of them does the emotion gradually die away. Every aspect of the pain of parting is fully explored here, from the conventional and primitively childlike to an elemental outburst of grief and heartfelt yearning – and all these ensembles are Andantes. As so often, the librettist's old-fashioned text shadows the music as the latter accompanies the characters' actions with its sense of Olympian irony, seeming to laugh and weep with them in turn, while never allowing us listeners to forget that in essence we are dealing with no more than a light-hearted game. But the music also reveals a further characteristic of the whole opera, namely, its delight in the sensuous beauty of its melodic writing and instrumentation. Mozart revels in 'beautiful music' here, in a melodiousness of iridescently changing colours that is itself a further aspect of his masquerade.

With Dorabella's aria ('Smanie implacabili che m'agitate) the individual characters begin to emerge from their various groups and take on a life of their own. In terms of their words, both recitative and aria are a genuine parody of the great solo scenes from *opera seria*. This in itself has given rise to considerable misgivings,[64] and it is certainly true that Mozart himself hesitated over his setting of this number.[65] None the less, it accords with the whole of Dorabella's later behaviour. She is the more impulsive and carefree of the sisters, abandoning herself to her feelings with greater passion, while at the same time forgetting them all the more promptly. By now the pain of parting, which had still been real when she had said goodbye to Ferrando, has been more or less forgotten. But as a society lady who knows how to behave, especially in the presence of servants, she plays the part of the abandoned Ariadne in all her disconsolate grief, a grief all the more spurious in that she can no longer express any genuine emotions. This is how Mozart has attempted to provide a psychological motive for a scene that composers of *opera buffa* traditionally – and with huge acclaim – treated as a parody. But unlike the Italian composers of the period, Mozart did not take the parody to the point of caricature. As a result, there are none of the wide-ranging intervals and coloratura outbursts that are otherwise inevitable here. Only the broad *seria* design, the insistently extended cadences, the Eumenides' retinue of winds and the tone-painting at the words 'suono orribile de' miei sospiri' ('the dreadful sound of my sighs') recall the tried and tested devices of the older type of parody. But nor is there any sign of the broad and emotional sweep of the melodic line found in such cases in Italian operas. Dorabella is psychologically incapable of this full-throated emotion and contents herself instead with short-breathed, almost convulsively agitated phrases, with only the orchestra giving full expression to her fury with its uninterrupted sextuplets[66] and violent dynamic contrasts. The particular qualities of the singer Louise Villeneuve – the sister of Adriana Ferrarese del Bene[67] – may also have played a part here. To judge by the music that Mozart wrote for her, she had a soprano voice of modest range that was particularly well suited to simple expressive singing.

Despina's first aria ('In uomini! In soldati') is a direct response to Dorabella's outburst and reveals her as a worthy descendant of Pergolesi's Serpina, one of a long line of Italian maids who with their immense cunning embody the crassest egoism. Nor was Mozart the first composer to take it upon himself 'to ensure that this character never for a moment degenerates into vulgarity'.[68] His Italian models had already achieved this aim by combining her basic instincts with mischievous charm and sincere, folklike freshness. As a result these characters were always the real favourites of *opera buffa* audiences, regaling them with most of the folklike songs. Mozart largely took over the character as he found it and wisely avoided investing her with the psychological depth found in the case of Susanna or even Zerlina. Textually and musically she behaves likes a true child of *opera buffa*, expressing her contempt of men in the form of a siciliana, in which men's falseness is underlined by drones involving a pedal point and appoggiaturas that tell the same old story. More individual is the introductory allegretto, which is also a delightful example of the language of musical gesture. It begins by striking a note of comic indignation, which is followed by a typically Mozartian phrase expressive of boundless contempt:

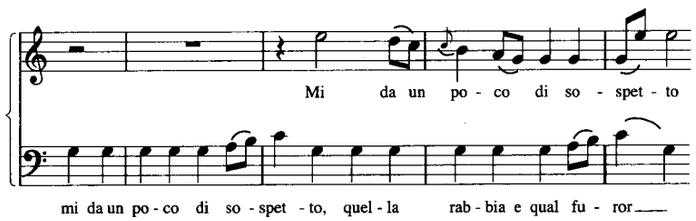


Finally, Despina makes fun of the sisters' credulous trust with a scherzando triplet motif – the second time round the triplet is intensified by wind accents on the weak beat of the bar. Particularly delightful is the emphatic repeat of 'fedeltà'. A typically Italian passage of quasi-recitative then leads into the Allegretto, which is chuckled rather than sung, but which none the less feels to be related to the siciliana theme, making it seem the natural sequel of the opening Allegretto.

With the sextet ('Alla bella Despinetta') the real comedy begins. The 'Albanians' enter on a note of delightful, solemn dignity, and with impassioned gallantry, supported by clarinets and bassoons, they attempt to win over Despina to their cause. She expresses her comic delight at the bearded strangers, a delight in no way lessened when the two men attempt, *sotto voce*, to boost their own failing spirits. The two sisters call out from offstage, thereby introducing the action proper. They come rushing in at the start of the allegro to a rapid unison passage, and proceed to

64. See Jahn, *W. A. Mozart*, fourth edition, ii.515.
65. According to Köchel, a second version of this aria has survived with German words. Two folios from the autograph manuscript are currently in the possession of G. A. Petter in Vienna. ◆ The manuscript cited by Abert (now in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) is not by Mozart but a copy said to have been made from the composer's score. In the absence of any unequivocal evidence for his authorship, and considering that an autograph has never been known, the version is unlikely to be by Mozart; possibly the anonymous arrangement was made in connection with a later performance. See K⁶ Anh. C7.06.
66. The same figure is found in the finale of Paisiello's *Il re Teodoro*.
67. Hence the reference to 'quelle dame ferraresi' in the second-act finale (bars 269–272), an echo of the old custom of improvised comedy. Louise Villeneuve had made her début as Amor in Martín y Soler's *L'arbore di Diana* on 1 October 1789 and had been 'rightfully acclaimed for her delightful appearance, subtle and expressive acting and beautiful and artistic singing'; see *Wiener Zeitung*, lii (1789), appendix.
68. Jahn, *W. A. Mozart*, ii.526.

scold poor Despina in a way that is highly strung and precious and, above all, true to life,[69] with the orchestration even extending to trumpets. But the Albanians, whom Despina now introduces, refuses to be blown off course and, supported by only clarinets, bassoons and, later, cellos, act out the part of sentimental admirers. There is something irresistibly comical about their melodic line, with its languorous sighs and tearful chromaticisms. Only with the entry of the Neapolitan sixth on the *b'* flat and of the cellos does it appear to acquire a regular metrical structure. Above all, however, it is the key of A minor[70] – invariably associated with exoticism in Mozart's works – that creates the sense of comedy. That the two sisters initially regard this as a painful insult is nicely observed, while the way in which the two groups retain their own particular orchestration is also highly effective. Their indignation then finds uninhibited expression in the great two-part molto allegro. Here the thirds that characterize the sisters throughout the whole of the opera and that are now supported by strings and winds acquire a particularly threatening, flickering hue. The men likewise form a group in opposition to them, to the accompaniment of a motif that Mozart had often used in the past to express male triumphalism. The third group is made up of Alfonso and Despina, and it is this group which, in keeping with the situation on stage, initially dominates the proceedings, with Despina even picking up the final motif from the previous episode. This group becomes even more prominent at the following passage:



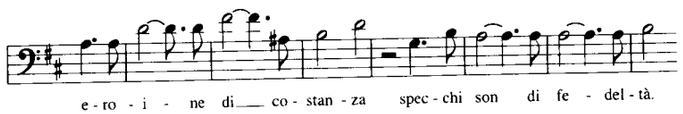
Here it can hardly be an accident that Don Alfonso repeats the phrase 'che vi sia ciascun lo dice' ('everyone swears it exists') from the earlier trio ('Fuor la spada'). The two sisters remain self-contained as a group, while the other two groups occasionally join forces, before all combine together at the end in a great unison emblematic of the general confusion. The section that follows is striking for its interplay of *secco* and accompagnato, something found in no other opera by Mozart. Particularly amusing here is the comic scene in which Don Alfonso pretends to recognize the strangers, a brief episode over a chromatically descending bass line, first staccato, then legato. In declaring their love, the two men again appear as a self-contained group, each taking up where the other leaves off, finally coming together in two-part harmonies in a particularly exaggerated outpouring of emotion. Only with Fiordiligi's intervention does the tone switch from the lyrical to the dramatic, with its highly charged intensity preparing the way for her aria ('Come scoglio immoto resta'), the slow introduction of which is motivically and atmospherically a heightened continuation of the recitative. As a character, Fiordiligi is no deeper than her sister, merely prouder

69. It is based on a rhythm regularly used by Mozart to create a feeling of agitation: ♪ ♪| ♩. ♫♫ | ♩ See also Osmin's aria 'Solche hergelauf'ne Laffen' in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail.*
70. In the course of the whole opera, the minor tonality is used only in Alfonso's caricature-like aria ('Vorrei dir, e cor non ho'), during the scene in the first-act finale when the two men pretend to take poison and in certain episodes in Ferrando's aria ('Tradito, schernito').

and more domineering. Whereas Dorabella opts to strike a note of tragic pathos in order to fake an emotion that is already fading in intensity, Fiordiligi is able to allow her emotions to well up from inside her: even in her recitative she seems already fully armed like some Amazon warrior about to do battle. As a result, she is far more successful than her sister at capturing the style of *opera seria*. The words recall the popular simile arias of the period, and within the first fourteen bars the music already conjures up the familiar scene-stealing style of the Neapolitans, except that the rising melodic line is audibly reminiscent of the first version of Donna Anna's 'vengeance aria' ('Or sai chi l'onore'). On that occasion Mozart had rejected the version as too high-flown, but for Fiordiligi it struck him as just right. The shortened two-part allegro develops this tone a stage further. Here, too, at the words 'e potrà la morte sola', we find certain elements in the thematic writing and the accompaniment that are related to Donna Anna's aria, except that here, too, the relationship is that of a mask to the person's actual face. The elaborate cadence at 'far che cangi affetto il cor', with its trifling coloratura, reveals all too clearly what Fiordiligi understands by 'affetto', and there is something entirely logical about the way in which the orchestra now breaks in with its noisy and vacuous scales. This vocal virtuosity climaxes in the Più allegro and, above all, in the dazzling coloratura on 'speranza' and the subsequent doubling of voice and violas, which here take the bass line. Both these aspects serve to point up the sense of irony. Of course, the aria was written to accommodate Ferrarese's particular vocal skills. As Da Ponte's lover at this time,[71] she was well provided for in the opera. Elsewhere he praised the beauty of her singing and her moving delivery. Mozart was far more critical.[72] Above all, he was keen to stress the drama of the role. In this aria, too, the parody is clearly felt, as Fiordiligi is incapable of any deeper emotion, but only of a defiant independence of mind and a powerful sense of her own worth, a feeling that dresses itself in the gaudy robes of tragedy. This basic feeling is, however, genuine and, as such, well calculated to cause her suitor serious difficulties in the future.

Clearly this heroic aria initially persuaded Mozart to follow it up with an equally large-scale *buffa* aria for Guglielmo, 'Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo' K584,[73] which was intended for Benucci. This is undoubtedly one of Mozart's greatest achievements in the field of *opera buffa*, but it would be going too far to compare it with Leporello's 'catalogue aria', which grows organically out of the action. Guglielmo's aria, by contrast, is only loosely connected to the plot and actually contradicts the character of the two fiancées. In the best *opera buffa* manner, Da Ponte is largely unconcerned about this but offloads on to his hero a whole array of mythological and other allusions that are difficult to ascribe to him in the light of all that we know of his character.[74] Mozart, too, brings a larger-than-life aspect to the comedy. In itself the aria is a worthy monument to Mozart's humour with its witty underlining of the individual ideas, its colourful tone-painting and other allusions, especially in the winds, to say nothing of a typically Mozartian joviality that borders on the demonic. Certainly, the way in which the tension builds up towards the end, culminating in an outburst reminiscent of Count Almaviva, creates an incomparable impression

71. *Memorie di Lorenzo da Ponte*, ii.108–9 and 117.
72. See above and *Briefe*, iv.83 (letter of 16 April 1789). In London, too, observers admired her skills but were reluctant to hail her as a real prima donna; see Parke, *Musical Memoirs*, i.48–9. She was not particularly pretty, nor were her skills as an actress at all impressive, but she had an attractive mouth and beautiful eyes, and audiences warmed to her.
73. According to Mozart's *Verzeichnüß* it was written in December 1789 and is here described as an 'aria that was intended for the opera Così fan tutte. For Benucci'. In other words it had already been replaced by 'Non siate ritrosi' by the date of the first performance. It is reproduced in NMA II/5/18/2, 603–23. It originally demanded not only oboes, bassoons and trumpets but also horns, but these were later deleted for reasons that remain unclear.
74. There is even a mention of the solo dancer Charles Le Picq, who was famous at this time; see above.



before Guglielmo breaks off as though shocked and whispers his delight to Don Alfonso.

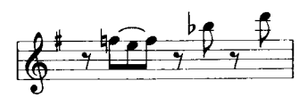
Rightly realizing that such a large-scale character aria was unsuited to the opera, Mozart replaced it with a second aria ('Non siate ritrosi'), cast in rondo form, from which Guglielmo emerges as an urbane gentleman well versed in the ways of the world, who, in spite of the snub that he has received, once again attempts to win over the women, half in earnest, half in jest. Yet at the same time his remarks reveal a smile of contentment at his rejection: confident that he retains Fiordiligi's love, he can good-humouredly play the gallant philanderer. Finally, even the orchestra takes a real delight in depicting masculine attractions, thereby leading directly into the following trio ('E voi ridete?') for the three men, an example of a popular type of number found in *opera buffa* that takes laughter as its subject.[75] In the present case the two officers reduce Alfonso to a state of virtual despair with their laughter, and there is something particularly amusing about the way in which the crescendos evaporate into a sudden *piano*, with Ferrando and Guglielmo laughing so hard that they run out of breath. The buzzing triplets in the generally unison strings complete this picture of exuberant high spirits.[76]

There follows an aria ('Un'aura amorosa') for Ferrando,[77] whose rapt infatuation had already found expression in the farewell scene. The saccharine words clearly pick up and parody the previous conversation about food, but Mozart's setting finds him – once again – going over his librettist's head. Rarely did he write a melody of such beguiling sensual beauty or such tender emotion. Ferrando is a deeply emotional, even sentimental, individual and, as such, was a figure of fun for the Italians, a factor that should not be forgotten in the present case. What we also find here is a burgeoning sensuality that finds particularly powerful expression in the wind accompaniment in the second section of the aria, at the end of which we again have a glimpse of the work's underlying irony: not once in the course of the aria have we heard a note of powerful masculine resolve on the part of this sanguine visionary, and so the orchestra now tries to make good that omission in a postlude based on a much altered version of the earlier motifs, only for it to sink back, of course, into the old mood of languorous passion.

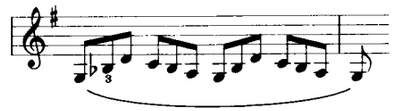
The first-act finale ('Ah che tutta in un momento') begins with a broadly developed duet for the two sisters that is introduced by a lengthy ritornello and that is again intended to express their feeling of abandonment. The underlying mood is again one of tender yearning, with the same element of powerful sensuality as before. At the same time, however, the fluttering figures in the flutes immediately introduce a note of coquetry: in spite of their grief-stricken words, it is clear

75. Cf. the ensemble in act three, scene one of Piccinni's *La Corsara*. In both versions Guglielmo's aria passes into the trio without full closure. This trio itself is marked 'ride smoderatamente' (not *fortissimo*).
76. ◆ Further, see Heartz, 'When Mozart Revises: Guglielmo in *Così*'. More generally on his writing for particular singers, see Woodfield, 'Mozart's Compositional Methods: Writing for his Singers'.
77. The tenor Vincenzo Calvesi had made his Viennese début with his wife in April 1785; see *Wiener Zeitung*, xxxiii (1785), appendix. It was for Calvesi that Mozart wrote the insertion arias for *La villanella rapita* in 1785. In 1786 he sang Eufemio of Syracuse in Storace's *Gli equivoci*, with Michael Kelly as Eufemio of Ephesus; see Kelly, *Reminiscences*, i.237. In 1781 he sang in Venice; see Wiel, *I teatri musicali veneziani nel Settecento*; and in 1787 he appeared in Naples; see Florimo, *La scuola musicale di Napoli*, iv.353. ◆ Concerning Calvesi, see Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna*.

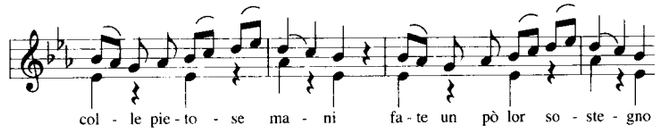
that the sisters have not lost their appetite for life. Listen, for example, to the setting of the words 'Ah, che un mar pien di tormento' ('Ah, what a sea of torment [is life henceforth for me]'), with its accompanying winds, at which point the two officers, fully resolved to die, burst in with their strident diminished seventh, their phrases, breathlessly expelled, standing out sharply from the sisters' lengthy scream.[78] With the heroic shift to B flat major ('L'arsenico mi liberi': 'May arsenic set me free') they swallow the poison, the effect of their action on the two sisters rapidly finding expression in a motif that keeps on recurring, helplessly, in the orchestra:



The harmonies change to a tragic G minor, where they remain for some time, supported by a rolling motif in the orchestra:

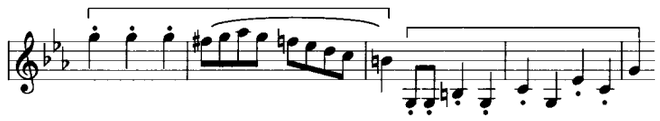


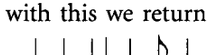
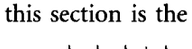
No stone has been left unturned in painting this tragic portrait, from the sisters' bewildered horror to Alfonso's ironic regret and the men's heroic yet wistful farewell. Finally, their hearts begin to beat more slowly, at which point the sisters join their group, allowing them to sense both their fever[79] and their failing strength with all the greater immediacy. As a result, they already seem to be half won over. The men sink into unconsciousness. With Alfonso's solemn E flat major, the mood changes to one that comes close to recalling an *ombra* scene: note, in particular, the solemn wind sonorities. All the more vivid are the sisters' calls for help and Despina's Zerlina-like feigned regret: 'Morti i meschini io credo' ('I think the poor things are dead').[80] This section develops along entirely natural lines, with the orchestra repeatedly falling back on old motifs and thereby ensuring a sense of unity and clarity. Despina proves to be a consummate actress, inviting the sisters to



She then insists that Alfonso accompany her in search of a doctor, leaving the two couples alone. The sisters are still extremely concerned, while the two men, now in the best of spirits, delight in their comic role, with Ferrando – as always the more volatile of the two – proving particularly ebullient. At this point a new and important double motif enters:

78. Note the way in which their screams typically break off nervously to the rhythm: ♪. 𝅘𝅥𝅯 ♩ .
79. There is a clear reminiscence here of the beginning of Donna Anna's recitative ('Ma qual mai s'offre, oh Dei') in *Don Giovanni*.
80. Cf. Zerlina's 'Ah lasciatemi andar via' in the first-act finale in *Don Giovanni*.



The two men seem to writhe on the ground with racing pulses. The instruments of the orchestra now take control, and over their two mischievous motifs the women engage in a delightful game, drawing closer to the handsome men in their sensual inquisitiveness and examining them as their lives slip away. Their pity is genuinely stirred, but this merely serves to make the men feel apprehensive: might Don Alfonso have been right after all? These two motifs then disappear, giving way to a remarkable sense of anxiety and tension that finds expression in terse imitative polyphony and chromatic motifs. The women are close to tears, while the men are deeply worried at this unwelcome turn of events: what had begun as a light-hearted game now threatens to become much more serious. There is genuine comedy here, with the true and honest feelings of both parties resting on completely different assumptions and taking a very different course from the one that appears to be the case. In terms of its concept and execution, this section of the finale – from the entry of the double motif to the reappearance of Despina in disguise – is a veritable masterpiece, with its gradual increase in tension from a witty situation comedy to an expression of the subtlest irony. With the doctor's entrance the weighty C minor is abruptly replaced by G major,[81] thereby recalling the earlier situation, and with this we return to the world of *opera buffa*. Typical of this section is the regular rhythm  with its alternative form in diminution  These provide the basis for the questions and answers, the chuckles and pompous preenings – in short, all the impish sparks of the *buffa* composer's art – that typify this section. The self-styled medic conducts his examination to mounting agitation on the part of Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Alfonso, before reassuring them in the most delightful manner, finally and gravely playing his trump card with the modulation to the subdominant C major: Dr Mesmer's magnetic therapy is now duly applied to the accompaniment of an incomparably comical passage in the winds notable for its affected pomposity.[82] Again the sisters have to place their hands on the men in an agitated passage involving syncopations and a tremolando. Adopting a suitably dignified tone, the doctor confirms the success of his cure, earning the praise of the two sisters, who are much relieved, and of Alfonso, whose reaction is one of mockery: 'Ah, questo medico vale un Perù' ('Ah, this doctor is worth all the gold in Peru'). The whole section bubbles along with all the high spirits associated with comedy, with no sense of exaggeration, while revealing the most wonderful unity. The number of new ideas that Mozart is able to coax from his basic rhythm is almost literally inexhaustible, making this scene an utter delight even if only from a musical standpoint. Again the music abruptly modulates, this time from G to B flat major. The men think that they have woken up in Elysium – an extremely popular feature in opera librettos of this period – and the orchestra responds by replacing the flutes, oboes and horns by clarinets, bassoons and trumpets, producing strange-sounding sonorities, half solemn, half ornate in a typi-

81. The changes of tonality are more volatile here than in the second-act finale of *Le nozze di Figaro* or the first-act finale of *Don Giovanni*. Here the sequence is D major–G minor–E flat major–C minor–G major–B flat major–D major.
82. The repeat of the passage 'Che poi sì celebre là in Francia fu' in the winds is missing from the autograph score and has been notated for flutes and bassoons alone on a separate folio in an unknown hand. That the passage is authentic is virtually certain. Presumably the comic idea that it expresses occurred to Mozart only during the rehearsals. ◆ The NMA version of this passage is based on the original conducting score of the opera (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, shelfmark O.A. 146).

cally Rococo manner, that continue throughout the whole of this section. The lovers seize the opportunity provided by the elevated mood to declare their love, a rapt declaration accompanied by the winds. At this latest turn of events, the sisters lose all self-control and reply with the same delightfully love-struck melody which, even if more timidly expressed, reminds their lovers of the comic nature of the situation. Alfonso and Despina between them form the third group, attempting to encourage the women with their hypocritical comments. The sisters pull themselves together one last time, with Fiordiligi underlining her proud resolve with a dazzling coloratura outburst, thereby bringing this section to an end on a note of extreme tension. This is the nub of the finale: while the orchestra continues to sing of the joys of Elysium, a decisive change in this game of love takes place in the voices. 'Più resister non poss'io', sing the sisters: 'I can resist no longer.' Melodically, too, they are now completely under the control of their new lovers. They can take no credit for the fact that in the following passage the men's awkward importunity recalls them to the path of duty. With its change of instrumentation – flutes and violins in unison and trembling quaver motion in the middle voices – the final allegro makes it clear that the officers are resolved to play their highest trump in the art of sensual seduction and, waking as though from an otherworldly vision, they demand a remarkably worldly kiss. This is too much for the sisters who, to the sound of powerful horn calls, interrupt the torrent of words and erupt in sheer anger. But it is unclear whether this anger is directed at their lovers' courtship as such or merely at the awkward, importunate form that it assumes. The latter seems the more likely, given the sisters' extreme reaction: they are furious at the fact that the men suddenly make so little effort, when they would have expected a different, more well-mannered approach. Because it springs from disappointment, their anger inevitably acquires a note of exaggeration that ultimately makes even the two officers afraid. As a whole, the scene again reveals Mozart's shrewd understanding of the female psyche. This lengthy section is in two parts, with a concluding stretta.[83] The three groups are maintained as before, but only the two sisters remain a self-contained entity throughout the whole of this section, while the other two groups soon merge to the sound of secret chuckling.[84] Meanwhile, the women's fury continues to mount, acquiring a note of high tragedy at the chromatic ascent to B flat major, which is immediately followed by a typically Mozartian combination of ideas: while the others, *sotto voce*, express their mischievous glee, Fiordiligi vents her anger in an agitated quaver-based melody with a final coloratura flourish on 'furor' and Dorabella's voice strives upwards in a series of recalcitrant suspensions. In the second section all the foregoing material is repeated in a more intense form, with the various groups now coming together to create a full ensemble. In the coda Fiordiligi manages for a time to assert herself in the face of the others by dint of her sustained and penetrating *a″*, thereby causing Ferrando to lose control of his own melodic line, a device that Mozart introduces to highly amusing effect: clearly Ferrando is terrified at Fiordiligi's behaviour. On this, Mozart now builds the presto, making the confusion complete. It begins with one of the descending scalar motifs with syncopated upbeat that are so often found in his works and that all convey a sense of breathlessness.[85] The men's group is now broken down, with Ferrando moving over to the side of the women, Guglielmo to that of Alfonso and Despina. The tumult reaches its climax in the tremendous chromatic crescendo in all six voices, with flames

83. At the repeat the main theme is reduced from four bars to three.
84. On the clipped melody at 'un quadretto più giocondo', see the trio ('Cosa sento!') in *Le nozze di Figaro*, where it again has an ironical significance.
85. Examples in *Don Giovanni* include the passage at 'mille torbidi pensieri' in the sextet ('Sola, sola in buio loco') and Leporello's aria ('Ah, pietà, signori miei!').

appearing to issue from the broken octaves in the strings that remain on *d*. The act ends on a typically Mozartian note, with all the characters reduced to a state of indecision that produces an insane whirl of the most contradictory emotions. The sisters are no longer entirely serious about their anger, the two officers grow unsure of themselves and of the comedy that they are playing and become suspicious, and Alfonso and Despina, too, appear to be mildly agitated, now that there is all to play for. Yet none of the characters is able to master the situation on his or her own initiative, resulting in a sense of general confusion, an aimless tension, a lively whirl of emotions that is all the more amusing in that the characters all attempt to lie to each other, while failing to find the courage needed to launch a proper attack. In this way love leads these characters a merry dance, making all their actions seem basically specious, pitiful and lacking in freedom, while at the time they take themselves incredibly seriously. This tangle of emotions was tailor-made for Mozart. He, too, makes no attempt to view it tragically but, delighting in his own gifts as a creative artist, leads his foolish creatures around in a circle. In all his earlier finales, there had always been an undertow of more or less dark-hued emotions, whereas here he created a masterpiece in the form of a purely *buffa* finale of a quintessentially Mozartian kind, with no crude effects and little sense of caricature but, rather, simply allowing the light-hearted masquerade to pursue its natural course and transfiguring it with the whole of his mature musical mastery. Significantly the Italians, with their instinctive sensitivity in such matters, rejected the work as essentially alien to their nature: after all, it is not an Italian *opera buffa*, but one, rather, that is typically Mozartian.

The second act opens with Despina regaling her listeners with her 'ars amandi' in an aria ('Una donna a quindici anni') that begins as a siciliana and ends as a quick waltz full of bubbling, pert high spirits, as if she were singing some old familiar ditty. Only a few passages are genuinely comical: note, for example, the high-flown 'e qual regina dall'alto soglio' ('and like a queen on her lofty throne') and the line 'viva Despina che sà servir' ('long live Despina, for she knows how to do it'), which rocks complacently back and forth on the chord of the ninth. In the fast section she grows even more impassioned, vociferating her domineering demands with almost tragic emotion. In the coda – a surprising and delightfully inspired appendage – the orchestra then coaxes her into picking up the earlier tone, until the very end, when her ingratiating triadic melody places an authentically Mozartian garland on her cunning little head.

In the following duet ('Prenderò quel brunettino') the sisters agree with Despina that there is no harm in a little flirtation. Their anger has been completely forgotten, and sensuality and curiosity rear their heads once more. Initially they regard the affair as no more than a game that does not affect their loyalty towards their fiancés. As the far more impulsive of the two, Dorabella takes control, with Fiordiligi following, initially at a considerable distance but later, once her senses have been fired, much more closely. In keeping with the *galant* lyric poetry of the period, the text revels in charming ideas and images, with the music exploring these images in greater detail than is normally the case with Mozart: note, in particular, the mischievous double coloratura and the repeatedly delayed ending.[86] But the music also reveals the sisters' powerful sensual desire and in that way lays the foundations for the decisive events that are to follow. Their lovers appear and launch into an emotionally charged wind-accompanied serenade with chorus ('Secondate, aurette amiche') of a kind drawn from real life at this time. But they still lack the courage for the final assault, and so Despina and Alfonso have to stand in for them in the following quartet ('La mano

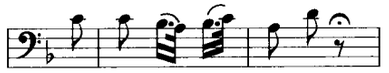
86. The same sequence of chords (IV–V–V–I) is repeated six times in succession.

a me date').[87] At this important point in the action, the men are revealed – to utterly delightful effect – as mere puppets of Don Alfonso, incapable of doing anything more than simply echoing his phrases. And, for all the humour of the situation, Mozart has been particularly successful in capturing the note of great urgency with which he spurs them into action. Despina begins by striking a similar note when addressing the sisters, but in evident deference to Fiordiligi she introduces a passage of emotionally charged recitative. Unlike the men, the women do not echo her phrases, and it is left to the winds to provide a response, a state of affairs that undoubtedly reflects the underlying situation. But the fact that the sisters are left out here, allowing no large-scale sextet to develop and bring the couples closer together, is clearly a weakness on the part of the libretto. What a plan might Mozart himself have offered! The whole of the double seduction would have unfolded along far more striking and succinct lines than in the present case, where Da Ponte was reduced to a monotonous series of arias and duets. Instead, the ensemble dissolves into a mocking *buffa* duet for the two opportunists: not even the clever variation of the initial theme[88] can alter the fact that a particularly favourable dramatic opportunity was missed here.

women left from the quartet

critique of the quartet's ending

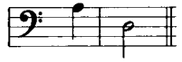
The game of seduction brings with it a reversal of roles, with the tender-hearted and volatile Ferrando now brought together with the proud Fiordiligi, while the *galant* bon vivant Guglielmo is paired off with the easy-going Dorabella. In the following duet ('Il core vi dono') it transpires that Dorabella is particularly receptive to gallantry, with the result that she soon succumbs to the perfect gentleman in Guglielmo, whose courtship has something extraordinarily eloquent about it. This emerges not only from the numerous fermatas but also from the rising fourth with change of harmony at the end of the phrase, a device that recalls Don Giovanni's 'Là ci darem la mano'. Dorabella loses no time in adopting this tone in turn. Even the inevitable description of her beating heart is found here. Only once – at the words 'Nel petto un Vesuvio' ('I feel I have a volcano in my bosom') – do her feelings well up inside her, allowing her to take the initiative, and here Guglielmo accompanies her with his sense of superior gallantry, yet every section of this number ends with a motif which, in one form or another, suggests a seductive and lovesick glance:



It finally comes to dominate the end of the duet, with the winds once again revelling insatiably in the joys of *galant* love.

Ferrando's situation is more difficult. True to her character, Fiordiligi gives him his marching orders in an accompanied recitative which, emotionally overblown, involves a lively dialogue. Only at the end does she cast a seductive and snakelike glance at him with the full support of the orchestra. It is this glance that Ferrando picks up in his aria ('Ah lo veggio, quell'anima bella'),

87. Something different was originally intended here, with the recitative achieving full closure:



Alongside this is a note 'segue l'aria di Don Alfonso'. The *d* was then struck out and the word 'attacca' written next to it. In other words, a solo aria was originally planned at this point, perhaps with a following ensemble. The passage shows that Mozart was aware of the weakness of his text at this juncture.

88. This is a feature often found in Piccinni; see above.

which Mozart specifically described as 'lietissimo' ('very happy'). From a psychological point of view, the absence of all caricature is nicely observed, as is the fact that in this moment of outward dissimulation the aria develops solely out of Ferrando's own character. Sanguine by nature, he makes straight for his goal and plunges into a real turmoil of emotions, including hope for the future, that is undoubtedly intended on its deepest level to be an expression of feigned emotion but which immediately draws him into its sway to such an extent that he is no longer conscious of its inauthenticity. Here we see the man of temperament who, acting according to the dictates of reason, sets himself a particular goal, only to find himself swept along by his temperament in a totally different direction. Ferrando simply does not realize that his youthful heart is surreptitiously and at least for the present taking entirely seriously what had originally been intended as a game, and an additional irony lies in the fact that in this way he becomes far more of a threat to Fiordiligi than if he were consciously playing a part. As a result, the floodtide of this aria flows impetuously along, a single, powerful expression of emotion, in a constant state of unrest, never allowing the orchestra to have an independent say. In its most general terms, it recalls the aria that Mozart wrote for Donna Elvira for the Vienna production of *Don Giovanni*, except that it is far more agitated and lacks its motivic unity. It is in binary form, with the allegro taking its cue from the quartet ('La mano a me date') and, in its emotional exuberance, freely developing the main theme and transferring it to the orchestra. We also hear a clear reminiscence of a phrase from Zerlina's first aria ('Pace, pace, o mia vita').

This outpouring of emotion leaves a profound impression on Fiordiligi, whose emotional life is likewise well developed, but the impression is not the one intended by Don Alfonso and Despina. She feels remorse at her frivolous behaviour and yearns once more to recapture her earlier happiness in love. Both of these feelings assail her in her recitative in keeping with her volatile temperament, but then, in the radiant E major of her aria ('Per pietà, ben mio, perdona'), she sees the image of her absent lover in her mind's eye and seems to sink remorsefully to the ground in the adagio's half-sobbing portamento opening.[89] This and Ferrando's aria ('Un aura amorosa') contain the most beguiling melodies in the whole opera, with the present aria surpassing its predecessor only in that it has none of the former's irony. Its emotions are entirely authentic, even if – like all the sisters' outpourings – it is markedly sensuous in tone. A considerable part in this colouring is played by the concertante winds, alternately echoing the calls of yearning and supporting them with independent motifs – especially beautiful at the words 'perderà la rimembranza'. The fact that, however much she may revel in her own emotions, we are still dealing with the old Fiordiligi is clear from the wide-ranging and emotionally charged intervals that are scattered throughout the adagio and, even more, from the dazzling bravura of the allegro, which in terms of both its structure and themes recalls one of Sarti's rondòs,[90] a type that is certainly appropriate here inasmuch as it prevents the underlying mood from becoming too serious and picks up the note of the comedy as a whole.

Guglielmo tells Ferrando about Dorabella's infidelity, precipitating an outburst of appalled despair that finds expression in a wild accompanied recitative.[91] Guglielmo, too, comments on this

89. In terms of its key-signature, form and mood, there is a clear affinity between the present aria and Leonore's 'Komm, Hoffnung' from *Fidelio*. Jahn rightly draws attention to the parallel with the aria that Mozart wrote for Ferrarese for the 1789 revival of *Le nozze di Figaro* (see above); see Jahn, *W. A. Mozart*, ii.520.

90. Even the upbeat with the four quavers and the translucent melodic line demonstrate this affinity.

91. The recitative originally ended in C minor with the words 'Dammi consiglio!', followed by the note 'Segue l'aria di Guillelmo'. Later, the last two bars were deleted and the present version of the recitative continued on a separate folio, ending with the same note as before.

turn of events in his aria ('Donne mie, la fate a tanti'), but his own tone is ironical and that of a man of the world. He now believes himself peculiarly entitled to adopt this superior tone in that he has not only replaced his friend in Dorabella's affections but, according to Ferrando, can still count on Fiordiligi's love. It does not occur to him, of course, that this state of affairs may change, and herein lies the comedy of the situation. Wittily discursive, his aria is directed at the women whom he earlier valued so highly but whom he now regards as fickle and, as such, is half reproachful, half couched in the form of a tribute. It is a rondo, with a middle section that is bellicose and sentimental by turns. The way in which Guglielmo repeatedly returns to his reproachful 'ma quel farla a tanti a tanti' ('but such treatment of so many') creates a wonderful comic effect. But there are other ways, too, in which the aria stands out from its surroundings, not only as a result of its considerable length but also because of the leisurely, almost nonchalant manner of its expression, a quality already apparent in the metre of its main idea. The theme, which is stated right at the outset by the flutes, violins and bassoons two octaves apart, babbles along at a comfortable pace. Time and again this volatile and roguish figure slips out, reminding Guglielmo of the matter in hand and, following the second episode, reducing the whole orchestra to a state of total unease with its chuckling.

This has no effect on Ferrando, of course, and in the following accompanied recitative, which is particularly unified from a motivic point of view, he wallows in his anguish, but in his beautiful cavatina ('Tradito, schernito') his anger flares up again after only seven bars, followed in the winds by a radiant picture of the woman whom he still loves. It is the sort of melody which, filled with yearning, already anticipates Beethoven in its expressivity. Like Fiordiligi before him, Ferrando is deadly serious about his fidelity. Again his anger flares up briefly, before the earlier melody reappears, but now heard in the oboes, rather than the clarinets, and in the key of C major, where it creates a particularly beautiful impression, casting its transfiguring radiance over the whole of the rest of the aria. Here, too, Ferrando remains true to himself, a man of deep emotions but little taste for action – Alfonso still has a struggle on his hands with him. Dorabella, too, pours out the whole of her superficial, sensual nature in her following aria ('È amore un ladroncello'): the love that she praises is a titillating affair of the moment, a gallant game that stirs the senses but never goes beyond the surface. In this it corresponds to a commonplace of *opera buffa* as found in the text. Mozart responds in kind, setting it as an Italianate, siciliana-like rondo with a varied main theme,[92] mischievous and graceful, but without depth. The prominent winds, especially the clarinets, ensure that the sensual aspect of Dorabella's character finds full expression here.

Meanwhile, Fiordiligi has taken the romantic decision of dressing as a man and following her fiancé into battle. She is busy preparing to leave, when Ferrando interrupts her in a state of tense expectancy. He, too, is deeply agitated as a result of recent events, thereby providing the starting point for the most remarkable number in the entire opera apart from the two finales, a duet ('Fra gli amplessi in pochi istanti') that is noteworthy not least for its free form. In the opening adagio Fiordiligi begins by picking up the raptly infatuated mood of her recent aria. Her thoughts are still consumed with tender longing, and her heart is already beginning to beat a little faster in the E major section (con moto) when suddenly, in E minor, she hears a lovesick lament that is akin to her own yearning but which comes from another world: it is Ferrando who, on entering this world of emotion, once again forgets the role that he is playing. The radiance of A major suddenly fades and Fiordiligi withdraws into C major for the allegretto, a fragrant bloom that closes its petals

92. The opening recalls Paisiello's 'E vero sò fegliuola' from the second finale of *Gli amanti comici*, a number that is also in B flat major.

when touched against its will. Only one more phrase struggles to cross her lips, the same phrase that had accompanied the sisters' first rejection in the earlier quintet ('Sento oddio, che questo piede'), except that now it is harsher. But even the flickering accompaniment in the violins is the same. Ferrando now begins to emerge more clearly from the curious half-light, the phrase in question becoming for him a symbol of death at Fiordiligi's hands. How eloquent is his admonishment at the words 'E se forza, oh Dio, non hai, io la man ti reggerò' ('And if you lack the strength, by God, I'll guide your hand myself')! Even at this point Fiordiligi has already begun to vacillate, as is clear from her helpless, vaguely recitative-like melodic line at 'taci ahimè'. From now on he has her in tow melodically: he begins with bassoons, she follows with oboes, and at the words 'incomincia a vacillar', the vocal lines of both of them already exude a suspicious warmth of emotion. Once more she tries to break free from this delightful spell with her disjointed entreaty, but by the words 'ah non son, non son più forte' ('Ah, I no longer have any strength') she is fluttering around like a caged bird. At the same time the seductive A major reappears with increasing insistence in the distance, emerging from Ferrando's vocal line in the following larghetto to exert its magic power. It is a melody of a sensuous beauty unique to this opera and, at the same time, very closely related to Fiordiligi's world of emotion. But the enchantment of the moment draws Ferrando, too, out of himself, so that he no longer thinks of acting a part and instead enjoys its beauty to the full. Fiordiligi's change of heart is typical of Mozart: in spite of the previous crescendo, it is accompanied not by an agitated outburst of emotion but by an oboe melody of tranquil bliss. Which of us, when listening to this whole love scene, thinks of it as no more than a hypocritical game? Fiordiligi has forgotten her fiancé, Ferrando has forgotten the role that he was playing and the listener has forgotten the whole dramatic context as a result of the music, which is the true victor in this battle of love, so that even these characterless creatures are permitted a fleeting glimpse of Mozart's paradise of love. And is it not an ancient right of *opera buffa* occasionally to turn dramatic logic on its head for the sake of the music, a privilege of which Mozart now makes the noblest use? Which of us, in the presence of such rapt bliss, thinks of logic or of Da Ponte?[93] In the following andante – there are no fast sections in this duet – the couple's happiness pours forth in all its inwardness, first in folklike thirds and sixths, as though we are dealing with some fairytale princess who has just been released from her captivity, then in a passage involving brief canonic entries, mounting in intensity all the time, as though there is no end to the feeling of bliss. Only in the following scene does the beautiful illusion evaporate and the plot reasserts its claims. In a scene that is calculated to create the greatest possible contrast, the arch-rationalist Don Alfonso – a man who can never take time off to explore the irrational – draws his own conclusion, culminating in the moral 'così fan tutte': 'all women are the same'. Melodically, too, this aria is the diametrical opposite of the duet, with the burgeoning lines of the earlier piece replaced by self-righteous, stilted and arid declamation. Particularly delightful here are the trenchant dynamics and orchestral writing: note especially the contrasting use of legato and staccato and the complacent tone that Alfonso adopts at the words 'ed a me par necessità del core' ('but I think that it's an inborn need'). His diatribe grows increasingly embittered, climaxing in the final moral familiar from the overture that is now repeated by the lovers, who have finally been persuaded to believe in it, too. That this uninspired dictum follows immediately after the love scene between Fiordiligi and Ferrando is a further example of the opera's subtle irony, reminding us that the work is not a series of random numbers

93. Not even Jahn is free of such reservations; see Jahn, *W. A. Mozart*, ii.521.

but one that demands to be seen as a whole, the individual parts of which are internally linked with one another.[94]

Like the first-act finale of *Don Giovanni*, the second-act finale of *Così fan tutte* ('Fate presto, o cari amici') begins with hectic preparations for the coming celebrations. The bubbling high spirits of the music are also related, except that here the tone is more leisurely, more good-natured and more bourgeois. With wit and dignity Don Alfonso takes control of the situation, slipping away at the end with Despina, with a half-suppressed chuckle at the success of his prank. With the sudden entry of a festive E flat major comes a description – clearly modelled on contemporary life[95] – of the wedding celebrations of the two couples. The chorus begins the proceedings with a lively number, with the men greeting the two bridegrooms, the women greeting the brides. But they have also brought some music with them and end with a festive fanfare. The chorus is then repeated following an ensemble for the two couples that lends burgeoning expression to their feelings of happiness to the accompaniment of tender wind sonorities. Once again Fiordiligi and Ferrando step outside their respective groups with their fiery *fioriture*. And once again the pressure to dissemble has been completely forgotten, as the two men abandon themselves to the happiness of the moment with the same ardour as the two women. To the strains of Tafelmusik, they then sit down to eat and to drink each other's health while casting lovesick glances at one another, while their glasses chink merrily in the orchestra. In keeping with contemporary custom, the meal culminates in a canon initiated by Fiordiligi. In this way Mozart succeeds in allowing the lovers to luxuriate in their feelings of bliss to a degree that one would hardly have thought possible. In a far nobler sense than is suggested by the text, all thoughts of the past are overtaken by this flood of beauty and harmony, with only the coolly superior Guglielmo refusing to be drawn into the floodtide of emotion.[96] Seething with quiet fury, he curses the whole comedy and thus maintains a link with the outer action. But he remains completely apart from the others, as the winds add their voices to the canon.

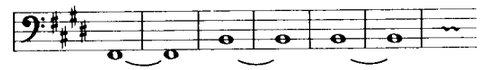
With a surprising enharmonic shift from A flat to a strident E major, the notary's *buffa* scene begins.[97] Here Mozart adopts the Italian practice of emphasizing his formal dignity, just as he

94. ◆ Concerning the duet, also see Stiefel, 'Mozart's Seductions', and de Médicis, 'Chanter pour se faire entendre: Le duo d'influence dans les opéras de Mozart'.

95. We have already found similar allusions to everyday customs and practices in *Le nozze di Figaro* and, even more, in *Don Giovanni*. They reveal the links between Mozart's operas and the older tradition which, as is clear from Bach's passions, for example, laid special emphasis on such connections.

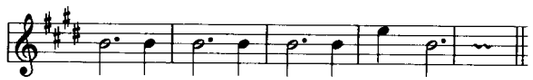
96. It was originally planned that Guglielmo should join in the canon, but this idea was then abandoned; in the critical commentary to AMA V/19, Rietz suggests that the canon would have been too high for Guglielmo's voice, but, had he wanted to, Mozart could undoubtedly have overcome this technical difficulty. ◆ Concerning the context of Mozart's canon, and in particular its relation to Martín y Soler's *Una cosa rara* and *L'arbore di Diana*, see Link, 'The Viennese operatic canon and Mozart's *Così fan tutte*'.

97. In this scene Bernhard Gugler assumes an error on Mozart's part and alters the bass line in the autograph score from



to

stressed the medic's vulgar charlatanism. Even his greeting is accompanied by a delightful little old-fashioned flourish in the orchestra. When he then reads out the contract, he assumes his self-important official expression in a vivid motif that he is instructed to sing 'pel naso' ('through the nose'):



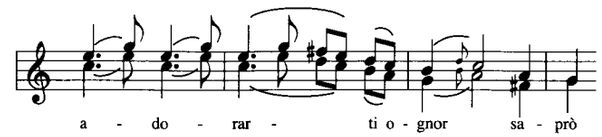
The orchestra keeps inventing new and more roguish accompanying figures that finally drive the two bridal couples to vent their exasperation, at which point a drumroll and the shrill sound of flutes, coupled by a sudden shift from A to D major, usher in a repeat of the chorus from the opening act ('Bella vita militar'), which now enters *pianissimo* in the distance. This is the first of a series of very brief sections. After all, the listener knows in advance how the affair will end and demands its swift resolution, with the result that the composer, too, is content to emphasize individual features and to characterize each of them only briefly. In consequence, there is no grand, free rondo-like ending to the work. Alfonso's feigned alarm is suitably underscored by the sudden entry of E flat major. This section is related, above all rhythmically, to the scene with the doctor in the first-act finale. It opens with one of those motifs which, descending triadically before suddenly breaking off, invariably signifies an outpouring of extreme emotion in Mozart's music.[98] The two women then repeat it in a more succinct form. For all its brevity, this section is extremely unified in structure and filled with a real sense of tension. Its second half rests on two equally structured harmonic arches, first on F, then, by means of an interrupted cadence, on E flat. The fluttering of the voices in minor thirds over the diminished chords creates a particularly pitiable impression, sinking to the ground in a highly realistic manner at the change of time-signature. All the more effective, then, is the half *galant*, half trusting tone of the two officers on their apparent return, with their delightful fermatas at the ends of their lines.[99] They know very well how to play the part of innocents. Meanwhile, the two puppeteers continue to pull the strings of the comedy. Particularly priceless is Despina's lie about the masked ball, with the innocent tone of the opening suddenly turning into mischievous giggling. The discovery of the marriage contract provokes in the men an outburst of tragic emotion that clearly contains an element of parody. All the more powerful is the response on the part of the totally annihilated sisters. Here, too, the text strikes a tragic pose, but the composer takes pity on his creatures and simply lets them sing and reveal the genuine emotions that they feel in their anxious young hearts. At the words 'Il mio fallo tardi vedo' ('Too late I see my error') they suddenly and movingly take refuge in the melody with which the men had greeted them, as though this might offer them some means of escape. After a few moments of fear and bewilderment, the two Albanians are wittily unmasked in a series of very brief episodes, with Guglielmo quoting the melody of his love duet ('Il core vi dono') and then, together with Ferrando, repeating the doctor's melody from the first-act finale, while the

As a result the bass now doubles the voice. See Gugler, 'Zwei eingewurzelte Druckfehler', 30. Chrysander ('Zur Partitur des *Don Giovanni*', 534–5) and Köchel (written communication) agree, whereas Rietz, in the collected edition, disagrees. The new edition gives the original version, but changes the viola line, a change that the critical commentary ought to have stressed, whereas it does not discuss the passage at all. I share Deiters's reservations about this change; see Jahn, *W. A. Mozart*, ii.539. It undermines the notary's self-importance, which finds highly effective expression in the chord of the seventh on F sharp, and above all it destroys the wonderful effect of the ninth that enters on 'stipulato'. There is no compelling reason to change Mozart's autograph score at this point.

98. Cf. the Count's 'Quà la chiave' in *Le nozze di Figaro* and, below, the passage 'Giusto ciel! Voi qui scriveste!'

99. Note also the way in which the violas double the violins at the lower octave.

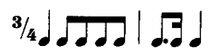
orchestra, too, insists repeatedly on its motif from the same scene. Alfonso then adopts his typical tone of discreetly smiling irony (note also the gentle murmuring in the middle voices) and removes his own mask. Note the delightful way in which the sisters completely ignore him and, drawing on all the feminine wiles at their disposal, beg their lovers' forgiveness. Again their characteristic shimmering sequences of thirds have to do all that they can on their behalf. How fervent are their fermatas, how irresistible the following phrase, which is so typical of the opera as a whole:



The men forgive them, even if their forgiveness is initially somewhat grudging. Meanwhile, Despina's voice flutters uneasily through the ensemble, suggesting that she may even feel the pricks of conscience here. Total reconciliation comes only with the final Allegro, but whereas the Italian composers of the period would have struck a note of wild exuberance, here we find a quiet cantabile for the winds, which the voices likewise take up *sotto voce*, with the feeling of happiness finding expression with no sense of stridency or exaggeration. In the course of the following pages Mozart explores in detail individual ideas in his wooden text, from 'ogni cosa', 'casi', 'piangere' and 'riso' to 'turbini' and 'bella calma', but he takes these pearls of wisdom no more seriously than his characters, who are the last people to allow their happiness to be spoilt by Da Ponte's moral. Instead, they enjoy the moment with all the impulsiveness of their nature, with sheer bliss radiating in their eyes at the beautiful writing for the winds before 'bella calma troverà'. It is as though love, having led them such a merry dance, were smiling and offering them its forgiveness here. And with a silent and wistful smile the composer brings down the curtain.

The recitatives are markedly *buffa*-like in character, in other words, they are far more concerned with quick-wittedness than with expressivity. The *secco* recitative between the second and third trios includes a dialogue consisting of very brief phrases that are generally tossed to and fro like balls. Mostly, it is the same chord on which the battle of words is fought out. As a result, the recitatives are essentially more flowing and flexible than in the earlier operas. Not only do they often pass without full closure into the following number but are occasionally and effortlessly combined with brief accompanied recitatives, as in act one, scene twelve. This also explains the more frequent appearance of animated basses. Just before the decisive scene with Despina in act one, scene ten, for example, Don Alfonso has a motif in the bass which, carefully harmonized, is repeated seven times, providing an admirable reflection of his concerns. Otherwise, the emotionally charged passages are far fewer than in the other operas. The brief recitative at the start of act one, scene three is a good example of this, as is the recitative in act one, scene nine, in which Alfonso tells Despina of his plan for the officers to take poison. In act two, scene eight, when Ferrando learns that Dorabella has been unfaithful to him, there is even a chromatically rising line in the bass that recalls Gluck. And in much the same way, the temperament of the two sisters occasionally breaks through, as with Fiordiligi in act one, scene four and with Dorabella in act one, scene nine. And since the couples often appear in self-contained groups, we encounter a surprising number of recitatives involving more than one voice at a time, notably in act one, scene four, where the two officers sing together for no fewer than five bars in a row. On one occasion, the entrance of Don Alfonso means that we even have three-part writing.

Like each of its great predecessors, *Così fan tutte* has its own particular style, a style that emerged entirely naturally from Mozart's basic conception of his subject.[100] In this case the difference is much greater than that between *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, for *Così fan tutte* represents far more of a triumph for Mozart as a musician than as a delineator of character. The austere objectivity of *Don Giovanni* is replaced by a veritable indulgence in the purely musical, with all its sensual delights.[101] This indulgence manifests itself in the predilection for tone-painting as well as in the colourful instrumentation, with its fondness for beautiful sonorities, especially the characteristically tender sound of the clarinets, and in the melodic writing, which bears all the hallmarks of the composer's grace and sweetness. Nowhere else did he write more sensuously beguiling love songs. Of course, there is no underlying sense of the portentous primeval urges of the human psyche, as in *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. What we find instead is *galant* lyricism: these feelings, after all, are always bound up with society. Yet within this sphere they have all the delightful mellifluousness of this Rococo art form, without any sense of self-complacent insistency. It is this that distinguishes *Così fan tutte* from Italian *opera buffa*, a genre with which it otherwise shares the preponderance of the musical over the psychological. The insane jokes and caricatures of Italian *opera buffa* are only lightly touched on, and instead the prevailing tone is a superior, far more aristocratic humour that prefers to leave everything in this masquerade to create its effect through itself alone, learning to recognize and love the human element even in the inadequate and superficial. In consequence, the work reveals an aspect of Mozart's view of the world that we should not like to forgo. We have every reason to take off our hats to the genius who conjured up this fragrant rosebush between the towering achievements of *Don Giovanni* and *Die Zauberflöte*.

Among the arias that date from this period, the least important is 'Schon lacht der holde Frühling' K580, which Mozart wrote for Josepha Hofer and which survives only in the form of a draft score. It was presumably in order to accommodate his sister-in-law's modest musical abilities that he fell back on the form of the old *da capo* aria here, a form he had long ago abandoned, varying only the end of the *da capo*. On a higher level are the three insertion arias written for Louise Villeneuve, K578, 582 and 583.[102] The first of these, 'Alma grande', is a binary aria, powerful in expression, that makes only limited demands on the singer's range and vocal flexibility. Its accompaniment includes a number of effective pointers in the direction of an imitative treatment of the main theme. The second aria, 'Chi sà qual sia', is a single andante movement that stands out more for the beauty of its wind writing than for its depth of expression. And the third, 'Vado, ma dove?', comprises a fast section followed, exceptionally, by a slow one. The andante that finally develops out of the tempestuous allegro floats along on a Mozartian minuet rhythm  with a cantilena whose tender melodiousness recalls *Così fan tutte*. Its instrumentation, too, reveals the same masterly qualities.

100. ◆ Further concerning *Così fan tutte*, see Bruce Alan Brown, *W. A. Mozart: Così fan tutte*; Dent, *Mozart's Operas: A Critical Study*; Kunze, *Mozarts Opern*; Steptoe, *The Mozart–Da Ponte operas: The Cultural and Musical Background to Le nozze di Figaro, Don Giovanni, and Così fan tutte*; Till, *Mozart and the Enlightenment: Truth, virtue and beauty in Mozart's operas*; and Vill, *Così fan tutte: Beiträge zur Wirkungsgeschichte von Mozarts Oper*.

101. Mozart's consideration for the individual qualities of his performers also falls under this heading.

102. K578 was discovered by Jahn in Carl August André's possession in 1856 in a copy that was almost certainly among Mozart's papers at the time of his death. An entry on the title-page is in Nissen's hand. ◆ Mozart's autograph for K578 is lost; the best surviving source for the work is a Viennese copy from 1789 now in the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna (shelfmark K. T. 56). Further concerning K578, see Lazarevich, 'Mozart's Insertion Aria "Alma grande e nobil core", K. 578: Criticism of Cimarosa or a Compliment to the Composer?' Concerning K582 and 583, see Wiesend, 'Opernhandwerk und Originalität: Mozarts Arien KV 582 und 583 als Einlagen in Martín y Solers "Il burbero di buon cuore"'.

49

Increasing hardship and work[1]

The accession of the Emperor Leopold II on 13 March 1790 seemed to bode little good for opera and music in general. After all, Leopold was not regarded as a great lover or connoisseur of music. At all events, he no longer took a personal interest in the musical life of Vienna in the way that his predecessor had done. Consciously or unconsciously he ushered in a period of marked political and artistic reaction. The old favourites of the princely courts of Europe – ballet and *opera seria* – were revived. Rumour had it that a new opera house was to be built with boxes that could also be used for card games.[2] It was also reported that Salieri was so disgruntled by this new development that he was thinking of quitting his post and would be replaced by Cimarosa.[3] Initially Leopold showed absolutely no interest in opera and music: by July 1790 he had still not been to the theatre or organized any private concerts. Only his wife, the Empress Louise, was seen at the opera, to which she seemed to bring a genuine understanding, even though she appeared unimpressed by musical standards in Vienna. The princes, too, received music lessons.[4] But gradually the emperor became less withdrawn, and it was Joseph II's favourites who were the first to be affected by this change of heart. On 25 January 1791 Count Rosenberg was dismissed from his post and replaced by Count Ugarte,[5] and the same fate overtook Adriana Ferrarese and Da Ponte, who had marked the emperor's accession with a typically bombastic tribute.[6] Salieri, to whom Leopold was particularly ill disposed,[7] preferred not to wait for further developments but stepped down as director of the opera and was replaced by Joseph Weigl, in order – it was said – 'to honour the master in the pupil'.[8]

Mozart himself had certainly not been one of the favourites of the old regime and was allowed to remain in office. But that was all. In general, even less notice was taken of him than before and he was treated with open contempt, a point that emerges with particular clarity from his attempt – undertaken with the help of Gottfried van Swieten – to obtain the post of second Kapellmeister

1. ◆ In some respects this is the most surprising chapter in Abert. To be sure, research since his time has clarified aspects of the genesis and chronology of *La clemenza di Tito*, *Die Zauberflöte* and the *Requiem* that could not have been known to him. Nevertheless, his uncritical faith in unsupported anecdotal evidence concerning these works is atypical of the book as a whole. At the same time, however, it clearly serves his teleological purpose, as the chapter's concluding sentence makes clear.

2. This, too, was a long-established custom in Italy, as is clear from the lively account of de Brosses, *Lettres familières écrites en Italie en 1739 et 1740*, ii.236: 'Les échecs sont inventés à merveille pour remplir le vide de ces longs récitatifs, et la musique pour interrompre la trop grande assuidité aux échecs.'

3. *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, i (1791), 15; and Lange, *Biographie des Joseph Lange*, 167.

4. *Musikalische Korrespondenz der Teutschen Filarmonischen Gesellschaft*, i (1790), 30.

5. Wlassak, *Chronik des k. k. Hof-Burgtheaters*, 67.

6. Da Ponte, *Memorie*, i/2.114–15.

7. According to Da Ponte, Leopold described him as an 'egoista insupportabile che non vorrebbe che piacessero nel mio teatro che le sue opere e la sua bella; egli non è solo nemico vostro, ma lo è di tutti i maestri di cappella, di tutte le cantanti'; Da Ponte, *Memorie*, ii.135. ◆ For detailed discussions of Leopold's musical taste and changes in Vienna's musical life at this time, see Rice, 'Emperor and impresario: Leopold II and the transformation of Viennese musical theater, 1790–1792', 'Vienna under Joseph II and Leopold II', 'Leopold II, Mozart, and the return to a Golden Age' and *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera*; further, see Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna: Sources and documents, 1783–1792*.

8. Mosel, *Ueber das Leben und die Werke des Anton Salieri*, 138; and *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, i (1791), 62.