Rhythmic Gesture in

MOZART

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

&

DON GIOVANNI

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Finally, I follow Leonard G. Ratner in viewing Classic "form" as essentially a compositional procedure, which follows a basic harmonic plan; I have adopted his terminology to describe it. I discuss the matter at greater length in note 5 to chapter 3.

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Wye Jamison Allanbrook

INTRODUCTION

Expression, Imitation, and the Musical Topos

One of the most exalted moments of music in Mozart's operas occurs midway through the second-act finale of *Le nozze di Figaro*. The Countess, Susanna, and Figaro have just managed to outwit the most recent of Count Almaviva's strategems and, united in their precarious triumph, are asking the Count to cease his attempts to sabotage Susanna's and Figaro's coming wedding (while the Count under his breath mutters imprecations on the head of the tardy Marcellina). The music of the ensemble is extraordinarily beautiful, and lifts the brief moment up out of the temporal bustle of the comedy (ex. i–1).[1] In all its transcendent beauty this passage can at the same time be classified as a specific musical type: it is an example of a musette-gavotte, a dance gesture which is associated with the genre of the pastoral.[2] Four other pieces in the last two acts of *Le nozze di Figaro* have as close a connection with the pastoral, and the poetry of da Ponte abounds in pastoral images. The opera in fact turns out to be a special vision of the refuge offered by the pastoral world to true lovers, and has as its business to explicate those adjectives "pastoral" and "true." This musette-gavotte in the second-act finale is doing its work as part of the complex of associations which confirms and defines the role of the pastoral image in the opera.

That the pastoral plays any role at all in *Le nozze di Figaro* has not previously been much noticed. It has instead become a commonplace to describe the opera as a drawing-room comedy with strong undertones of revolutionary protest.[3] Yet the claim that the opera has a pastoral ambience draws its support not from private intuitions, but from a study of Mozart's musical imagery—a study the mere possibility of which has

Example i-1

been too long ignored by most writers on his operas. For Mozart was in possession of something we can call an expressive vocabulary, a collection in music of what in the theory of rhetoric are called *topoi*,[4] or topics for formal discourse. He held it in common with his audience, and used it in his operas with the skill of a master craftsman. This vocabulary, when captured and categorized, provides a tool for analysis which can mediate between the operas and our individual responses to them, supplying independent information about the expressive content of the arias and ensembles. For in it music and words about music are united; each musical *topos* has associations both natural and historical, which can be expressed in words, and which were tacitly shared by the eighteenth-century audience. Because of their connections with certain universal habits of human behavior, these *topoi* are also largely in the possession of the opera-going audience today, although modern listeners may not

be aware of the source of their particular perceptions. An acquaintance with these *topoi* frees the writer from the dilemma he would otherwise face when trying to explicate a given passage: that he can at the one extreme do no more than detail the mere facts and figures of its tonal architecture,[5] or at the other merely anatomize his private reactions to a work. By recognizing a characteristic style, he can identify a configuration of notes and rhythms as having a particular expressive stance, modified and clarified, of course, by its role in its movement and by the uses made of it earlier in the piece. In short, he can articulate within certain limits the shared response a particular passage will evoke.

Current notions of the term "topic" or "characteristic style" seem often to include under that head all which is musically eccentric or exotic, or belonging to that rather questionable bag of tricks, the imitation of natural phenomena. Membership in the class is considered to mark a figure, a rhythm, or a style as necessarily of limited utility to the composer; it will be much in demand on certain special occasions, but only on special occasions. In the meantime the rest of music moves serenely on down purer and more respectable paths. Only one exception is universally granted—in the high Baroque the *Affektenlehre*, or "doctrine of the affections," with its thoroughgoing attempts to codify the connections between figure and affect.[6]

Yet the music of the Classic style is pervasively mimetic, not of Nature itself but of our natures—of the world of men, their habits and actions. The doctrine of art as imitation, as a "mirror to the world," is often today regarded as a puzzling or distasteful teaching. Although it was for centuries the center of the canon of aesthetic theory, it suffered a devaluation in the nineteenth century, when poets and composers began to consider the end of artistic endeavor to be instead the transmission into a poem or composition of the artist's own interior state of being.[7] Romantic formulations like the following by Franz Liszt, taking for granted the origin of the creative impulse as "the impressions of [one's own] soul," crowned music as the highest of the arts because it alone was capable of expressing inner feeling untrammelled:

> Music embodies *feeling* without forcing it—as it is forced in its other manifestations, in most arts, and especially in the art of words—to contend and combine with *thought*. If music has one advantage over the other means through which man can reproduce the impressions of his soul, it owes this to its supreme capacity to make each inner impulse audible without the assistance of reason.[8]

In the word "expression" the preposition *ex-* now drew to itself all the emphasis. The source of the work of art was the soul of the artist; his task was to "press *out*" the stirrings within himself, to give them expres-

sion in words or notes.[9] In previous centuries, on the other hand, it had been the art of making the imprint which alone mattered — the *Druck* of the German word for expression, *Ausdruck* — for as sources of the imprint were intended not the private and personal, no matter how transcendent, but the beings outside of us which impinge on us, the "things that are."

The accumulation of a collection of *topoi* for expressive discourse is the natural concomitant of an aesthetic which sets as its goal the mirroring of aspects of the universe. Each branch of the arts will develop a storehouse of devices appropriate to its own medium whereby those universals can be represented — or imitated. The argument for music as an imitative art runs in the most general terms as follows: objects in the external world make an impression on our souls; music can, by imitating those impressions, move our souls in a similar fashion, placing us "in tune" with certain substantial entities. The entities to be imitated are various: the higher orders of being, perhaps, or the passions of our fellow men — different ages esteemed different objects. In the theologically ordered cosmos of the Middle Ages and Renaissance the soul vibrated in tune with the natural numbers, seeking to know its kinship with God through the mediation of physics. But Aristotle, who was for all who came after him the prime exponent of the doctrine that the arts should be imitators of real objects, held an alternative view of the kind of objects which it is proper for makers of imitation to catch in their mirrors. "The objects of imitation are men in action," he stated flatly in the *Poetics*.[10] And since a man's bearing will help to reveal his character, as the *Nichomachean Ethics* states,[11] any imitation of a man in act will show us how he performs those actions — with dignity, basely, with joy — and will thus uncover his true nature. Only by witnessing a man in the motion of action can we judge him in an ethical frame. Aristotle considered music to be an art particularly apt for transmitting the qualities which men exhibit in action:

> Rhythms and melodies especially contain likenesses to the true natures of anger and gentleness, and further of courage and temperance and of all their opposites, and of the other moral qualities (and this is clear from its effects, for when we hear these things we are changed in our soul).[12]

The eighteenth-century doctrine of imitation followed not the Renaissance but the Aristotelian view of the proper objects of imitation: "Not to portray ideas of inanimate things, but passions and feelings of the heart, is its [music's] particular and final goal," said the late eighteenth-century theorist Heinrich Christoph Koch, author of a music lexicon and a treatise on composition.[13] Koch's formulation resembles those of

the *Affektenlehre* theorists earlier in the century (it lacks only their detailed attempts to correlate figures with affects). The passions to be portrayed are those emotions in the throes of which men act. They are not the private emotions of the composer, except indirectly as he experiences those passions in common with all men. Each passion is considered to be distinguished by a certain kind of motion, which differentiates it from all the other passions. For that reason, says Koch, we sometimes call the passions *Gemüthsbewegungen* ("soul-movements").[14] Music can successfully imitate the motions of the passions, stirring up a similar motion "slumbering in the spectators."[15] The process is kinaesthetic, and might appear to be merely a pseudoscientific elaboration on the notion of sympathetic vibrations, but for one important addition: it identifies the kinaesthetic and ethical spheres. The "vibrations" set up by a certain configuration of tones and rhythms stir our souls infallibly to a particular perception of the nature of each action; sensing them, as Aristotle put it, "we are changed in our soul." It is the duty of the composer to make the study of the passions his life's work.[16]

The importance to early eighteenth-century music of the doctrine of the affections is relatively well understood. But, in operatic music at least, this kind of mimesis could not fulfill its highest potential until later in the century, with the advent of the new freedoms of comic opera. The rigidly structured conventions of the serious opera of the period put strict limits on the situations in which the passions could be imitated: a character singing an aria could only assume a static posture of reaction to an action previously rendered in recitative. Thus the formal music of *opera seria*, with all its lofty aspirations, nevertheless fulfilled only half of Aristotle's dictum: it could imitate men, but never their actions. The often crude and simple *opera buffa*, because it admitted dramatic action to the arena of the set piece, was far more Aristotelian in character. Only when action became musically respectable and music was allowed to range beyond the limits of the soliloquy, could opera become a full-blown example of the imitative art. Music could then make its contribution to the opera's structure of metaphor through the imitation of the affective configurations of an action.[17] And, as is often pointed out, Mozart was the particular benefactor of *buffa*'s innovation.

Before we can turn to the operas themselves there remains one further question to be dealt with, that of the means by which Classic music effected its imitations of "men in action": the particular content of Mozart's thesaurus of *topoi* must be spelled out. As every period differs in the set of objects it chooses to reflect in its surfaces, so the natural limits of each of the arts help to dictate both the proper subject matter of each art and the means of its mimesis. A misunderstanding of music's

proper means of imitation may be one reason for the modern reluctance to apply the doctrine of imitation to music. The ubiquity of that misleading catch phrase, the "imitation of nature," suggests the more trivial types of program music, where music's unnatural efforts to represent natural phenomena in tones imitate not nature but the powers proper to another art—that of painting—and only serve to render music laughable. But music's proper limits were defined very simply by one eighteenth-century French writer on music (and composer of libretti), Michel Paul Gui de Chabanon:

> Imitation in music is not truly sensed unless its object is music. In songs one can successfully imitate warlike fanfares, hunting airs, rustic melodies, etc. It is only a question of giving one song the character of another. Art, in that case, does not suffer violence. When one moves away from this, however, imitation grows weaker, actually because of the insufficiency of means which music can employ.[18]

Chabanon's formulation allows "tone-painting" to remain strictly a metaphor. He was plainly offended by musical gimmickry, an excess to which every era is given in some fashion, from the naive pictorialism of a few Italian and English madrigalists down to the carefully codified pictorialism often attributed to J. S. Bach himself. Composers, Chabanon felt, should never attempt the vain task of forging a direct link between music and the thing it imitates. Instead, art music should represent the passions through the mediation of the simpler music which men use to accompany their daily activities and amusements. Music could then retain a dignified autonomy without thereby denying the human subject matter of the art.

music pictorialism x metaphoric tone-painting

Chabanon was only legitimizing in words the common practice of composers of his time, a practice observed even in the domain of instrumental music, where it would seem one could most easily make a case for music as an abstract or private art. One example from the piano sonatas of Mozart will suffice to illustrate the point, introducing at the same time some of the topics in his expressive vocabulary. The first movement of the Sonata in F Major, K. 332, is a miniature theater of human gestures and actions, which is crafted by imitating the kinds of music written to accompany these gestures. It begins with four measures in a simple singing style, answered by a four-measure parody of learned counterpoint (ex. i-2). The double opening statement of the sonata is balanced by ten measures of hunt calls (mm. 13–22), which fall to a strong cadence in F major (ex. i-3). A passage of *Sturm und Drang* music (mm. 23ff.) dramatizes the move to the dominant, its minor tonalities and arpeggiated sixteenth notes imitating the self-consciously "tragic" style often affected by C. P. E. Bach, and by Mozart and Haydn after him (ex. i-4). Moving into C minor, the *Sturm und Drang*

Example i-2

Allegro

(p)

Example i-3

(p)

13

Example i-4

23

f

sf

Example i-5

p

41

culminates in an augmented sixth and a dramatic cadence on the dominant. Arrival in C major is "nailed down" by a bright and symmetrical minuet tune (ex. i-5). The minuet is interrupted momentarily by a *Sturm und Drang* parenthesis (m. 56), but reasserts itself in measure 71 (beginning on the subdominant as a reminder that its neat periods have been interrupted), and brings the exposition to a close.

The exposition of this *Allegro* is theater, although it has no aspirations to actual narrative. Mozart makes palpable the harmonic drama of the section — the modulation from the tonic to the dominant — by imitating various human gestures along its arch. This imitation is effected through the mediation of the kinds of music which characteristically accompany these gestures. In instrumental music the reigning affects did not need to be spelled out in words; sonatas were subliminally referential, and required no "program." Each musical motive,[19] because it had an implicit connection with an ordinary human posture, appealed directly to the listener's experience.

All the words I have used to describe the *topoi* of the *Allegro* — posture, stance, gesture — concern movement of the body, and hence rhythm. Supporting the successful projection of each posture in the sonata is a characteristic rhythm. In the "singing allegro" the slow-moving, long-breathed legato of the singer is set off by the perpetual and even motion of the "Alberti" bass figure.[20] The contrapuntal gesture is fundamentally a rhythmic one as well, for it is the overlapping repetitions of a single motive which conceal the regular punctuations implicit in normal period structure. Rhythm is the essence of the minuet gesture, with its six beats of nearly equal weight evenly distributed across two measures of moderate tempo. The dignified and noble affect which the horn calls project is derived from the minuet rhythms which animate the evocative harmonies, voice leading, and "orchestration" constituting the horn sound.

It is not at all surprising that rhythm — the number, order, and weight of accents and, consequently, tempo — is a primary agent in the projecting of human postures and thereby of human character. The German term *Gemüthsbewegung* itself suggests the primacy of rhythm in the anatomy of feeling: each passion is termed a *movement* of the soul. Indeed the German word for tempo, *Bewegung* (French *mouvement*), emphasizes not rate of speed but quality of motion. The rhythmic *topos* or characteristic rhythmic gesture lies at the base of almost all of Mozart's affective vocabulary, and in opera especially. There the subject is explicitly the actions of human beings, and rhythmic gestures choreograph the movements of each character in the drama. In the eighteenth century it was still possible to agree with Aristotle that bearing is character. As one dancing master of the period put it:

> A man's gestures and postures provide a considerable demonstration of his dispositions and habits, which sometimes are manifested in the most trivial actions. . . . From outside appearances, from his gestures, words, movements, and the least externals, one can get to know the most important internal matters. That is where the saying comes from: to know someone from his face. Every man should attend to two things in himself: a modest walk and gestures suitable to an intelligent and well-bred man.[21]

The motions of the singer on the stage will be directly revelatory of the character he portrays, which is as much as to say that the music written for that character is in itself a demonstration of his nature. Koch approvingly quotes Rousseau as remarking of the performer in opera:

> It is not enough for [him] to be an excellent singer, if he is not also at the same time an excellent mime. . . . The orchestra ought not to execute any thoughts which do not appear to come from his soul. His steps, his bearing, his movement, all must constantly match the music, without it seeming to have been planned that way.[22]

The music of Classic opera was no longer bound in an ancillary relation to the text. Using its own vocabulary of rhythmic *topoi* it assumed the primary responsibility for the motivation, literal and figurative, of its characters. The librettist was freed from the necessity of writing pallid *sententiae* in rhyming couplets in order to render the protagonist's commentary on his psychic state, for a character in the motion of action would reveal himself more naturally than could any number of explanatory soliloquies. He need never step out of the frame of the drama, and his actions could belie his words. Dramatic music could bear any number of relations to the text: it could contradict, question, interpolate, or reinterpret. It had become the prime mover, and Mozart a choreographer of the passions.

CHAPTER ONE

The Shapes of Rhythms

Meter, Dance, and Expression

It should not come as a surprise, in light of what has been said, that meters can in themselves possess affects. Although meter is an element of music which in general we consider as merely a handy temporal measure (beneath the threshold of expressive values), a meter is usually the first choice a composer makes, and all signs indicate that in the late eighteenth century that choice amounted to the demarcation of an expressive limit. One finds in glancing through the writings of late eighteenth-century theorists that a description of the expressive qualities of meters is regularly included in discussions of how to "paint the passions":

> Tempo in music is either fast or slow, and the division of the measure is either duple or triple. Both kinds are distinguished from each other by their nature and by their effect, and their use is anything but indifferent as far as the various passions are concerned. . . .
>
> Composers rarely offend in this matter [the affects of various tempos], but more often against the special nature and quality of various meters; since they often set in 4/4 what by its nature is an *alla breve* or 2/4 meter. With 6/8 meter the same confusions occur often enough, even with well-known composers, and in cases where they cannot use as an excuse the constraint occasionally placed upon them by the poet. Generally many composers appear to have studied the tenets of meter even less than those of period structure, since the former is cloaked in far less darkness than the latter.[1]

> Music is based on the possibility of making a row of notes which are indifferent in themselves, of which not one expresses anything autonomously, into a speech of the passions. . . .

> [Meter's role in the "speech of the passions":] The advantages of subdividing triple and duple meter into various meters with longer or shorter notes for the main beats are understandable; for from this each meter obtains its own special tempo, its own special weight in performance, and consequently its own special character also.[2]
>
> But it is clear from the little I have said here about the different characters of meters that this variety of meters is very suitable for the expression of the shadings of the passions.
>
> That is, each passion has its degrees of strength and, if I may thus express it, its deeper or shallower impression. . . . The composer must before all things make clear to himself the particular impression of the passion he is to portray, and then choose a heavier or lighter meter according to the affect in its particular shading, which requires one or the other.[3]

It makes sense that meter—the classification of the number, order, and weight of accents—should take on an important role in an aesthetic which connects emotion with motion. Since meter is the prime orderer of the *Bewegung* or movement, its numbers are by no means neutral and lifeless markers of time, but a set of signs designating a corresponding order of passions, and meant in execution to stir their hearers directly by their palpable emanations in sound. The composer can study the shapes of meters to learn their potential for expression, he can manipulate them, but he did not invent them.

Yet it is frequently assumed that this notion, although a signal principle of the *Affektenlehre* theories of the early part of the century, had dropped out of fashion by the late 1700s, at the same time as the number of time signatures in use had declined and qualifying adjectives were being more frequently employed at the head of a movement to indicate the proper tempo—and character—of the work.[4] In the face of this opinion it is striking that late eighteenth-century theorists' discussions of rhythm and meter remained as detailed as those of their counterparts earlier in the century;[5] accounts of the subject in lexicons, manuals, and treatises spelled out carefully the individual configurations of each time signature in current use and of many which had fallen into disuse.[6] J. P. Kirnberger's classification ran to twenty-eight meters,[7] and Carlo Gervasoni, writing around the turn of the century, still treated under separate headings as many as sixteen.[8]

Kirnberger sketches out the form he considers the discussion of any given meter should take, listing three main heads, the first two of which are especially relevant here (the third concerns the special case of the setting of texts):

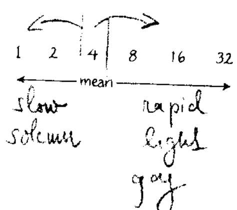
> 1) That all kinds of meters discovered and in use up to now be described to [the composer], each according to its true quality and exact execution.

> 2) That the spirit or character of each meter be specified as precisely as possible.[9]

Most theorists' discussions tend to follow this sketch, with the result that the meters examined settle into a sort of affective spectrum, or gamut. Consider first the lower number of the time signature—the designator of the beat. From the beginnings of Western polyphony a particular note value has usually been tacitly considered to embody what I shall call the *tempo giusto*, the normal moderate pace against which are measured "faster" and "slower."[10] By the eighteenth century the *valore giusto* had become the quarter note and, insofar as there is a modern notion of *tempo giusto*, it remains so today. In eighteenth-century French music, for example, 3/4 was often expressed by the single symbol 3, presumably in recognition of its status as the normal or *tempo giusto* among triple meters.[11] A spectrum of meters is readily organized around the lower number of the time signature, radiating in each direction from the central number 4; both tempo and degree of accentuation are established by the relative duration of the note receiving the beat:

> As far as meter is concerned, those of longer note values, such as *alla breve*, 3/2, and 6/4, have a heavier and slower movement than those of shorter note values, such as 2/4, 3/4, and 6/8, and these are less lively than 3/8 and 6/16. Thus for example a *Loure* in 3/2 is slower than a Minuet in 3/4, and this dance is again slower than a Passepied in 3/8.[12]
>
> The meters written on the staff all indicate a particular performance. In meters, for example, with notes of long duration, execution must always be slow and sedate, in conformance with the large note values; but in meters with notes of only short duration a lighter execution is required, since these notes by their nature must be passed over quickly. Thus, independently of the degree of tempo, meters are regulated also by the various values of the notes.[13]

The quarter note, measuring the motion of a normal human stride, occupies the center of the spectrum. Meters in half notes (2) or whole notes (1, although rare, is mentioned in some treatises) fall to the left of center, requiring a slower tempo and a more solemn style of execution. To the right fall 8 and 16 (and, at the beginning of the century, 32) in ascending degrees of rapidity, lightness, and gaiety. Thus a geometric series of numbers from one to thirty-two corresponds to an ordered range of human strides from the slowest (and gravest) to the fastest (and gayest):



The affect projected by the meter is a direct consequence of the union of tempo and degree of accentuation:

> Sorrow, humility, and reverence, require a slow movement, with gentle, easy inflections of the voice; but joy, thanksgiving, and triumph, ought to be distinguished by a quicker movement, with bolder inflexions, and more distant leaps, from one sound to another.[14]

And so the number exemplified by meter is viewed as a "passionate" number, capable of embodying the emotions and feelings of human beings in all their range and variety.

This ordering of affects by musical numbers was by no means an arbitrary or mystical numerology, for it corresponded to a like ordering of human motions or gestures. Music had turned away from its Renaissance preoccupation with the cosmic harmony of the sonorous numbers toward a new desire to move an audience through representations of its own humanity. Priority in music was claimed for the imaging of human affairs as over against the serene encompassment of a divinely numbered cosmos. Because of this change in music's role in the world from a theological to a sensory reflector, the metrical hierarchy was now based on physical movement, the province of the dance. Dance unites bearing and character in a measured and artful expression:

> Clearly almost everything in the moral character of men can be expressed intelligibly and in a lively manner by the position and movement of the body. Dance in its way is as capable as music and speech of being modelled on the language of the soul and of the passions.[15]

In the dancer movement and affect become one. The repertory of conventional music for social dance—sarabandes, gavottes, and minuets, for example—naturally became one of the most important sources of *topoi* in the affective language of both Baroque and Classic music.

In fact it is the characteristic metrical usages of the social dance repertory that finally organize the upper number of the time signature into the metrical spectrum. The function of the upper number is of course to specify a triple or duple ordering of the beat which is represented by the lower number. Although, in the late Renaissance, dances were cast as much in duple as in triple meter, by the seventeenth century triple had become the meter most identified with dancing. At first tempi associated with triple meter were generally faster than those in duple. By the high Baroque, however, the noble and considered gestures of the folia and sarabande, although triple in structure, were set over the number 2 (the meter 3/2) at the slower end of the spectrum. Thus in the early eighteenth century, although the numerical series 2 4 8 16 32 had significance for tempi and execution, the duple and triple indications constituting the upper number of each time signature had no particular

attachment to either end of the spectrum: music was written in 3/2 as well as 3/8, or 2/8 and 4/16 as well as 6/8 and 9/16.

By the latter half of the century, however, Classic composers had made a final clarification of the attachments born by the numbers on the top—the triple and duple beat groupings. Writers of the period frequently returned to the early Baroque distinction between a slower duple and a quicker, more lively triple meter:

> The different sorts of time have, in some degree, each their peculiar character. Common time is naturally more grave and solemn; triple time, more chearful [*sic*] and airy. And for this reason, it is generally agreed, that every mood of triple time ought to be performed something quicker, than the correspondent mood of common time; for instance, the measure in the slow triple of minims [3/2], ought to be made shorter than the measure in the slow common time [4/4], marked with a plain C; and the measure, in the triple of crotchets [3/4], should be shorter than the measure in the mood of the barred C [*alla breve*]; and so on.[16]

> Meter also takes its place in expression. If it is a question of expressing great, solemn, and majestic matters, Common Time is the most suitable; Triple is best for expressing familiar things and ordinary ones. 2/4 has a character which is still lighter, and more humble. 6/8 serves only for expressions of the comic and the humorous, for pastorales, dances, and the like.[17]

In classifying meters writers often identified particular dances as the "natural movement" of a triple meter,[18] and at the same time considered the "natural seat" of duple meters, especially *alla breve*, to be in the church (or, concomitantly, in fugues and choruses).[19]

This classification of duple as an "ecclesiastical" meter can be explained by certain historical associations. Sacred music was by the late eighteenth century synonymous with certain musical practices which had come to be considered antique. Fuxian species counterpoint,[20] with its long-note *cantus firmi*, heavily accented and slow of tempo, was by virtue of its venerability judged most appropriate for the expressive requirements of music for worship. It was epitomized by copy-book exercises in duple measures of half and whole notes—"white-note"[21] or *alla breve* counterpoint. At the same time, in the sphere of dance music, dances with a markedly slow triple movement were less in evidence in both the dance hall and chamber and symphonic music: composers turned away from the courante with its 3/2 or 6/4 meter and complex rhythmic patterning, and began to take the sarabande at a tempo only slightly slower than the minuet, usually adopting a 3/4 meter in place of the 3/2 signature prevalent earlier in the century.[22] These changes pushed triple groupings over toward the quicker beats at the right of the spectrum. The result was a polarization of duple and triple meters—a

topical confrontation between the two metrical types which could be characterized as an opposition of divine and mundane subject matters. Not only did meter bear the stamp of human character: the various affects themselves were classified by two special types of human activity—the ecclesiastical and the choreographic.

The Classic style itself gravitated around these two poles, which took on a variety of names in their various manifestations: the learned (from its associations with "school" counterpoint), ecclesiastical, strict, or "bound" (*gebundener Stil*, *stile legato*, from its precise rules for dissonance treatment) at one extreme, and on the other, the *galant*, or free. The strict style had its ancestor in Renaissance and Baroque *alla breve* counterpoint, while the free style stemmed metrically and rhythmically to a great extent from the dance. The vehicle of Classic music most closely connected with the *style galant*, the "sonata allegro" or key-area plan,[23] had its origins in the simple symmetrical dance form. That highest of contrapuntal forms, the fugue, was associated principally with sacred music, and had the air of an importation when encountered in a sonata movement.[24] In the classification of affects inhering in meters, the duple rhythms of the learned style were reserved for expressions which were intended to have some connection with the ecclesiastical (an affect which was by no means banned from the "secular" sonata allegro, which reflected every facet of contemporary life in its imitations), while dance rhythms were regarded as the most direct and measurable means of portraying human passions in time. Many other types of gestures came in for their share of imitation in the *galant* vocabulary: the singing style, for example, horn calls, and the very habits of orchestral music themselves. Still the dance remained a central symbol of the human half of the eighteenth-century cosmos.

In fact, this simplifying and sharpening of contrasts in the metrical spectrum in the late eighteenth century may well have been a correlative of the emerging procedures of key-area or sonata-form composition. Composers of the high Baroque customarily explored one gesture in a movement, favoring a mono-affective style. Classic composers, on the other hand, preferred to bring into the frame of a single movement the bustle and contrast of a world in small, in a harmonic and affective "dialectic" set out in antecedent and consequent symmetries (or in the intentional breach thereof). One requirement for fulfilling this disposition to dialectic would be that the nature of the topical materials in question be clearly defined, and their relations to one another sharply and dramatically demarcated: for the listener to embrace the fact of the contrast, identification of the members involved in it must be swift and near-automatic.

But the subjects of Mozart's operas are not on the whole ecclesiasti-

cal; even the spectral Stone Guest, heaven's emissary in *Don Giovanni*, is vested in human form and arrives on foot. In secular music the left side of the spectrum served to choreograph those human passions which most resemble the divine. Danceable meters, although they are capable of expressing a broad range of passions, must stop short of the most exalted ones. When noble characters voice tragic or moral sentiments in the lofty couplets of *opera seria*, Mozart has them affect the ecclesiastical style in a gesture which still remains choreographic in an extended sense: let us admit it to the roster of *topoi* under the designation "exalted march," for it figures importantly in this catalogue of expressive devices.

To explain how the exalted march is an operatic extension of that style of music called learned or ecclesiastical, a comparison of a sample of each will suffice: for example, the last movement of Mozart's Quartet in G Major, K. 387, and Donna Anna's "Or sai chi l'onore" (*Don Giovanni*, I, 10).[25] The quartet movement opens with sixteen measures of an academic "fugue" in fifth-species counterpoint, which are answered by a contrasting *galant* cadential flourish (actually a contredanse, which would properly be scanned in 2/4). Although the movement is designated *Molto allegro*, the "white notes" of the counterpoint project one strong beat per measure, choreographing a slow, marked, and solemn stride, the tread of Aristotle's great-souled man;[26] *Molto allegro* is more appropriate to the misbarred contredanse (ex. 1–1). The text of Donna Anna's aria—her challenge to her fiancé Don Ottavio to punish Don Giovanni, her would-be seducer and the murderer of her father—is plainly material for the exalted style. Donna Anna, the one woman in *Don Giovanni* who is unquestionably of noble rank, adopts the white-note *alla breve* gesture for an aria in a grand, rather old-fashioned idiom. Unlike the quartet movement, "Or sai chi l'onore" is marked *Andante*, but each of its measures contains two beats or steps, while the quartet's *Molto allegro* measures, during the contrapuntal opening, each contain one (ex. 1–2). "Or sai chi l'onore," while not contrapuntal, imitates the same gesture as the more obviously learned and venerable species counterpoint of the quartet—music with two strong slow beats per measure and all other rhythmic action subordinated. Strides choreographed to the quartet's counterpoint and to Donna Anna's exalted march would be approximately coincident. The quartet movement is a scholium on the style of the aria, explicating in its textbook fugue the archaic and ultimately ecclesiastical sources of the *alla breve*.[27]

Modern designations for *alla breve* such as "cut time" and *doppio movimento*, and the attendant modern notions of *alla breve* as "faster than," appear to contradict the eighteenth-century account of 2/2 as the most *maestoso* of all meters,[28] "only useful for serious, heartfelt passions,"[29]

Example 1-1

Molto allegro

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

"suitable for sacred song on account of its weighty slow tempo."[30] Some eighteenth-century writers shared the confusion, for instance Scheibe, who complained about the recent habit of using *alla breve* in quicker tempi for secular pieces:

> Its proper seat is in truth the church, where it was meant to be used in choruses, fugues, and polyphonic pieces; but since the meter is now also used for other pieces, one must get used to it. But this makes it all the more necessary that in every case the tempo required by the piece, whether an aria, symphony, allegro, or concerto allegro, and so on, be indicated. Nevertheless, since the operas and symphonies have taken

Example 1-2

Andante

2 Oboi
2 Fagotti
2 Corni in D
Violino I
Violino II
Viola
Donna Anna
Violoncello & Contrabasso

Or sai chi l'o - no - re ra - pi - - - - re'a me vol - se chi

over this meter, and it is often used for the fastest and most fiery pieces where its old dignity and seriousness have no place, it has almost taken on another character. For it is now as preeminently cherished in the galant style as it was previously venerated in the church style.[31]

Both eighteenth-century and modern confusions about the meter arise from a failure to attend to the quality of the beat rather than to the tempo marking, or to the notes which subdivide the beat.[32] The *alla breve* can appear in many notational guises and still retain its essential choreographic gesture. Neither the *Molto allegro* whole notes of the quartet nor the aria's busy-looking trappings of heavily decorated upbeats and string tremolos detract in performance from the measured yet stirring pace of the exalted march. In "Or sai chi l'onore" the gesture and affect of the *alla breve* have simply been transferred from their ecclesiastical sources into the domain of the *galant*, bearing their original associations with them; Donna Anna is a celestial heroine militant.

With the extremes of the spectrum of meters determined, we can make a rough sketch of its components. Triple meters represent the danceable passions, duple the passions closest to the divine:

Ecclesiastical (exalted passions) — Galant (terrestrial passions)

[4/2] ¢ 2/4 4/4 3/4 6/8 3/8 [9/16] [9/32]

march — dance

The meters at the outermost extremes of the spectrum, those using whole-note and thirty-second-note beats, had dropped out of use, and are included here because they were mentioned as theoretical possibilities. Pulses of the practical extremes—half notes and sixteenth notes—were seldom made into measures which would be antithetical to their habitual affects: notes of long duration were rarely any more used in triple groupings (3/2), and sixteenth and eighth notes almost never in duple (4/16 and 4/8). Toward the middle of the spectrum usage grows more ambiguous, and one term may partake of the gestures of both extremes upon occasion: certainly some dances were written in duple meters, and in turn the generally frivolous 3/8[33] was sometimes used in an *affettuoso* style. In the middle of the spectrum stand 4/4 and 3/4, as the duple and triple meters of the *tempo giusto*. Both admit of slightly slower or faster tempi and more serious or more lighthearted affects, but they never shade into the radical solemnity of *alla breve* on the one hand, or the frivolity of 3/8 on the other.

The paradigmatic gestures of 4/4 are the humbler, "terrestrial" marches, and of 3/4, the minuet. The foot march provides a transition

from the exalted to the danceable passions. Dances are artful inventions requiring a meter susceptible to ornament; in triple meter the disproportion in the times allotted to upbeat and downbeat allows the dancer more room for an expansive step or gesture before the upbeat drives him on to the next measure, and the next step. Characteristic of the march and of duple meter, on the other hand, are the intensity and inevitability of the drive to the next step; the pedestrian alternation of right and left leaves no room for an expansive gesture, for the invented fantasy of the dancer. Most of the more complex rhythms which are habitually associated with the march—dotted rhythms, for example, at their most exaggerated in the French overture—are only elaborations of the upbeat impetus preparing for the next tread. In its intensity and singlemindedness the march is often anything but pedestrian, as "Or sai chi l'onore" demonstrates. Yet it can also be comically literal—a flat-footed imitation of the movements of the poor human body at its most unexalted. The few dances written in duple meter require a more distinctive rhythmic pattern than that of the march, a pattern which must be achieved by some manner of tinkering with the ordinary striding shape of the march's duple measure in order to make room for the unfolding of the dancer's movements.[34] The minuet, the danced counterpart of the march in the center of the spectrum, represents the most artful treatment of the normal human stride. In sum, the danceable takes its proper position to the right of the spectrum, in the company of the more modest, worldly passions, while exalted grief and anger soar from the left, in the tradition of the otherworldly.

Metrical Notation and the Contrast of Affects

The rather dramatic reduction, by the latter half of the eighteenth century, in the number of meters which were actually in frequent use, may seem to have necessitated an attendant blunting of refinement in the expression of the various passions. Indeed, this reduction is often taken as proof of a severed connection between meter and expression which is assumed to be part of the "new aesthetics" of the Classic period. Kirnberger himself was certain that such was the case:

> That these meters [2/8 and 6/16] and others . . . are considered today unnecessary and superfluous shows either that good and correct execution has been forgotten, or that a part of the expression which is easy to maintain only in these meters is completely unknown to us. Both do little credit to the art, which should in our time have ascended to its highest summit.[35]

In fact the reduction in meters had nothing to do with a weakening capacity for refined expression. It was rather the consequence of one of

the few true "revolutions" in habits of expression in the latter part of the century[36]—the enlistment of contrast as a compositional procedure. To abandon a particular notational sign does not of necessity mean to abandon the gesture it projects. Since Baroque composers generally allowed one spun-out affect to dominate an entire movement, they could choose a time signature which would notate that affect with precision. Classic composers began to shape each movement around several affects in order to dramatize the clarity of structure resulting from the newly emphasized polarity of tonic and dominant. The practice necessitated the choice of a flexible, chameleonlike time signature, harmonious not just with one affect but with a particular handful of them. Precision of notation was partially sacrificed in exchange for the freedom to play over a wide range of expressive gestures in one piece. The choice, for time signature, of a meter at one of the extremes of the spectrum (Kirnberger's "light gigue" in 9/16, for example, or the 9/4 which he considered an appropriate choice for church fugues[37]) would prohibit the inflection of a contrasting rhythmic gesture in the movement. Composers preferred to choose a metrical "lowest common denominator" for a time signature, avoiding the radical metrical extremes.

The contrasting gestures of the last movement of Mozart's G Major Quartet quoted earlier[38] would take on a different aspect if notated separately. The fugal section beginning the movement could be set more comfortably in an *Andante* 4/2 than in 4/4 *Molto allegro* (ex. 1–3). A time signature of 4/2 was not outside the bounds of Baroque practice,[39] and the four-beat measure fits the rhythmic shape of the fugue subject better than does 4/4, a meter which fractioned the subject into four whole-note measures. (The new notation does, however, make the syncopations of the countersubject slightly more difficult to read than they were in the original.) Mozart probably adopted the expedient of whole-note measures in order to avoid notating the quick contredanse which answers the fugue in sixteenth notes, where it would be difficult to distinguish from rapid and purely ornamental concerto-style passage work. The whole-note measure, almost a parody of the notation of Bach's motet-style fugue subjects, also lends the fugue an exaggerated vener-

Example 1-3

Example 1-4

Example 1-5

ability. Still the contredanse itself has to be improperly barred in order to dovetail with the fugue; it would ordinarily appear in 2/4 (ex. 1–4).

Toward the end of the exposition of the movement (m. 92), a third and cadential gesture appears, working on a rhythmic level midway between the fugue and the contredanse: it moves in quarter and half notes as opposed to the half and whole notes of the fugue and the eighth notes of the contredanse. A quasi-bourrée, with expanded upbeat, it helps to stabilize the rhythms of the movement, striking a *tempo giusto* between the *maestoso* fugue and the breakneck contredanse. In ordinary circumstances it would more likely be written with note values halved, two measures of the original compressed into one, and the barline shifted. The first violinist must ignore a few barlines if he is to superimpose the broad arch of the bourrée on the choppy succession of *alla breve* measures (ex. 1–5). The actual time signature of this movement is of little help to a performer who is ignorant of the individual configurations of each gesture: 4/4 suits all three topics at once by not quite suiting any of them. Although 4/4 is probably the best choice as a time signature for a movement with gestures on three rhythmic levels, it cannot in itself reflect the rhythmic richness of the movement. Its virtue is the purely negative one of noninterference.

The following example from a Classic *opera buffa* may help to illustrate the ways in which the neutral time signature can be manipulated in order to reflect various characters in an unfolding dramatic situation, and also, incidentally, to show how easy it can be to miss the point.

Example 1-6

Edward Dent, in his study of Mozart's operas (a book which, although often sketchy or off the mark in its analyses, provides more helpful background to the operas than any work in English which has appeared since Dent's second edition of 1947), analyzes an aria by Florian Gassmann as an example of mature *opera buffa* at the time when Mozart was beginning to compose operas. The aria occurs in the middle of a typical *buffa* intrigue: a master (Leandro) is instructing his servant (Carlotto) to carry messages to his beloved through her servant (Marinetta) when he discovers to his surprise that Carlotto has disappeared (ex. 1–6[40]). The aria is Leandro's, but Carlotto is lurking in the orchestra. While Leandro, intent on his own concerns, describes his amorous torments in a courtly bourrée style (mm. 2–9 in the vocal line), the orchestra is simultaneously choreographing Carlotto's motions, subdividing each quarter-note beat into a triplet, for a simple peasant gigue.[41] The skirling "scotch snaps" of the inattentive Carlotto's gigue melody mock the stock histrionics of Leandro's chromatic appoggiaturas on the words *tormento* and *provo* (mm. 5–6). When Leandro comes to himself and discovers Carlotto's disappearance, the gigue also vanishes, and Leandro assumes a martial bearing in his anger (mm. 9–14—a military march with horns and oboes added to the strings).

Even at its simplest, the *buffa* style has a genial wit and finesse, and is not without its subtleties. The "schizophrenic" dances which open this aria are not merely a description of the dramatic circumstances; they also manage to inject into the scene in subliminal fashion a suggestion of the conventional psychology of crafty servant and pompous master. Furthermore, as always in good *buffa* writing, the action confirms the harmonic arch of the key-area plan:[42] Leandro's angry march occurs at the arrival on the dominant—a harmonic move which requires both new musical energy and a consolidation of topical resources if it is to be made fully dramatic. And, reflexively, the move up a fifth mimes Leandro's coming to consciousness. If a director is aware of the topical variety in this apparently one-dimensional aria, he can exploit it cleverly on the stage. But to someone ignorant of the interplay of topics (as indeed is Dent himself in his analysis), there would seem to be little reason to prize the aria. It has no melody to speak of, nor is its harmony or orchestration particularly inventive. All Gassmann's skills as a *buffa* craftsman are engaged in making of this text a comic *scena* for three participants: singer, orchestra, and mime (the silent Carlotto).

Practical Musicians and the Vocabulary of Expression

Late eighteenth-century musicians differed in another way from their counterparts earlier in the century: they had learned to distrust attempts to concoct "cookbooks" of metrical gestures containing recipes

for the expression of the passions. J. A. Hiller in his singing treatise published in 1774 expressed this distrust in a satirical paragraph about the obsession of his predecessors with classification:

> If anyone wants more divisions of style, or modes of writing, he can gain rich gleanings from *Walther's* musical *Lexikon* in the article *Stylus*. *Rousseau* himself dipped into this little work. Our dear forefathers never lacked for classifications, and if they sometimes strayed into another compartment, still there was no end to the classifying. Thus they fared with style. Everything we comprehend under the expression and character of a piece, they would include under style. They had a merry, a sharp, an expressive, an honest, a tender, a moving, even a base and cringing style. It was not enough for them to assume a special *Stylus Choraicus* for dance pieces; these still had to be *subdivided* into as many special styles as there were kinds of dances. They had the sarabande-minuet-passepied-gavotte-rigaudon-gaillard-courante-style. Other classifications of style, into the noble, middle, and low, into the serious and the comic, into the artificial and the natural, into the swollen and the flowing, appear to have somewhat more in them, and would deserve a closer examination if I did not fear it would be too detailed, and if the singer had to be as well-grounded in them as the composer.[43]

no specific list in 18c!

For this reason it is vain to search in Classic manuals of composition for prescriptions of the *Affektenlehre* sort. Most writers preferred to discuss a few universal principles pertaining to the passions and their proper mode of expression, and then to leave all decisions about particulars to the composer's good taste. Breaches of taste, however, did not go unobserved, especially in opera, where the text provided a standard of criticism. So, for example, Thomas Busby, studying the music of Handel, could fault the composer for the misuse of a dance topic in *Alexander's Feast*,[44] and a French writer could be sharply critical of Jommelli's application of the same dance.[45] But composers were expected to avoid the pitfalls of bad taste armed merely with such negative examples.

The Classic distaste for codification and the concurrent simplifications of metrical notation held real dangers for the musical illiterate. Good taste was still considered to be not a matter of individual caprice, but a faculty opposed to whimsy; it could be accounted for, and must be educated. As Quantz put it,

> Music, then, is an art that must be judged not by personal whims, but by certain rules, like the other fine arts, and by good taste acquired and refined through extensive experience and practice.[46]

Practical musicians were seriously concerned lest with the new movement away from prescription they raise a generation of young composers and performers ignorant of the expressive values of rhythmic shapes. "The retention or realization of a *Charakter*," warned Koch, "is one of

the most important requirements of all musical compositions."[47] The practice of appending a qualifying adjective to a movement became widespread in the period probably as a means of suggesting at least approximate sets of tempo limits for performers who lacked training in the art of reading a movement's rhythmic gestures. Reluctant, however, to rely on these ambiguous directions, teachers chose to instruct their pupils in the recognition of the various expressive gestures, and used the social dances, the *danses caractéristiques*, as a primer for their study. There young musicians could examine the gestures in their natural habitat; Mozart spent his early training as a composer writing sample minuets, gigues, and marches. As Kirnberger put it:

> Every beginner who wants to be well grounded in composition is well advised to make himself familiar with the organization of all forms of the dance, because in them all kinds of character and of rhythm appear and are most precisely executed. If he has no fluency in these characteristic pieces, it is not at all possible for him to give to a piece a particular character.[48]

Pupils beginning the study of music with characterless pieces would flounder hopelessly, as an amusing piece of dialogue makes clear:

> *Disciple*. Come, Sir, let us play a tune.
> *Master*. A tune! There is one: play it.
> *Dis*. How do you call it?
> *Ma*. I do not know.
> *Dis*. Nor I neither.
> *Friend*. Bravo! again: let me look at it—It is a Gavot: Your Gavots have been condemned, from time immemorial, to be crucified by beginners.
> *Ma*. And was it with a Gavot your ward began?
> *Friend*. Exactly; a March, and then a Gavot, and then a Vauxhall Song, and then a bit from *Felton's* Lessons, and then Adagios, Andantes, Allegros, and various other things.
> *Ma*. . . . Strange foundations for lessons for the harpsichord!
> *Friend*. Better begin with those than with a tune of which we cannot tell the name.
> *Ma*. And who is the ignoramus that does that?
> *Friend*. Yourself.
> *Ma*. I! who told you so?
> *Friend*. Why I saw it, heard it this instant.[49]

Classic musicians' aversion to overliteral codification must not be taken as evidence of an aesthetic of the "abstract" and "nonreferential" nature of music. Their music was indissolubly wedded to the human pulse beat, breath, and stride, shaped into an artful measure by meter. A

consciousness of the proper articulations of the rhythmic gestures in Mozart's music makes the difference between lifelessness and liveliness in performance. Furthermore, knowledge of the affective limits of each gesture ensures a clearer notion of what Mozart was about when he employed them in the operas. Since the social dances constitute a considerable portion of Mozart's expressive vocabulary, the next chapter is devoted to their consideration.

CHAPTER TWO

The Gestures of Social Dance

most dances old-fashioned
— the were still danced in late 18c
— minuet
— waltz
— contradance

Habits in the Dance Hall

Most of the dances whose characteristic patterns form part of Mozart's vocabulary of rhythmic gestures were already old-fashioned in his own time. New tastes prevailed among the bourgeoisie who frequented the new and modish dance halls; except for the minuet, the French court dances were rarely performed in public. Most of the dancing manuals written in the latter half of the century contained instructions only for the minuet and contredanse, and this pair of contrasting dances, the one reserved and the other exuberant, constituted the evening's exercises. The reason for the selection, as one dancing master explained it, was the preference of the new class of amateur dancers for dances requiring little skill and involving the greatest pleasure for the greatest number:

> In earlier times, before taste in the true beauties of dancing was refined, because of an excessive emulation of the French, no man was considered a skilled dancer who could not dance an *aimable Vainqueur, charmant Vainqueur, Passepied, dance d'Anjou, Princesse bourée* [*sic*], *Courante, Rigaudon, Cavotte* [*sic*], *Sarabande*, or *Gique* [*sic*]. People realized later that such dances were too theatrical for society, and hindered the common pleasure. Therefore they danced *Menuets* and English dances, which gave the kind of pleasure in which an entire group could participate.[1]

In fact, Classic composers of symphonies and chamber music were faithfully reflecting the activities of the dance hall when they coupled in the last two movements of their works the rhythms of the minuet and

poser who worked both in the *seria* and *buffa* veins, that when in 1749 he set the Metastasian libretto *Artaserse*, he composed the last five scenes of act I as a single quartet like a *buffa* finale. But when the opera was given in Padua in 1751 he decomposed the finale back into separate arias, finding for whatever reason that the *seria* habit would not admit of such musical continuity.[6] And comedy not only brought to Mozart's operas the particular historical development of the *buffa* finale; the comic viewpoint in general also brings to a drama a greater range and power of comment than does the purely elevated, the "neoclassical" style. Without this mixing of modes there is not the same freedom to juxtapose disparate conventions, to reexamine stereotypes, to produce a startling identification (Susanna with the noble minuet, for example). In the case of *Le nozze di Figaro*, *buffa* style fused with the *aria d'affetto* gave rise to that rare creature, a true romantic comedy. The mixture of *buffa* and *seria* in *Don Giovanni* has darker implications, resulting in a work which has its abode in the netherworld beyond the tragic, and which by encompassing tragedy seems to deny its possibility.

The mixture of modes in Mozart's operas was not lightly received by his audiences, nor, once his operas had drawn their just measure of acclaim, did other composers find it an easily imitable path: *Fidelio* returns to a kind of affective purity, and Verdi had to struggle mightily to have his librettists agree to the possibility of mixing low and prosaic subject matters with the exalted.[7] It seems to be a balance which only the dramatists who are the most profound of human observers—Mozart and Shakespeare—found their way to. Shakespeare too took his energy from the popular theater, and the thorny combination of the abased with the elevated in his works has always drawn criticism from petty critics who would keep the genres pure. But in the famous phrase "negative capability" Keats praises Shakespeare for this enormous and encompassing vision—never in a series of works one particular stance frozen, never a polemic, an ax to grind. And as with Shakespeare, also Mozart—each opera is a facet, a momentary proportioning of musical styles, a particular way of taking the world, which is true and sufficient unto the day, but because of pressure from the other works in the corpus never pretends to inclusivity. Nothing could illustrate this more tellingly than the third of these great Italian *opera buffas* of Mozart, the enigmatic *Così fan tutte*—an *opera seria* of an *opera buffa*, if such phenomenon is possible—for whose glassy and ironic remove little in its two predecessors prepares.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Violins and violas double the voice parts almost all the way through.
2. The type of the musette-gavotte is discussed on pp. 53–55.
3. For example, Edward Dent's notion of the collaboration between da Ponte and Mozart was that da Ponte endeavored to eliminate the "new social point of view" from Beaumarchais's text, but that Mozart put it back in his music (Edward Dent, *Mozart's Operas: A Critical Study*, 2nd ed. [London: Oxford University Press, 1947], p. 95).
4. From the Greek *topos*, "place," or in its technical use in rhetoric, "commonplace." Aristotle's *Topica* is a collection of general arguments which a rhetorician might consult for help in treating a particular theme. In music the term has been borrowed to designate "commonplace" musical styles or figures whose expressive connotations, derived from the circumstances in which they are habitually employed, are familiar to all.
5. A static scheme of symbolic key relations is one of the primary devices by which writers seek to uncover meaning in Mozart's operas. But while key relations are often important, they are more apt to lend confirmation to an insight than to suggest one; they offer no particularity of vision.
6. Theorists of the *Affektenlehre* include Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739) and Johann Heinichen, *Der General-Bass in der Composition* (Dresden, 1728). See also Frederick Wessel, "The Affektenlehre in the Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1955); Brewster Rogerson, "The Art of Painting the Passions," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (1953):81–87; George J. Buelow, "The *Loci Topici* and Affect in Late Baroque Music: Heinichen's Practical Demonstration," *Music Review* (1966):161–76.
7. See M. H. Abrams's illuminating discussion of nineteenth-century theories of poetry, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*

(London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 1–69, for an account of the change.

8. Franz Liszt, "Berlioz and his 'Harold' Symphony," *Source Readings in Music History*, ed. and trans. Oliver Strunk (New York: Norton, 1950), p. 849.

9. Abrams, p. 48.

10. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1448a.

11. "Indeed a slow movement is thought to be characteristic of the great-souled man, and a deep voice, and a steady way of speaking; for the man who pursues few things zealously is not likely to be hurried, nor is the man who thinks nothing great to be impetuous. But a shrill voice and swiftness of movement result from haste and impetuosity" (Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, 1125a12–16).

12. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1340a18–24.

13. Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt am Main: August Hermann, 1802), s.v. "Malerey."

14. Ibid., s.v. "Ausdruck."

15. Ibid., pp. 185–86.

16. This brief discussion of the doctrine of the affections is a paraphrase of Koch's article quoted above, itself partly a quotation from J. G. Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (1771–74).

17. Today it is more commonly assumed that expression and action have mutually exclusive natures, a position which would be equivalent to stating that in the plays of Shakespeare the poetry of ethos and imagery is properly confined to reflective soliloquies, while speeches of individuals in act can convey only factual information. This thesis is untenable in both drama and music drama. On the contrary, the composers of *opera buffa*, and with them Mozart, had in admitting actions to their arias and ensembles succeeded in bringing the most revelatory part of the drama into music's domain, where it could contribute to the illumination of the whole. The modern difficulty lies, I suspect, with an artificial distinction between reflection and action. To Aristotle, the contemplative man, engaged in the highest activity men are capable of, was most in action when he was most reflective (*Nichomachean Ethics*, 1177a12–1178a8).

18. Michel Paul Gui de Chabanon, *De la musique considerée en elle-même et dans ses rapports avec la parole*, 2nd ed. rev. (Paris: Pissot et fils, 1785), p. 56.

19. I will use the word "motive" frequently, to designate the short figures with which Classic composers characteristically constructed melodic phrases. In using this word I wish to distinguish these figures from both "motifs," which are generally considered to be figures which have a significant recurrence in the course of a movement, and throughcomposed "tunes," which are a striking and rare occurrence in Classic music.

20. The type of bass which features broken figures such as the ones in the left hand in measures 1–4 (see ex. i–2) was given the sobriquet "Alberti," after the keyboard composer Domenico Alberti (1710–40?), who used them frequently.

21. C. J. von Feldtenstein, *Die Kunst nach der Choreographie zu tanzen und Tänze zu schreiben* (Braunschweig: Schröderschen Buchhandlung, 1767), pp. 21–22. He is quoting here from a letter written by the great-chancellor of France to his son.

22. Koch, *Lexikon*, s.v. "Acteur."

CHAPTER 1

1. *Musikalische Nachrichten und Anmerkungen die Musik betreffend*, ed. Johann Adam Hiller, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1766–70), 4:20–21.

2. Johann George Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1786–87), s.v. "Takt."

3. Johann Phillipp Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Decker and Hartung, 1774–79), 2:134.

4. See for example Edward R. Reilly's discussion of the growing use of tempo markings in the latter half of the century in *Quantz and His "Versuch"* (New York: American Musicological Society, 1971), pp. 116–23.

5. For early eighteenth-century classifications of meter, see, for example, the catalogue of Michel de Saint-Lambert (Paris, 1702), paraphrased by Curt Sachs (*Rhythm and Tempo* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1953], p. 311), and that of Hotteterre (Paris, 1719), quoted by Reilly in *Quantz and His "Versuch"* (pp. 118–20).

6. A partial list of these classifications would include F. G. Drewis, *Freundschaftliche Briefe über die Theorie der Tonkunst und Composition* (1797), pp. 22–25; Francesco Galeazzi, *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica* (1791–96), 1:36–37; 2:295; Carlo Gervasoni, *La scuola della musica* (1800), 1:163–73; J. P. Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik* (1774–79), 2:113–36; H. C. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (1802), s.v. "Takt"; *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition* (1782–93), 2:291–321; A. F. C. Kollmann, *An Essay on Musical Harmony* (1796), pp. 73–77; J. A. Scheibe, *Über die musikalische Composition*, vol. 1: *Die Theorie der Melodie und Harmonie* (1773), pp. 203–18; and J. G. Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (1771–74), s.v. "Takt."

7. Kirnberger's method of cataloguing meters was somewhat eccentric, and he was, furthermore, aware that thirteen of the time signatures which he discussed were no longer in fashion, but he would have liked to see them revived in the interests of affective variety.

8. A modern discussion of meters of the "common-practice period" would probably feature only six: 2/2, 4/4, 2/4, 3/4, 3/8, and 6/8. To these Gervasoni adds 12/8, 6/4, 6/16, 12/16, 3/1, 3/2, 3/16, 9/4, 9/8, and 9/16 (six of these he characterizes as not in frequent use; see Carlo Gervasoni, *La Scuola della musica*, 3 vols. [Piacenza: N. Orcesi, 1800], 1:163–73).

9. Kirnberger, *Kunst*, 2:114.

10. *Tempo giusto* more commonly signifies the proper tempo for a given piece of music and not, as in this usage, a universal "mean tempo." But side by side with its usual meaning in the eighteenth century (see for example Koch, *Lexikon*, s.v. "Tempo giusto"), there existed the notion for which I have adopted the term. According to one French music encyclopedia, the words *a tempo giusto* indicate "that one must perform the piece with a moderate tempo, fairly close to andante, beating the notes distinctly" (*Encyclopédie méthodique*, vols. 1–2:

Musique, ed. Nicholas Etienne Framéry [Paris: Panckoucke, 1791], s.v. "A Tempo Giusto"). Thomas Busby uses for the same notion the phrase *tempo ordinario* (*A Musical Manual or Technical Directory* [London: Goulding and D'Almaine, 1828].

11. In duple meters 2/4 was often rendered as 2, although the sign did double duty as a symbol for *alla breve*.

12. Kirnberger, *Kunst*, 2:106.

13. Gervasoni, 1:165.

14. John Holden, *An Essay towards a Rational System of Music* (Glasgow: R. Urie, 1770), p. 35.

15. Sulzer, s.v. "Tanz."

16. Holden, p. 35.

17. Francesco Galeazzi, *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica*, 2 vols. (Rome: Stamperia Pilucchi Cracas, 1791–96), 2:295. See also Adolf Bernhard Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1837–38), 2:53–54; Sulzer, s.v. "Takt"; Gervasoni, 1:171.

18. Sulzer called the passepied the "natural movement of 3/8 meter" (s.v. "Takt"). Kirnberger used the same words to describe the minuet and 3/4 (*Kunst*, 2:129).

19. Johann Adolf Scheibe, *Über die musikalische Komposition*, vol. 1: *Die Theorie der Melodie und Harmonie* (Leipzig: Schwickert, 1773), p. 203; Gervasoni, 1:168; Kirnberger, *Kunst*, 2:118, 133; Sulzer, s.v. "Takt."

20. Fux's codification of Renaissance vocal counterpoint was as popular in the late eighteenth century as it had been earlier. Most later eighteenth-century theorists put their accounts of Renaissance polyphony in Fuxian terms, with *alla breve* examples (see for example Koch, *Lexikon*, s.v. "Contrapunkt").

21. *Weisse Note* ("white note") is a German term for the half note (Koch, *Lexikon*, s.v. "Weise Note").

22. A frequent characterization of the sarabande in the latter half of the century is a "slow minuet"; see for example Jean Leroud d'Alembert, *Elémens de musique théorique et pratique*, 3rd ed., rev. (Lyon: J.-M. Bruyset, 1766), p. 209; Holden, p. 40.

23. The key-area plan is discussed in n. 5, p. 340.

24. Yet underneath the blocks of sharply contrasted and punctuated materials and the unprepared dissonances which characterize the playful salon music, there can be discerned a tightly bound contrapuntal substructure, the sinew of the style. In deep structure the apparent antitheses merge.

25. Or one might substitute the last movement of the *Jupiter* Symphony and Donna Anna's "Fuggi, crudele, fuggi" (*Don Giovanni*, I, 2); there are many possible pairs.

26. See pp. 4 and 330 n. 11.

27. The ¢ often used as a sign for *alla breve* also betrays the old-fashioned origins of the style. As Koch reminds his readers, the sign is a slight alteration of the half-circle used by "our ancestors" to indicate *tempus imperfectum* (*Lexikon*, s.v. "Prolatio"; also "Takt"). Its ecclesiastical origins are reflected in its alias, *alla capella* (loosely, "as in church").

28. Leaving aside meters like 2/1, which some theorists only regretfully relinquished to the past.

29. F. G. Drewis, *Freundschaftliche Briefe über die Theorie der Tonkunst und Composition* (Halle: J. C. Hendel, 1797), p. 25.

30. Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *Anleitung zur Singcomposition* (Berlin: G. I. Decker, 1782), p. 12.

31. Scheibe, pp. 203–4.

32. Some of the confusion may have arisen from a simple misapprehension concerning the derivation of the term *alla breve*. One theorist translates it "with shortened notes," and moves from that translation to "every note as fast again as otherwise" (A. F. C. Kollmann, *An Essay on Musical Harmony* [London: J. Dale, 1796], p. 72). A better translation would be "beating the *breve*" (or double whole note) instead of the *semi breve* (or whole note), in other words taking a larger note value (in modern notation the half instead of the quarter note) as beat.

33. Kirnberger described the affect of 3/8 as "a gaiety with a wanton quality to it" (*Kunst*, 2:133).

34. See the discussions of the bourrée, the gavotte, and the 2/4 contredanse, pp. 48–59.

35. Kirnberger, *Kunst*, 2:120.

36. Leonard Ratner, in the preface to his recent book on the Classic style, makes the important point that the divergence between Baroque and Classic styles is far less than is usually assumed: they were "based upon the same criteria, a common set of premises, despite their obvious differences; they used one language, and their differences represented sublanguages of a universal 18th-century musical speech" (*Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* [New York: Schirmer Books, 1980], pp. xv-xvi). The assumption of a hiatus between the two styles, a necessary concomitant of the opinion that Classic music is abstract and nonreferential, constitutes a serious stumblingblock to any attempt to understand the Classic style.

37. Kirnberger, *Kunst*, 2:130 (9/16); 2:128 (9/4). Bach wrote many light gigues in such meters, for instance Fugue no. 4 of book 2 of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

38. See p. 20, Ex. 1–1.

39. Fugue 22 of book 1 of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, for example, is set in 4/2 meter, or two whole notes per measure.

40. Dent, pp. 21–22.

41. See the discussions of the gigue and the bourrée on pp. 41–43 and 48–49 respectively.

42. See p. 340, n. 5.

43. Johann Adam Hiller, *Anweisung zum musikalisch-richtigen Gesange* (Leipzig: J. F. Junius, 1774), pp. 212–13. The kind of overparticular classification Hiller criticizes is exemplified in this paragraph of prescriptions by the *Affektenlehre* theorist Johann Mattheson: "Now it may be difficult to believe that even in simple little dance melodies the passions must be just as distinguishable as light and shade can always be. To give just a small example, in a *chaconne* the affect is more noble and proud than in a *passacaglia*; in a *courante* the feeling is

directed toward a tender hope (but I do not intend an Italian *corrente*); in a *sarabande* to a public, formal seriousness; in an *entrée* to pomp and vanity; in a *rigaudon* to pleasant joking; in a *bourrée* to contentment and a pleasing air; in a *rondeau* to cheerfulness; in a *passepied* to fickleness and inconstancy; in a *gigue* to passion and fervor; in a *minuet* to moderate gaiety, and so on" (Johann Mattheson, *Kern melodischer Wissenschaft* [Hamburg: Christian Herold, 1737], pp. 66–67).

44. "It must be confessed, that sometimes, while his [Handel's] carelessness neglected, his lax judgment even opposed the sentiment. . . . In *Alexander's Feast*, Thais is described *lighting another Troy*, by the slow and graceful movement of a minuet" (Thomas Busby, *A General History of Music*, 2 vol. [London: C. Whittaker, 1819], 2:386).

45. "Triple meter, above all that of the minuet, is only suitable to pleasant affections, to peaceful sentiments, at the most to plaintive notions; and I cannot keep from finding Jommelli ridiculous, when in his air *Già di nubbi*, etc., after having made the threat thunder in the mouth of an angry king, he finishes it off with a lovely little minuet on the words "If you want to find shelter from the storm, you, you indeed, know how to do it" (Laurent Garcin, *Traité du mélodrama, ou réflexions sur la musique dramatique* [Paris: chez Vallat-la-Chapelle, 1772], p. 310).

46. J. J. Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversière zu spielen*, trans. Edward R. Reilly (New York: Schirmer Books, 1966), p. 297.

47. Koch, *Lexikon*, s.v. "Charakter."

48. Kirnberger, *Kunst*, 1:202, n. 78. See also idem, 2:10; Newman Powell, "Kirnberger on Dance Rhythms, Fugues, and Characterization," *Festschrift Theodore Hoelty-Nichel*, ed. Newman Powell (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University, 1967), pp. 66–67; Sulzer, s.v. "Tanzstück"; Koch, *Lexikon*, s.v. "Tanzmusik"; A. F. C. Kollmann, *An Essay on Practical Musical Composition*, (London, 1799), p. 103.

49. Anton Bemetzrieder, *Music Made Easy to Every Capacity*, trans. Giffard Bernard (London: R. Ayre and G. Moore, 1778), pp. iii-iv.

CHAPTER 2

1. Von Feldtenstein, pp. 18–19. The dances he mentions are either French court dances or a particularly popular choreography of one of them which has been endowed with a descriptive title.

2. Michael Kelly, *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly*, 2 vols. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 1:223.

3. Sulzer, s.v. "Menuet."

4. Von Feldtenstein, pp. 36–37 (italics mine).

5. The minuet quoted on p. 7 (ex. i–5), from the first movement of the Piano Sonata K. 332, is also an example of the quick version.

6. Sulzer, s.v. "Menuet."

7. A system of symbols capable of reflecting accurately the rhythm of any given measure or phrase is a necessary and helpful device, but one which is extremely difficult to fashion. Any abstraction from a rhythm will distort the

rhythm, yet abstraction is necessary for purposes of comparison. I have adopted the symbol (–) for a strong beat and (∪) for a weak beat for purposes of calligraphic clarity, intending no suggestion of the relative duration or quality which these symbols take on in poetic notation, where (–) is usually twice (∪). I intend both symbols to represent the quality of the beat, a factor influenced by quantity but not identical with it. For example, the paradigm 3/4 measure will be pictured /–∪∪/–∪∪/, the paradigm 2/4 measure /–∪/–∪/ In the schema for 4/4, /–́∪–∪/–́∪–∪/ , the downstroke indicates that beat 1 is a "stronger strong beat" than beat 3. A weak beat can also receive a downstroke. For example, the minuet's two weak beats are stronger than the analogous weak beats in the waltz: /–∪́∪́/ as opposed to /–́∪∪/ A comma will be used to indicate beat groupings which are not articulated by the barline, for example in the pattern of the bourrée: ∪/–́∪∪,∪/–́∪∪

8. See M. E. Little, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London, 1980), s.v. "Minuet." Wendy Hilton refers to the "hypnotic cross-rhythm" which this counterpoint supplies (*Dance of Court and Theatre: The French Noble Style 1690–1725* [Princeton: Princeton Book Co., 1981], p. 294).

9. Anselm Bayley, *The Alliance of Musick, Poetry, and Oratory* (London: John Stockdale, 1789), p. 44.

10. A. Bacquoy-Guédon, *Méthode pour exercer l'oreille à la mesure dans l'art de la danse*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Valade, c. 1784), 1:9–10.

11. *A Collection of the Newest and Best Minuets* (Edinburgh: Neil Stewart, ca. 1770), pp. 1–2.

12. *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, trans. and ed. Emily Anderson, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 1:121.

13. These two clumsy minuets from the Edinburgh collection (pp. 28 and 12 respectively) are interesting because they imply a knowledge of the configurations of each topic, and therefore of the possibility of combining them, at the crudest level of musical skill.

14. See, for example, the sarabande "La Bourgogne", one of a suite of French court dance choreographies which Meredith Ellis Little analyzes in a recent article in *The Journal of the American Musicological Society*. She characterizes this sarabande as "dignified and serious but less complex than the courante . . . a bit more lively . . . and perhaps even playful" (M. E. Little, "The Contribution of Dance Steps to Musical Analysis and Performance: *La Bourgogne*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 28 [1975]:116).

15. Hilton, p. 36.

16. Mattheson, p. 119.

17. See pp. 17 and 332 n. 22.

18. The faster the tempo, the less a measure admits of rhythms which go against the grain of its usual pattern. In a rapid sarabande, the second beat of the measure would begin to sound like a downbeat.

19. Quantz, p. 291.

20. Beethoven uses the sarabande in his Piano Sonata opus 109, in the theme and variations *Andante molto espressivo ed cantabile*, and Schubert in the A-flat Major Impromptu, opus 142, #2, to name two later stylizations of the dance.

21. Koch, *Lexikon*, s.v. "Passepied."