Decoration or Dramatic Function?:

Mozart's Use of Coloratura in Three Comic Soprano Roles

by

Kristina Lynn Baron

B.A., University of Waterloo, 2003

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the School of Music

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University of Victoria

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SUPervisory Committee

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ABSTRACT

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Coloratura arias for soprano were popular with Viennese opera audiences in the late eighteenth century. Prima donnas of the Singspiel and opera buffa companies expected composers to write arias that would display their technical skills, even requesting substitute arias to replace less virtuosic ones in revivals of older operas. However, in using coloratura in the comic opera genres, Mozart was not only creating an opportunity for virtuoso display of the singer’s talent, but was also using this vocal style as a dramatic and rhetorical device, one that defined a character’s social level, depicted her emotions, and advanced her dramatic situation. This thesis investigates how coloratura functions in Mozart’s soprano comic roles by examining the arias of three characters from two different operas: Konstanze and Blonde in the Singspiel Die Entführung aus dem Serail, and Susanna in the opera buffa Le nozze di Figaro. An analysis of these arias shows evidence of Mozart’s skill in using coloratura while meeting the conflicting demands of diva and drama.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Michelle Fillion, for her invaluable guidance, not only during the thesis-writing process, but also throughout my education at the University of Victoria. Whether they involved difficult questions, honest criticisms, or support and encouragement, our meetings never failed to energize me. I am sure that the impact of Dr. Fillion's influence will continue to reveal itself to me for many years to come.

Thank you to Dr. Sherry Lee for her kindness in taking part in this thesis, adding to the flurry of activity that was her short time at the University of Victoria. Her wealth of knowledge of operatic scholarship, both classic and current, offered great insight with this project, and will give me much to ponder for future doctoral work.

Thank you to Dr. Jennifer Wise for the valued advice in the proposal stage of this thesis, which helped to focus the project into a manageable size, and for the suggestions at the revision stage, which helped to clarify the argument once again.

Thank you to Dr. Susan Lewis Hammond who, although not a member of my committee, showed unfailing support and interest in my work. A discussion on “music as language” generated in her Music 532 graduate seminar inspired me to question whether coloratura had any meaning.

Thank you to Alexandra Browning, my voice teacher, and Charlotte Hale, my pianist, for patiently helping me work through numerous Mozart soprano concert arias, and for listening to me tell all my Mozart anecdotes.

Finally, huge thanks to Nicole, Susan, Rebekah, Nicholas, Jee Yeon, Jennifer, and all my other musicology cohorts who made the journey complete. The friendship, encouragement, and chocolate dessert parties will never be forgotten.
For Duane and Henry
Introduction:

The Dramatic Function of Coloratura in

Mozart's Soprano Roles in the Comic Operas
In 1781, during the compositional period of his opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Mozart wrote to his father describing the aria he had just written for the lead female role: "I have sacrificed Konstanze’s aria a bit to the agile throat of Mademoiselle Cavalieri. . . it is written entirely to please the Viennese."¹ In Mozart’s brief description of the aria, "Ach, ich liebte, war so glücklich," he mentions that while he has tried to be as expressive as possible within the confines of a bravura aria, the public would be impressed with the vocal display he had created for Caterina Cavalieri, the soprano who first performed the role.² Viennese audiences in the late eighteenth century clamoured for soprano arias containing coloratura -- patterns of rapidly sung notes on a single word or syllable of text that challenged a singer’s technique in range, flexibility and breath control -- and the singers who were able to navigate these difficult passages, such as Cavalieri, Aloysia Weber, and Adriana Ferrarese del Bene, were highly acclaimed by the public.³

Prima donnas of the Viennese Singspiel and opera buffa companies expected composers to write operatic arias that would display their technical skills, even

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³ During the above-mentioned sopranos’ engagements with either the National Singspiel or the Italian Opera companies in Vienna, all were among the highest paid members of their respective companies. Studies that include significant material on the sopranos who premiered roles in Mozart’s operas include Patricia Lewy Gidwitz, “Vocal Profiles of Four Mozart Sopranos” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1991); Alessandra Campana, “Mozart’s Italian buffo singers,” *Early Music* 19, no. 4 (1991): 580-3; Daniel Heartz, *Mozart’s Operas*, ed., Thomas Bauman (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); John A. Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
requesting new arias to replace less virtuosic ones in revivals of older operas. Eighteenth-century composers in Vienna and elsewhere were obliged to satisfy both audiences and singers by creating in their comic operas such bravura works for sopranos -- singers with the vocal range most commonly associated with coloratura. But Mozart's letter hints at a common misconception about coloratura, one commonly held in his time and perhaps even in our modern day, when he writes, "I tried to be as expressive as an Italian bravura aria will permit."4 The implication here is that coloratura functions primarily as adornment for the singer, rather than as an expression of the drama. In addition to the practical purposes and necessity of pleasing divas and thrilling audiences, however, these coloratura patterns serve a dramatic and expressive purpose in Mozart's operas. In using coloratura in the comic opera genres, Mozart was not only creating an opportunity for virtuoso display, but was also using this popular vocal style to define his characters' social level and develop their dramatic situation.

This thesis explores the dramatic function of coloratura in Mozart's comic operas through an analysis of selected soprano arias that employ coloratura. I investigate how Mozart uses the device to depict character, class, and emotional state by examining the coloratura (or its conspicuous absence) in these arias and substitute arias written for female soprano voices performing female roles in the two different comic genres of Mozart's operas: the Italian opera buffa and the German Singspiel.5


5 The clarification of female voices performing female roles is necessary in order to exclude "trouser roles" such as Cherubino in Le nozze di Figaro, in which women play male characters.
The main arias chosen for this study are sung by three female characters from the operas *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, operas that not only show the composer at the height of his maturity and mastery, but that also function as models for his later works in the comic opera genres. Both operas in question are Mozart’s first successful forays into their respective genres, and both are followed by later operas that are influenced dramatically and vocally by the characters created in these earlier works. The soprano roles in these operas provide a field of inquiry into Mozart’s use of coloratura to delineate characters within the hierarchy of roles in the comic opera genres, and to depict a character’s emotional state -- while obeying the conventions of the two prevalent Viennese comic opera genres in the 1780s.

The roles under consideration are Susanna, Konstanze and Blonde. Only the second of these can be considered a full-fledged coloratura soprano role, in which a character of noble stature sings bravura arias appropriate for her character level and dramatic situation. Konstanze is one of Mozart’s most difficult and virtuosic roles for coloratura soprano. The other two characters in the study, Susanna and Blonde, use occasional flourishes of coloratura to create a specific dramatic effect or to show a particular characterization or mood; all such instances are important and relevant to my study. Additionally, the use of coloratura by these two characters represents an opportunity for the character to raise herself to a higher social status than is normally

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6 Mozart did compose *Zaide*, a Singspiel, in 1779-80, but it was left unfinished, having been rejected for production due to being too serious for Viennese tastes. Earlier operas include the Singspiel *Bastien und Bastienne* (1768) and *opere buffe* *La finta semplice* (composed 1768; first performed 1769) and *La finta giardiniera* (1775). Julian Rushton, “Mozart: Operatic Career,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 10 June 2006), <http://www.grovelmusic.com>.
afforded a maid in a comic opera. The role of Susanna is a particularly noteworthy case for study: in the original production of the opera (1786), the character would not have been considered a coloratura soprano role at all, having been given little coloratura to sing in her arias. In the revival of the opera (1789), however, coloratura abounds in the newly-composed substitute arias, changing not only her vocal profile, but also her character level and status within the opera. I will also briefly mention roles and arias from Mozart’s other operas, mainly for the purpose of comparison. These roles include Despina, Fiordiligi, and Dorabella from *Cosi fan tutte* (1790); Zerlina, Donna Anna, and Donna Elvira from *Don Giovanni* (1787); and the Countess from *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786).

**Table A: Roles and Arias discussed throughout this study:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Le nozze di Figaro</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Susanna</strong></td>
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<th><strong>Die Entführung aus dem Serail</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Konstanze</strong></td>
<td><strong>Aria</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Blonde</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Aria</strong></td>
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This study is concerned only with the coloratura used in the soprano roles written for female characters in comic genres (and not male roles sung by *castrati* in opera seria or trouser roles sung by females). There are a number of reasons for this. First, coloratura is used far more extensively in soprano roles than in those of any other voice range in the Mozart operatic repertoire; therefore, the sheer volume of material in this voice range allows me to draw conclusions and generalizations about the use of coloratura in Mozart's operas. Second, within the comic opera genres, coloratura appears in all types of roles, from serious to comic, in the soprano voice range, and in three distinct vocal *Fächer* -- dramatic, lyric, and soubrette -- whereas in other voice ranges, coloratura tends to be used in only a single *Fach* and character type. Third, Mozart's extensive use of coloratura throughout a number of different female roles -- and the lack of it in most male roles in the comic genres -- allows us to read the musical device as an expression of Mozart's view of feminine rhetorical style.

There has as yet been surprisingly little scholarship in this field. The study of meaning and gesture in music has seen much scholarship in the past twenty years, with such musicologists as Leonard Ratner, Kofi Agawu, Eero Tarasti, and Robert Hatten leading this field of inquiry; however, these scholars have written almost entirely on instrumental forms. Opera, and indeed vocal music in general, has been

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7 The dividing of vocal range into specific type is known as *Fach*, a German term meaning "compartment." It refers to the delineation of voices by tessitura, vocal character and colour. This issue will be discussed more fully in the first chapter. See J. B. Steane, "Fach," *Grove Opera Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 17 June 2006), <http://www.groveonline.oxforduni.ac.uk>.

under-served by this field of study. Issues of voice and vocality have, however, been
well served by musicologists in recent years. A few studies have focused on the issue
of coloratura from the perspective of vocal pedagogy. Ruth Padel and Mary Ann
Smart have considered the practice of highly ornamented singing in opera in the early
Baroque Florentine opera and the mad scenes of the nineteenth-century bel canto
masterpieces respectively. However, the coloratura of the Classical era seems to
have been of little interest to musicologists thus far. With the notable exception of
Allanbrook, Hunter, and Wheelock, few scholars have considered the use of
coloratura in Mozart’s operas from the perspective of dramatic function.

The scores of the operas are the main primary resources used for this study. I
have consulted the full scores contained in the Bärenreiter Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher
Werke, and have examined the accompanying critical reports for detailed entries on
performance dates, original singers, and commentary related to performance
reception. This edition of Mozart’s works contains facsimiles of the autographs for a


Carolyn Abbate, “Opera, or, The Envoicing of Women,” Musicology and Difference: Gender

David Mason, “The Teaching and Learning of Singing,” Cambridge Companion to Singing,
ed. John Potter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 204-220; David Galliver,

Ruth Padel, “‘Piangi, piangi o misera’: Putting Words in Women’s Mouths—The Female
Role in Opera,” London Review of Books 19, no. 2 (1997): 12-17; Mary Ann Smart, “The

Wye Allanbrook, Mary Hunter and Gretchen Wheelock, “Staging Mozart’s Women,” Siren
Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Don Giovanni, ed. Wolfgang Plath and Wolfgang Rehm, Neue
Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke 2/17 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1968); Mozart, Die Zauberflöte, ed.
Gernot Gruber and Alfred Opel, Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke 2/19 (Kassel: Bärenreiter,
number of the arias in the operas; these have been consulted mainly for accuracy of articulation in the voice parts and comparisons with any corresponding instrumental lines.

Other primary sources pertinent to this study are Mozart’s personal and professional correspondence contained in the various translations of his letters, including Emily Anderson’s Letters of Mozart and his Family and Robert Spaethling’s Mozart’s Letters, Mozart’s Life.\(^{14}\) Dorothea Link’s The National Court Theatre in Mozart’s Vienna: Sources and Documents for 1783-1792 provides information on all the activities at the major theatres in Vienna during Mozart’s time.\(^{15}\) Along with a performance calendar outlining the operas, plays and concerts produced, Link includes lists of performers, directors, composers, and designers, and their salaries. Additionally, Link has translated the diaries of Count Zinzendorf, an avid theatre-goer and prolific diarist. The Count gives his own lively opinions of the works performed; particularly important to my study are his impressions of various performances -- including different casts and substitute arias -- of Le nozze di Figaro.


Major secondary sources include *Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna*, Mary Hunter and James Webster’s collection of essays about Mozart’s operas, essays which focus on genre issues, cultural studies, or other composers of the time.\(^{16}\) Hunter’s work, with Allanbrook and Wheelock, on “Martern aller Arten” in the book *Siren Songs*, has provided me with an important analytical model for the case studies of the arias of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and the substitute arias of *Le nozze di Figaro* discussed in this thesis.\(^{17}\) Despite the difference in historical positioning between this essay, which looks at modern performances through the perspective of feminist critique, and my own work, which focuses more on primary source study and historical authenticity, the *Siren Songs* essay is the first English-language document I have found that suggests the idea of coloratura as a consciously-used rhetorical device.

John Rice’s *Antonio Salieri and the Viennese Opera* contains an important study of the different genres of opera prevalent in Vienna during the last half of the eighteenth century, as does Hunter’s *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna: A Poetics of Entertainment*.\(^{18}\) I have also looked to the work of Thomas Bauman and Tim Carter, particularly their Cambridge Opera Handbooks, for information on *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Le nozze di Figaro*, respectively, while Daniel Heartz’s survey, *Mozart’s Operas*, is an important foundational study of all the operas in this

\(^{16}\) Mary Hunter and James Webster, *Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).


The thesis progresses from contextual information, including necessary definitions of important terms, through descriptions of the different character levels in the two comic opera genres, to two case studies that utilize these definitions and concepts. The first case study, that of the coloratura arias in the Singspiel *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, finds Mozart using coloratura in a way that fits the conventions of its genre and the conventional character levels within it. The second case study examines how coloratura has the ability to change character level, thereby affecting dramatic meaning, through an analysis of the substitute arias Mozart composed for the 1789 revival of the opera buffa *Le nozze di Figaro*. These two case studies form the preliminary foundation for a larger study of coloratura in Mozart’s operas. A comprehensive analysis of Mozart’s use of coloratura throughout different voice types and operatic genres transcends the scope of a master’s thesis; however, this

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thesis establishes a context and methodology for a future study of coloratura in Mozart, and points toward the kinds of conclusions that such a study can reach.

The first chapter, “Coloratura in the Viennese Comic Opera Genres,” lays the foundation for the following two chapters by defining the concept of coloratura as it pertains to eighteenth-century opera. The issue of vocal range and timbre, or Fach, will be discussed, and the three soprano roles from Mozart’s comic operas that will be discussed in this thesis will be differentiated accordingly. Finally, this chapter ends with a description of the two comic genres of opera buffa and Singspiel, and the three different levels of character, from serious to comic, found in these genres. Both genre and character level, as will be seen, influence the amount of coloratura used by a character, and how she uses it as a device of expression and communication.

The second chapter, “The Strength of Coloratura for Two Abducted Sopranos,” is a case study of the function of coloratura for both soprano characters, Konstanze and Blonde, in Die Entführung aus dem Serail. This opera is an ideal subject for this study because of its dramatic clarity and adherence to generic conventions; the only two female roles in the opera are sopranos; each represents a different character level found in the Singspiel genre; and the coloratura of each character is musically and dramatically specific to her. Konstanze has three arias in the opera, two of which feature extensive coloratura passages: the final one, “Martern aller Arten,” is the lengthiest and perhaps the most vocally challenging of all of Mozart’s soprano operatic arias. In it, Konstanze displays a strength both unusual to her status, and unprecedented by her two previous arias. For the character of Blonde, Mozart uses
coloratura more sparingly, but its use helps define her as a strong and spirited young woman as she deals with her captor and potential seducer, Osmin.

Chapter three, "Coloratura and Character in the Figaro Substitute Arias," considers the problem created by coloratura arias that Mozart substituted into later productions of his operas, when no coloratura had existed in the original conception of a role. The role of Susanna in Le nozze di Figaro was changed substantially when the singer performing in the 1789 revival of the opera demanded substitute arias, works that bore little resemblance to the mood and musical language of the original pieces. One of the substitute arias, "Al desio di chi t’adora," is a grand opera seria piece, replete with coloratura, that is fundamentally different from "Deh vieni non tardar," the simple, lyrical work it replaced. Through the addition of coloratura, particularly on certain words of text, the role of Susanna is considerably altered, elevating her from a conventional buffa level character to a mezzo carattere within the opera buffa genre.

In addition to providing vocal adornment for the singer, Mozart used coloratura in his comic opera arias as an important dramatic and rhetorical device. Through its use, conventions of eighteenth-century comic opera genres and their three different character levels -- serious, middle and comic -- are respected and reinforced. Specifically, he uses it to affirm the status of those in the upper echelons of society, and to elevate those of lower station. His use of coloratura in arias of intense emotion serves to magnify the predominant mood: when unembellished melody is not enough to express emotion, coloratura vocalizes that which cannot be simply sung. Through analyses of the text and music of arias from operas of different comic genres, I will
argue that Mozart's use of coloratura in his soprano arias supports the dramatic requirements of the text and (with the important exception of the substitute Susanna arias) reflects the conventions of late eighteenth-century Viennese comic opera genres. Although constrained by the conflicting demands of composing arias that would highlight the "agile throat" of the prima donna, satisfy the desires of the pleasure-loving Viennese, and fulfill generic convention, Mozart nevertheless found a way to use coloratura dramatically, either to indicate class or character, or to advance plot.
Chapter One:

Coloratura in the Viennese Comic Opera Genres
Coloratura is used in different ways and frequency by the various characters within Mozart's comic operas. The case study of the opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in the second chapter of this thesis shows that the character Konstanze, whose status as a woman of nobility places her in a high character level, uses coloratura more extensively than the character Blonde, a woman of a lower stature and lower character level. The two genres of comic opera popular in Vienna in Mozart's time, the Singspiel and the opera buffa, both concern themselves with social standing, albeit in different ways. In opera buffa, personal merit is unrelated to social class. Comedy ensues when characters cross the boundaries of their stations: aristocrats may be seen as ridiculous, or at least fallible, and servants can often be more intelligent than their masters.\(^{21}\) Similarly, in Singspiel, personal merit is more important than birth; however, in this genre, the nobility is rarely made to seem ridiculous. Higher characters may have moments of weakness, but their nobility of character carries them through their difficulties. The lowest character level in this genre occupies the position less because of lowly birth than of baseness of character.\(^{22}\) In both genres, we see coloratura functioning as a powerful tool for characters of different levels to assert their positions in the social hierarchy of their comic opera worlds.

In this chapter, I will define the concept of coloratura as it is used in this thesis. As well, I lay the foundation for the detailed studies of the use of coloratura by Konstanze and Blonde in *Die Entführung*, and by Susanna in the revival of *Le nozze di*


\(^{22}\) Bauman, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 16-37.
*Figaro*, by discussing the issue of character level in the comic opera genres popular in Vienna in the 1780s. Opera buffa and Singspiel are introduced, with a brief history of their development into popular music theatre forms in Vienna in the 1780s.

**Coloratura**

The use of elaborate vocal embellishment spans the history of opera from the works of the Florentine *Camerata* in the early seventeenth century to the bel canto masterpieces of Bellini and Donizetti in the nineteenth century, and beyond into the avant-garde operas of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Highly ornamented vocal embellishment has, throughout the history of opera, changed from ornamentation that was typically improvised by the singer to elaborate melodic patterns written out by the composer. By Mozart’s time, a clear distinction has emerged between the trills, mordents, and other small ornaments that a singer would add on her own, particularly at cadence points, and the composed passages of scale patterns, arpeggios, or a combination of both, that are fully written out in the score. It is these composed patterns to which I will be referring as coloratura throughout this thesis.

The term coloratura may be applied as a descriptive term to both voice and aria type (a coloratura soprano or a coloratura aria), and may be used as a noun denoting the melodic passages of the aria in which one finds it. Thus, the term can have different meanings depending on the context. As a musical device, the term coloratura is

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23 Mason, “The Teaching (and Learning) of Singing,” 209.
commonly used in reference to vocal music to denote florid ornamentation sung to a single word or syllable of text.

Coloratura is thus defined in several early non-Italian music treatises, where the term is discussed briefly and always with reference to Italian vocal techniques. Examples of its usage in vocal treatises can be found during the early decades of opera, and as early as 1618, when Michael Praetorius describes lightening the voice to move rapidly through several pitches in his *Syntagma musicum*.\(^{24}\) Christoph Bernhard defines it in two different ways: as diminution, “when an interval is altered through several shorter notes, so that, instead of one long note, a number of shorter ones rush to the next note through all kinds of progressions by step or leap,” and as cadenza, described as “runs which are not so exactly bound to the bar, but which often extend two, three or more bars further [and] should be made only at chief closes.”\(^{25}\) Both Praetorius and Bernhard also note the placement of florid passages occurring on important words of text in order to draw attention to them, a technique that we will see Mozart using over a century later. In describing this practice, Praetorius and Bernhard provide early theoretical evidence of the importance of coloratura as a dramatic device.

By the late eighteenth century, the term *Koloratur* in German had long been in use as a generic term for ornamentation. Sixteenth-century German organ composers,


for example, described an ornamented melody as “Colloratum.” However, in the principal Italian treatises on singing, such as those by Giulio Caccini (1602), Pier Francesco Tosi (1723), Giovanni Battista Mancini (1774), and Manuel García (1841), the term never occurs, despite lengthy descriptions of ornamentation from all the authors, and admonitions to singers to embellish music tastefully; likewise, it is absent from the vocabulary of such English authors as Charles Burney (1771) and Henry Chorley (1859), who wrote extensively about Italian singing at a time when ornamentation was of utmost importance. Both Caccini and Mancini wrote in detail about ornamentation, and divided their discussions of it into composed and improvised embellishment. Mancini made no mention of the dramatic function of ornamentation in his treatise, *Pensieri, e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato* (1774), but simply called for singers to master vocal agility as an important aspect of their musical training. Caccini, however, in his preface to *Le nuove musiche* (1602), wrote of ornamentation as being an important affect in moving listeners, proposing that it should not be used to display virtuosity, but to enhance the impact and “paint” the

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meaning of the words. Although written almost two hundred years before Mozart's operas, Caccini's definition of coloratura as an expressive device which elongates and emphasizes important words of text is consistent with my observations of Mozart's coloratura in the comic operas.

The root of the term coloratura -- the Italian word meaning "colour"-- would imply to a modern-day musician that coloratura originally involved the practice of changing the vocal "colour" or timbre of her voice, through lightening or darkening the tone, usually to suit the style or period of music which she is performing. However, this concept of the term "vocal colour " is fairly recent -- the term "shading" or "shadows" meant the equivalent in the eighteenth century -- and does not pertain to our current understanding of the term coloratura. But as Steane and Jander point out, the "colouring" implied in the term coloratura is more akin to the kind practised in the eighteenth-century art of rhetoric; here the "colours" are figurative phrases, rhetorical questions, elaborate metaphors, and other techniques used to enhance and embellish the argument. Similarly, in music, decorative passages in the melodic line were said to be "figured." Coloratura enhances music in a way that could be considered figured or coloured in this sense. Viewed in that light, the term, with its Italian root, is apt and understandable. There may, however, be some basis to understanding the term

29 Mason, "The Teaching (and Learning) of Singing," 209.
30 Both French and Italian singers used essentially equivalent terms to refer to darkening the timbre of the voice. Voix sombrée, or 'darkened voice,' was used beginning in the mid-nineteenth century to describe the expressive device. The Italian term for the same technique is Voce ombreggiato for 'shaded voice' or simply ombre, which means shadow. Jander and Harris, "Voix sombrée," Grove Opera Online, L. Macy, ed. (Accessed 22 June 2006), <http://www.grovemusic.com>.
31 Steane and Jander, "Coloratura," Grove Opera Online.
coloratura in reference to vocal colour. The voice necessarily changes in order to sing coloratura: it generally changes colour and "lightens" in weight in order to sing rapidly and with flexibility. The term "coloratura" now seems to encompass the implications of both vocal weight and colour, and of figuration and embellishment.\footnote{Mason, "The Teaching of Singing," 206-10.}

German musicologists have long used \textit{Koloratur} or coloratura to denote vocal ornaments of all periods, and since the nineteenth century, this broad application has also become common in Italian and English.\footnote{Steane and Jander, "Coloratura," \textit{Grove Opera Online}; Frederick Neumann, \textit{Ornamentation and Improvisation in Mozart} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 211; Mason, "The Teaching of Singing," 206-10; E. Thomas Glasow, " 'Too many notes...': An interpretation of 'Martern aller Arten,' \textit{The Opera Quarterly} 8, no. 3 (1991): 42-57.} The term is now widely used to denote passages of florid vocal music, operatic roles in which such passages figure prominently, and the singers who specialize in them. Coloratura tends to appear in arias conveying heightened emotion, such as rage, vengeance, or extreme joy. This specification pertains to a wide spectrum of musical periods, from the \textit{aria di bravura} of early eighteenth-century Italian \textit{opera seria} and oratorio to the mad scene of nineteenth-century \textit{bel canto} opera. It can also be applied to all voice ranges including bass (Osmín in \textit{Die Entführung aus dem Serail}) and mezzo soprano (Rosina in Rossini's \textit{Il barbiere di Siviglia}). However, the term coloratura most typically refers to the soprano voice -- with further delineation of tessitura, vocal character and colour.
The dividing of vocal range into specific type is known as Fach, a German term meaning “compartment.”[^34] Three types of coloratura soprano will be discussed in this thesis: the *soprano acuto sfogato* or “extreme range” coloratura, the lyric coloratura, and the soubrette coloratura. The *soprano acuto sfogato* is an extremely high and acrobatic soprano, sometimes with a somewhat “edgy” timbre, who sings such roles as the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* and Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. This type is sometimes called the dramatic coloratura to call attention to the heavier vocal weight of these voices in comparison with other coloratura sopranos. The lyric coloratura has a somewhat lower voice capable of warm *cantabile* singing and *fioratura*, and performs such roles as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and the two Donnas in Don Giovanni. Finally, the soubrette coloratura is a very light, flexible soprano with a bright timbre used in soubrette roles, normally servant girls or other characters of the lower or working classes, such as Blonde in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. The three types of voices tend to coincide with issues of characterization within the different operatic genres, with the highest range of *Fächer* corresponding to the highest social level of character.

It is important to note that Mozart did not delineate Fach himself when stipulating the vocal range or character of voices he wanted for his roles.\textsuperscript{35} He did, however, describe the quality of the voices of the singers with whom he worked in letters to his father and wife. He wrote that the voice of Adriana Ferrarese had a rich low register and a "brittle quality" in her upper register, and that Aloysia Weber had a voice capable of sustaining a "floating" cantabile line in an extremely high range.\textsuperscript{36} While not actually using terms such as lyric coloratura or soprano acuto sfogato to describe their voices, Mozart's descriptions may offer indications both of the Fächer of the original singers of his roles and the intended or preferred vocal quality for which the roles were composed.

\textbf{Comic Opera Genres}

In addition to his serious works, Mozart composed in the two main comic opera genres that were popular in Vienna in the late eighteenth century, Singspiel and opera buffa. When Mozart arrived in Vienna in 1781, at the age of twenty-five, the well-established Italian Opera company was at the height of popularity, and the

\textsuperscript{35} A perusal of the autograph scores of Mozart's operas shows him rarely using any term but Sopran for female singers. A rare exception is the role of Cherubino, a trouser role, which Mozart stipulates should be sung by a mezzo soprano. See Stefan Kunze, "Kritischer Bericht: Arie," \textit{Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke}, 2/7 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2002), 2.

\textsuperscript{36} Mozart's letter to his wife, 15-18 August 1789 (undated). In Spaethling, \textit{Mozart's Letters, Mozart's Life}, 415.
National Singspiel company was in its second season. Comic opera had overtaken serious opera as the entertainment of choice for the theatre-loving Viennese.

Opera seria, the form of musical theatre in which big-budget, lavish productions featured the highest paid singers in Europe, had appealed mainly to the wealthy, and had suffered a decline in popularity with the rise of the middle classes and the accession of Emperor Joseph II to the throne in 1765.\(^{37}\) As a patron of music and supervisor of the court theatres in Vienna, Joseph was instrumental in helping to shape the city’s operatic life. Joseph found opera seria boring, and encouraged his favourite composers, including court composer Antonio Salieri, to compose light and humorous entertainment.\(^{38}\) With the change in social class dynamics, most notably a greater prosperity and level of education for the middle classes, opportunity for cultural and leisure activities abounded in Vienna. Opera continued to provide the central focus of musical life; indeed, the Viennese people filled the city’s four opera houses every night. Seats at the opera houses were available in many price ranges, allowing the middle class, and even the working class, an opportunity to enjoy performances and socialize.\(^{39}\) This mingling of classes in the opera house was not dissimilar to the mix of characters from all facets of society that the audience saw on the stage in the comic operas.


\(^{39}\) The lowest price seats, occupying the upper tier at the Burgtheater, cost 20 Kreuzer at a time when the average domestic servant earned 15 Kreuzer a day. See Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera*, 37.
The Viennese popularity of opera buffa was not only due to public taste, but also to the shrewdness of theatre management. Impresarios running the court theatres were instrumental in promoting the popularity of comic opera in Vienna. The contract of Franz Hilverding, who ran the Kärntnertortheater, stipulated that the spectacles that he produced “must be worthy of an Imperial-Royal capital”; however, no particular genre of presentation was suggested or required. Hilverding and his successors favoured comic over serious opera because it was cheaper to produce: its singers generally demanded less money than those of opera seria, and it was more popular with the public. When in 1775 Joseph released from contract the various impresarios who had been hired to run his court theatres, and now took a closely involved role in their operation, he too chose to present comic operas as a means of financial viability. Leopold Mozart had taken note of opera buffa’s dominance over opera seria when he had visited Vienna in 1768 with his children, an observation which led to Mozart’s composition of the buffa La finta semplice instead of an opera seria: “There is no opera seria here now, and moreover people do not like it. . . . There are no singers here now for serious opera. Even Gluck’s tragic opera Alceste was performed entirely by opera buffa singers.”


The genre of comic opera combined elements of *commedia dell'arte* (including physical humour and simple plots involving the war of the classes or of the sexes) and *intermezzi* (simple, tuneful songs) to create an art form enjoyed by the upwardly mobile middle classes.\(^{44}\) The most important features of opera buffa were of course comedy, the constant forward thrust of the narrative action, and verisimilitude -- the sense of reality that both the dramatic situation and the characters created.\(^{45}\) Opera plots changed from a focus on character development and reflexivity in *opera seria*, which had been promoted by the static form of the musical unit comprised of recitative and aria, to one of a comedy of situation, made possible by the speeding up of the rhythm of events, and the establishment of ensemble numbers.

Librettist Carlo Goldoni’s reforms in the realm of Italian comedy influenced the genre of comic opera as a whole.\(^{46}\) Goldoni felt that comedy should transcend the limits of broad slapstick, and should steer a middle course between comedy and tragedy.\(^{47}\) He combined the ethos of tragedy -- the nobility of feeling and action -- with the devices of comedy -- more probable actions and situations.\(^{48}\) He wished to

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\(^{46}\) Goehringer, “The opere buffe,” 137.

\(^{47}\) This synthesis, which works well in ennobling the low class characters of opera buffa, inevitably gives rise to problems of interpretation, of distinguishing between the straightforward and the parodistic use of seria moments within buffa forms.

portray the nobility, intelligence, and tenderness of character that could be found in all people, regardless of their social class, by depicting characters who rose or fell through personal merit rather than by birth. His works were inhabited by characters to whom audiences could relate; Goldoni’s libretti featured servants, busineswomen, actresses, doctors, merchants and other ordinary members of the rising middle class. Goldoni’s technical and moral reforms can both be seen in Mozart’s comic operas.

Almost concurrent with this rise in popularity of the Italian opera buffa in Vienna was the establishment by Joseph II of a German language opera company, the National Singspiel. The National Singspiel was devoted to the performance of new operatic works written specifically in German or of fine translations of works from the French or Italian. This company, begun in 1781, was the special project of Joseph, who desired to promote German art with the lofty themes of morality, decency, and clemency, in contrast to the frivolous and bawdy entertainment of improvised comedy.  

Prior to Joseph’s creation of the Singspiel company, the German opera performed in Austria had been a lowbrow affair: improvised farce, replete with slapstick comedy, stock characters, and popular-style songs, was common on Viennese stages. However, such entertainments were not to be tolerated on an enlightened emperor’s stage, and so they left the imperial theaters (where they had been welcome under Emperor Francis Stephan) and migrated to the suburban theaters.  

50 Bauman, ibid., 4.
opera that was being performed in northern German courts was deemed rather dreary and “too Lutheran” for Viennese tastes.\textsuperscript{51} Rather than simply bring to Vienna the opera that was being performed in northern regions, Joseph sought to develop a quintessentially Viennese style of German singing theatre to offer an alternative to the Italian opera buffa. Ultimately what he desired was a mingling of appealing music, high morals, tasteful comedy, and German ideals. The Viennese dramatist Tobias von Gebler explained the emperor’s goals for the new Singspiel company in a letter written in 1778:

You honourable people will perhaps have heard that our truly German emperor is now founding a German opera, for the serious as well as comic genre. Yet we must have nothing but true musical virtuosos and no street-singers, and the music, too, must be of the sort that we are used to hear by Piccinni, Anfossi, Paisiello... \textsuperscript{52}

Singspiel as a term simply means a spoken play with songs; however, the Singspiel of Josephinian Vienna bore more of a resemblance to opera buffa than to German spoken drama.\textsuperscript{53} The dialogue sections of Mozart’s two Singspiels, \textit{Die Entführung aus dem Serail} and \textit{Die Zauberflöte}, are short and seem to serve mainly as linking material between musical numbers. Additionally, Mozart’s Singspiels contain several distinguishing features of opera buffa, such as arias and ensemble numbers that advance the plot rather than simply reflecting upon emotions. While a major

\textsuperscript{51} A comment attributed to Josef Valentin Adamberger, Mozart's first Belmonte, in Bauman, \textit{Die Entführung aus dem Serail}, 4.


\textsuperscript{53} Bauman, \textit{Die Entführung aus dem Serail}, 12.
difference between Singspiel and opera buffa is the occurrence in the former of spoken
dialogue instead of long passages of conversational recitative, both opera buffa and
Singspiel are inhabited by similar character types based on the conventions established
by Goldonian comedy.

**Character Levels**

One of the most important reforms of Goldoni that influenced Mozart and
other comic opera composers of the eighteenth century is the codification of roles into
three different levels, ranging from serious to comic. Goldoni called these three levels
the *parti serie* or serious parts, *parti buffe* or comic parts, and *parti di mezze caraterre*
or middle character parts, roles that combine both comedy and pathos.\(^\text{54}\) In Goldonian
libretti, as in the operas it influenced, these three levels of character do not merely
specify the degree or amount of comedy they portray; character levels are closely
linked to social standing. Serious roles usually portray members of the nobility, while
comic roles are working- or servant-class characters. Opera adds to the requirements
of character another dimension that does not exist in spoken comedy, that of musical
style and aria type. Both the Italian opera buffa and the German Singspiel adopted
Goldoni’s three-tier system of character codification.

\(^{54}\) John Rice writes that as late at 1766 many comedies and libretti of Goldoni specify a
bipartite division of characters – parti serie and parti buffe. After 1766, most of Goldoni’s
works do contain all three types of roles. Rice, *Antonio Salieri and the Viennese Opera*, 69.
Parisi serie are closely related to the opera seria, incorporating the music, language and gesture of characters in the serious genre.\textsuperscript{55} Arias sung by these characters are often grand rondos or modified \textit{da capo} arias. These "representations of opera seria in opera buffa" (to borrow the phrase from Mary Hunter's article of the same name) communicated to eighteenth-century opera audiences a wide spectrum of meanings, from sincere expressions of nobility, deep passion, and heroism, to a comical parody of such emotions. While Mozart wrote roles for true heroic-style seria characters in his comic operas (Konstanze in \textit{Die Entführung} is one important example), he was also a master of this mocking or parodying of the seria style in his comic operas. Rather than taking such overwrought characters seriously, we tend to hear them as overblown, over-dramatic, and almost hysterical.

A telling example of this use of musical parody comes from \textit{Cosi fan tutte}. As the two sisters bid good-bye to their fiancés before the men supposedly go off to war, and later pine away for them, their \textit{seria} style arias depict deeply affected and extravagant displays of grief. In the first act, Despina, the maid, is preparing the ladies' chocolate when they burst in. Dorabella explains their despair, but her emotions leave her barely coherent in her aria "Smanie implacabili," in which she repeatedly, through passages of excessive coloratura, expresses her inconsolability. Despina, as a soubrette and buffa character (and therefore the voice of sanity according to Goldonian dictates), cannot take them seriously: surely they can find other lovers. Despite Despina's sensible advice to forget the men, the two women wallow in their

opera seria self-pity. When the fiancés arrive disguised as other men to test the sisters’ fidelity, Fiordiligia, a lyric coloratura, articulates her constancy to her beloved in a powerful recitative and aria, “Come scoglio”: she stands firm as a rock in tempestuous seas, she sings. The three sections grow in brilliance and versatility; near the beginning of the aria, she has wide interval leaps of tenths and twelfths, great displays of cantar di sbalzo, an opera seria technique of wide interval leaps that depict heroism. Later in the aria the vocal line ascends majestically with coloratura scale passages spanning over two octaves. By incorporating such earnest seria elements into the aria, Mozart adds to the comedy of the situation, especially when the audience knows that its singer will soon be in the arms of the man she is spurning.

Parti buffi are perhaps more straightforward to define. As the theatre ceased to be the sole preserve of the court, public opera houses began to perform for the new bourgeoisie. This new audience had very different tastes from the nobility who had patronized opera seria. The middle classes wanted to see on stage characters to whom they could relate. Parti buffi could typically be lawyers, shopkeepers, servants and even music teachers. Certain stock roles emerged: for example, the basso buffo might be an unusually cunning servant who could orchestrate all the events around him, such as Figaro in Le nozze di Figaro, or a rather rude and arrogant member of the middle class who is far less intelligent than he thinks, such as Bartolo in Figaro. Similarly, female roles were often clever and worldly servant girls who, though probably less

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56 Ford, Cosi?: Sexual Politics in Mozart’s Operas, 102.

educated and accomplished than their mistresses, are able to control or advise them, such as Despina in *Cosi fan tutte*. Susanna, the Countess’s chambermaid in *Figaro*, is a buffa character who is intelligent enough to advise the Countess and concoct schemes with her as a near-equal.\(^{58}\)

Audiences responded to characters who could be related to their own lives. Comic characters became beacons of sanity in the overwrought lives of their noble masters and mistresses. Through them, the audience experiences the joy of lower classes prevailing and getting the better of the upper class, a highly comic theme that was very much appreciated by the audience of the time.

These humbler characters were expected to sing in a more informal musical style than that of the seria characters. Seria characters conventionally sang elaborate musical numbers consisting of recitative -- often *recitativo accompagnato* -- and *da capo* or *dal segno* arias, with several displays of coloratura.\(^{59}\) Buffa characters had a great freedom in aria style. *Parti buffi* could sing short strophic songs, such as Pedrillo’s “Romanze” in *Die Entführung*; patter songs consisting of short, repetitive phrases, such as Leporello’s catalogue aria, “Madamina, il catalogo è questo,” in *Don

\(^{58}\) Interestingly, both Despina and Susanna are able to read and write, a feature that may be seen as reflection of the educational reforms of the enlightened Joseph II. See Carter, *Le nozze di Figaro*, 11-32. Carter questions whether Susanna’s intelligence and the fact that she and the Countess have a close friendship that seems to transcend their social differences would make Susanna a *mezze caraterre* rather a buffa.

\(^{59}\) Rice, *Antonio Salieri and the Viennese Opera*, 87.
Giovanni; and short two-tempo arias, such as Despina’s “In uomini in soldati” in Cosi fan tutte.⁶⁰

The middle characters are the most problematic to classify. They can be from either social class; it is often the behaviour of a character, not his or her social class, that places the character in this level. Musical style often indicates that these characters are working outside of their expected realm. For example, a character would be classed as a mezze caraterre if he or she were to have noble origins, yet behave in a manner beneath him.⁶¹ The title character of Mozart’s Don Giovanni is a prime example of a nobleman who behaves in a less than noble fashion; alternately funny and tragic, charming and rude-mannered, the Don inhabits this middle level. His music is more closely related to the characteristic buffa style of his servant Leporello than it is to the seria-style Don Ottavio, despite his social status being the same as Ottavio. Conversely, a servant or peasant, who conventionally would be classed in the buffa level, can be elevated to the middle level by noble actions and intents, and musical style. The role of Blonde in Die Entführung aus dem Serail is a young lady’s maid, and would therefore be expected to inhabit the buffa level because of her station in life. However, Blonde’s bravery in facing her dangerous situation and her faithfulness to her mistress Konstanze raises her to the level of a middle

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⁶⁰ Rice, Antonio Salieri and the Viennese Opera, 97.

⁶¹ Carter, Le nozze di Figaro, 11-32. Carter considers mezzi caratteri to be mainly heroes and heroines at the centre of the action whose high-class origins conflict with their lower-class behaviour.
character. Her music shows equal affinity to seria as to buffa levels, with characteristic gestures of both.

The amount of coloratura one finds in the arias of soprano characters is closely related to character level in both opera buffa and Singspiel. Parti buffi rarely used coloratura. If present in the music of a buffa character, it is likely used for a specific dramatic effect, often to mock or imitate a seria character, or to attempt to aggrandize herself. For example, Zerlina, a young peasant girl in Don Giovanni, uses coloratura in tiny bursts in her aria “Batti, batti, o bel Masetto.” It may be an instance of feminine adornment used as means to appeal to her fiancé, who has been angered by her flirtatiousness with the Don. Perhaps she is still thinking of the Don at this moment, and is briefly adopting an elevated musical style, giving the audience a glimpse into her aspirations to a higher social standing.

Parti di mezze caráterre often incorporate passages of coloratura within the shorter strophic, modified strophic or sonata form arias typical of a buffa; these coloratura passages are likely to be shorter and less virtuosic than those in opera seria arias in terms of range and technical requirement. The soprano Pamina in Die Zauberflöte, as the daughter of the Queen of the Night, is a character of high social class. Her music, however, places her in the mezze caráterre level; her one aria, “Ach, ich fühlt’s,” is not as embellished as the arias of the Queen, containing only one brief

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62 This issue will be explored fully in the following chapter.
passage of coloratura. Her vocal style is naturalistic, as befits a character embodying the Enlightenment humanism at the centre of this comic work.

*Parti serie*, those characters belonging to the highest social level, are defined musically by their grand style, which includes bravura arias in through-composed ternary, binary or rondò forms, liberally adorned with coloratura. The Queen of the Night from *Die Zauberflöte* is an example of a *seria* role with appropriate and characteristic music for this level. Her first aria from the first act of the opera, "O zittere nicht, mein lieber Sohn," takes a typical formal structure for an *aria di bravura* in an eighteenth-century *opera seria*. It begins with an elaborate and dramatic *recitativo accompagnato*, and is followed by a two-tempo aria. The first section of the aria (Zum Leiden bin ich auserkoren) is a lyrical, cantabile Andante in the key of G minor as the Queen describes to the prince Tamino how her daughter Pamina was taken from her by an evil monster. The second section (Du wirst sie zu befreien gehen) is an explosive Allegro movement in B-flat major. This section, in which she implores Tamino to find Pamina and promises that he may marry her if he rescues her, is virtuosic and demanding, extending above high C numerous times.

Pamina and the Queen of the Night demonstrate how two characters can be from a similar social class and yet inhabit different character levels, affecting the amount of coloratura given. Both women are highly born, but only the Queen sings coloratura, while Pamina sings *cantabile* lyric soprano lines throughout the opera. Coloratura is used to indicate the Queen’s status as a magic, supernatural character: her coloratura is excessively, *inhumane*ly high, emphasizing her role as a powerful,
otherworldly character. In her first aria, "O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn," she is playing the role of caring, distraught mother, entreating the prince Tamino to find and bring her daughter back. While her initial scale patterns, written-out trills and conjunct coloratura seduce Tamino into undertaking the task, the disjunct staccato arpeggios that later creep into her aria serve as clues suggesting her ulterior motives. Her second aria, the stratospheric vengeance aria, "Der Hölle Rache," in which she demands that her daughter Pamina kill the priest Sarastro on threat of disownment, is almost completely made up of these disjunct coloratura patterns in an extreme range. Here, coloratura is used to depict the drama, sonically illustrating the Queen's ascent into madness. Pamina, pure and unblemished by any artifice, and portraying the moral opposite of the evil Queen, is not given any coloratura. Its absence appears to represent both her innocence in the midst of her mother's corrupt realm and her enlightenment through the humanistic teaching of Sarastro's temple.

The following chapters will look at three different female characters in operas from the opera buffa and Singspiel genres, each representing a different character level in Mozart's original conceptions of the roles. Each woman has varying degrees of coloratura within her arias, which affects our understanding of her position within her social milieu. As I move through the two case studies that comprise the following two chapters, I will consider the three main issues that this chapter's contextual material has presented. First, what is the character level of the role in question and how does it adhere to, or differ from, conventional comic opera dictates according to the Goldonian model? How does the amount and style of coloratura support the
character level, and is this coloratura what one would expect for this role? Finally, does the coloratura function as more than mere social indicator; for example, is it affected by or used in reaction to the character’s dramatic situation? In both *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, the coloratura used in the three soprano roles in question functions in multifaceted ways, providing rich evidence of Mozart’s use of vocal embellishment as both social and emotional indicators.
Chapter Two:

The Strength of Coloratura for Two Abducted Sopranos
The *opere buffe* of Mozart and da Ponte compel their audiences into a keen awareness of the various social statures of their characters. Class issues abound in comedies which, while emphasizing class differences and character levels, often show that nobility of character is not solely the possession of the highly born, and that the upper-class can behave as badly as their servants, and vice versa.\(^{63}\) The previous chapter introduced the genre of opera buffa and considered ways in which Mozart used coloratura and different aria forms and styles to define and strengthen character levels within the opera buffa genre. Amid the comedic and wholly human situations of Viennese opera buffa, coloratura separated the mistresses from their maids, providing a clear ranking of character type from *parti serie* to *parti buffe*. The genre of Singspiel is less concerned with issues of social class, tending more towards themes of morality and clemency. While coloratura is used extensively in Singspiel, it functions less obviously as an indicator of social standing and character level than in opera buffa.\(^{64}\)

In the Singspiel *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, composed by Mozart in 1782 to a revised libretto by Gottlieb Stephanie der Jüngere based on an original libretto by Christoph Friedrich Bretzner, coloratura serves a less social function: the expression of intense personal emotions. The two leading soprano characters of the opera, Konstanze and Blonde, are European women entrapped in a Turkish harem who use coloratura as a rhetorical device to face or deflect the threat of danger. For these two


\(^{64}\) Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 5.
characters, coloratura is a means of displaying outwardly emotions that are not readily expressed with simple and direct song-style expression. With virtuoso displays of vocality, the women exude feminine strength in a manner that confounds their captors, such vocality ultimately saving them from the further danger of unwanted sexual advances from their male captors. This chapter discusses these two female roles from the perspective of vocal characterization, in particular the use of coloratura and vocalization. It explores how such embellishment helps to define the level of character according to the conventions of the genre, and to depict the emotional state of the characters. As Konstanze and Blonde navigate their way through the complexity of their dangerous situation in a Turkish harem, their music alternately depicts humour, sorrow, and ultimately strength in the face of danger.

_Die Entführung aus dem Serail_ works as a perfect model for a case study because of its dramatic clarity and adherence to generic conventions: the only two females in the opera are sopranos, each of whom represents a different character level found in the Singspiel genre.\(^65\) The two women represent entirely different cultural backgrounds: Konstanze is a member of the Spanish aristocracy, while Blonde is English. The music assigned to each character requires a unique vocal _Fach._

Moreover, the coloratura of each character is musically and dramatically specific to her. Konstanze has three arias in the opera, two of which ("Ach, ich liebte, war so glücklich" and "Martern aller Arten") feature extensive coloratura passages that both reflect and affect her transformation from a meek and sympathetic gentlewoman who

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behaves in a manner well-suited to her station and upbringing to a powerful woman who inspires awe, both dramatically and vocally.\textsuperscript{66} As she undergoes this transformation, the style of her coloratura, as well as the vocal quality required to portray it, effectively metamorphoses from lyric to dramatic.

Only one of Blonde’s two arias (“Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeichelnd”) uses coloratura in brief, but notable, passages. Perhaps due to the seemingly simple nature of Blonde’s music and her role as the soubrette of the opera, scholars have shown this character little regard. None of the English-language literature regarding \textit{Die Entführung} consulted for this thesis includes a rigorous study of either the character or the music of Blonde.\textsuperscript{67} In addition, recent studies of the vocal profiles of singers at this time have ignored Therese Teyber, the originator of the role.\textsuperscript{68} It may be that critics and scholars have always found the forthright Blonde, with her similarly straightforward arias, too transparent a subject for penetrating analysis; perhaps she has simply been overshadowed by the sheer virtuosity of Konstanze. I will explore Mozart’s characterization of her which, befitting her role as an Englishwoman and a


\textsuperscript{68} Patricia Lewy Gidwitz’s doctoral dissertation and articles on the vocal profiles of Mozart’s sopranos examine the arias and roles composed for Caterina Cavalieri, the original Konstanze, Aloysia Weber, Adriana Ferrarese del Bene, and Nancy Storace. Teyber is not mentioned. See “Vocal Profiles of Two Mozart Sopranos,” \textit{Early Music} 19, no. 4 (1991): 565-579.
free one at that, raises her above the character level to which she is commonly assigned. While Mozart uses coloratura more sparingly for Blonde than for Konstanze, as befits her role as a subordinate to Konstanze, its very presence indicates a more substantial and elevated character than that of a simple comic opera maid. Her use of coloratura helps define her as a strong and spirited young woman as she deals with her captor and potential seducer Osmin.

When Mozart arrived in Vienna in March 1781, the National Singspiel company had just finished its third season in the Theater nächst der kaiserlichen Burg, or the Burgtheater, as it was commonly called. The presence of the talented Mozart in Vienna at this time was propitious. Mozart had been teamed with the librettist Stephanie der Jüngere, who was assigned the task of writing or adapting a libretto for a Singspiel that Mozart would write for the National Singspiel. They settled on an existing libretto, Belmont und Constanze, oder Die Entführung aus dem Serail, a work written by Christoph Friedrich Bretzner that had already been set to music a few years earlier by Johann André, the resident composer of the Döbbelin Company in Berlin. As Mozart enthusiastically set about his work, rumours abounded that Joseph II would ask him to prepare his work to be performed for the Grand Duke Paul Petrovich, heir to the Russian throne, and his wife the Duchess Sophia Dorothea, when they visited Vienna during November and December 1781 as part of a tour of western Europe.

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69 Bauman, Die Entführung aus dem Serail, 8.

70 Rice, Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera, 307.
Four months earlier, Emperor Joseph II had been advised to impress the grand duke and duchess with "the power of this monarchy" and "to present the court and the city with as much brilliance as possible." The writer of this advice, Prince Kaunitz, suggested that Joseph hire magnificent singers from Italy to perform opera seria, and to engage the best possible ballet troupe. Joseph, however, intended to display his German Singspiel and theatrical companies, and ordered Count Rosenberg to supervise the production of Mozart and Stephanie's new opera, as well as operas by Ignaz Umlauf, the resident Kapellmeister for the Singspiel. These intentions never came to fruition, as Joseph ultimately ordered new productions of three operas by Gluck, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Alceste*, and *Orfeo ed Euridice* — the first performed in German translation, and the latter two in the original Italian. He had not forgotten the effectiveness of Gluck's operas as symbols of the power, wealth, and good taste of the Hapsburg court. Despite his assertions to the contrary, Joseph still lacked confidence in German opera and its ability to impress his aristocratic guests.

Joseph had no need to doubt the skill of his singers in the National Singspiel company. During the early years of the troupe, he had managed to assemble the finest German performers, hiring where possible singers who had studied in Italy or with renowned Italians or, ideally, those who had had successful careers as singers of Italian

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72 Bauman, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 4-5.

73 Einstein, *Mozart: His Character, His Work*, 123.

74 Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera*, 308.
opera. Mozart was familiar with the performers in the Singspiel troupe before
beginning work on Die Entführung, and had the opportunity to create arias that he felt
were truly suited to the singers’ voices. Members of the Singspiel included Josef
Valentin Adamberger, the first Belmonte in Die Entführung and the troupe’s premier
tenor. He had studied and performed in Italy under the Italianised version of his name,
Adamonti; he later sang in London and Munich before being called to the National
Singspiel. He was the highest-paid singer in the company, a benefit for which he had
to thank his Italian success. Bass Johann Fischer played the important role of Osmin in
Die Entführung, and was a popular member of the troupe in serious and comic roles.
Although he had not been to Italy, he had studied in Mannheim with one of Germany’s
greatest seria tenors, Anton Raaff, for whom Mozart had composed the title role in
Idomeneo in 1780. After having notable success singing in Mannheim and Munich,
Fischer had come to Vienna in 1780.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adamberger, Josef Valentin</td>
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<td>Fischer, Johann Ludwig</td>
<td>bass (Osmin)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cavalieri, Caterina</td>
<td>soprano (Konstanze)</td>
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<td>Dauer, Johann Ernst</td>
<td>tenor/actor (Pedrillo)</td>
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<td>Jautz, Dominik</td>
<td>actor (Bassa Selim)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teyber, Therese</td>
<td>soprano (Blonde)</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75 Bauman, Die Entführung aus dem Serail, 16.

76 Link, National Court Theatre in Mozart’s Vienna, 399. Also reported in Bauman, Die
Entführung aus dem Serail, 16.
The company employed three sopranos, two of whom crossed paths with Mozart frequently in their careers: the first, Aloysia (Weber) Lange, was Mozart’s sister-in-law and the frequent interpreter of some of his most challenging and virtuosic concert arias.\textsuperscript{77} The second was Caterina Cavalieri, a favourite of Mozart, and the fortunate recipient of numerous roles and substitute arias that he created for her. She was trained by court composer Antonio Salieri, whose mistress she was reputed to have been. Cavalieri, a native of Vienna (born Fransziska Kavalier), had Italianised her name and is said to have contrived an Italian accent to gain popularity among the opera-buffa-loving Viennese public.\textsuperscript{78} The role of Konstanze in \textit{Die Entführung} was created with Cavalieri in mind; however, Lange studied the role and performed it frequently throughout the first few years of its run at the National Singspiel. The third soprano in the company was Therese Teyber, who created the role of Blonde. She was evidently a versatile performer: in addition to playing servants and other comic roles in the Singspiel, she sometimes took leading roles playing innocent young girls, and appeared often in spoken drama with the National Theater.\textsuperscript{79}

Despite Therese Teyber’s status as the lowest paid singer of the cast (likely due to her having never sung in Italy or abroad), she was evidently a skilled performer, judging from the music Mozart wrote for her. She was required to use an astonishingly wide vocal range for a soprano -- from the A-flat below middle to the E above the staff. She needed to be able to sustain long, arching, graceful phrases in a

\textsuperscript{77} The concert arias will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

\textsuperscript{78} Rice, \textit{Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera}, 287-9.

\textsuperscript{79} Bauman, \textit{Die Entführung aus dem Serail}, 14-16.
rather high tessitura in her first aria ("Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln"), and later deliver an energetic and cheerful performance in a midrange tessitura for her second aria ("Welche Wonne, welche Lust"). In addition, as the character Blonde, Teyber was required to hold her own in ensemble scenes and musical numbers with Fischer, Cavalieri, and Adamberger -- strong singers according to all reports -- and apparently did so to critical acclaim. "The best actress among the women of the Singspiel," wrote one contemporary critic of her the day after the Die Entführung aus dem Serail premiere on 16 July 1782. Teyber was best known in Vienna for playing servants and other soubrette characters, and rarely prima donna roles, which may be one reason that she has attracted so little interest as a performer in modern scholarship. Mozart counted her among his friends, and the two appeared in each other's concerts, or "academies," over the years. In a letter to his father dated 29 March 1783, he describes a successful concert he had given a few days earlier:

We did the new Haffner symphony, Mme. Lange sang the aria from my Munich opera, Adamberger sang the scena I wrote for Countess Baumgarten, I played the concerto in D with the new rondeau which is so favoured here, and Mlle. Teyber sang the scena Parto m'affretto from my last Milano opera. Tomorrow Mlle. Teyber will have a concert, where I will play as well.

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81 The pieces referred to are the Haffner Symphony, K. 385; Ilia's aria, "Basta vincesti...Ah, non lasciarmi," K. 486a from Idomeneo; the concert aria, "Misera, dove son!" K. 369; Piano concerto in D Major, K. 175 with the rondo, K. 382; Junia's aria from Lucio Silla, K. 135.

Nevertheless, scholars have summarily dismissed or ignored the role of Blonde as a mere servant girl with little depth of character worth discussing. In the Cambridge Opera Handbook to *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Thomas Bauman, a noted Mozart scholar, includes only the briefest description of Blonde’s first aria, “Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln,” and does not mention the second aria, “Welche Wonne, welche Lust.” This is in comparison to the detailed, eight-page analysis of Konstanze’s “Martern aller Arten.” Bauman also ignores Blonde in his chapter on *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in the book *Mozart’s Operas*, choosing instead to focus on the love triangle of Konstanze, Belmonte, and the Pasha. Additionally, Blonde is given no introduction by either Bretzner, the original librettist of *Belmont und Constanze*, or Stephanie, the librettist of the version in question. Both writers simply refer to her in the cast of characters as “Konstanze’s maid.” Blonde, however, is not a typical chambermaid. The inclusion of coloratura in her main aria suggests that she is in a higher social class than previously thought; her inclusion or exclusion of coloratura at key moments also suggests a certain fluidity of character level above the buffa level.

Blonde’s two arias, “Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln” (Act II, scene 1, No. 8) and “Welche Wonne, welche Lust” (Act II, scene 6, No. 12), are sung in response to different characters and situations, important aspects to consider when examining her use of coloratura. When Konstanze and Blonde were captured by the

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Pasha, he offered Blonde to his servant Osmin as a gift. Blonde’s first aria, “Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln,” is sung in response to Osmin’s aggressive attempts to get her to submit to him sexually. Blonde makes her first entrance in the opera at the beginning of Act II, standing up to Osmin’s (implied, offstage) advances, saying, “If you think that I am a Turkish slave who trembles at your feet, then you are sadly mistaken. European girls aren’t like that. You see, we are accustomed to rather different treatment.”\(^\text{85}\) He yells and orders her about, and she bravely responds with this instructive aria telling him that he will not get anywhere with her with his loud, scolding voice:

**Aria (Blonde): Act II, No. 8 “Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln”**

*Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln,*  
*Gefälligkeit und Scherzen*  
*Erobert man die Herzen*  
*Der guten Mädchen leicht.*

*Doch mürisches Befehlen,*  
*Und Poltern, Zanken, Plagen*  
*Macht, dass in wenigen Tagen*  
*So Lieb' als Treu' entweicht.* \(^\text{86}\)

With tenderness and coaxing,  
kindness and pleasantries,  
it's easy to conquer  
a gentle maiden's heart.

But surly commands,  
bluster, abuse and scolding  
will very quickly banish  
both love and faithfulness.

The music is a graceful and melodious single-tempo rondo with a strong feeling of a gavotte, a courtly Baroque dance. This allusion to a court dance associates Blonde with a high social level, suggesting that she is aware of the customs of aristocratic

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\(^\text{86}\) Bold type here and throughout the thesis denotes words on which coloratura occurs.
society. This aria is the only number in the opera accompanied by strings alone, which double her voice or move in parallel thirds throughout the parts of the aria in which she is singing about the positive attitudes one’s lover must possess (the first quatrain of text). The transparency of texture may give an indication of the lightness of Teyber’s voice. However, it serves a dramatic function as well: the small group of strings free of winds or brass sets Blonde apart from Osmin and the brash “Turkish” instrumentation that Mozart gives him as accompaniment. The graceful impression created by the strings emphasizes Blonde’s good breeding and cultural superiority over the loud and boorish Osmin (Example 2-1).\footnote{This and all subsequent examples have been copied from scores that are in public domain.}

Ex. 2-1 “Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln,” mm. 8-18
When the text of the aria changes to discussion of abuse and scolding, the strings abandon their parallel-motion accompaniment of the voice and become forceful and abrupt, in an onomatopoeic characterization of Blonde’s text (Example 2-2).

Ex. 2-2 “Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln,” mm. 18-24

Although Bretzner’s text consists of a mere two quatrains, Mozart spreads this spare text over a seven-part rondo pattern. Soon after the opera’s première, he marked a cut in his score, which shortened the aria to a five-part rondo. Except for three short instances of coloratura on the word “entweicht,” the text is set syllabically, allowing a clarity of communication understandable even to Osmin. Rather than spurning Osmin with harsh words of refusal, the intelligent and clearly capable young

88 Bauman, Die Entführung aus dem Serail, 43.
woman keeps him at arm's length with small vocal displays of defiance and strength disguised as flirtation and feminine embellishment. As she sings that scolding and tears can make love and faithfulness depart, she characterizes this departure vocally with a scale passage ascending well above the staff, dividing and contrasting her voice as much as possible with the basso Osmin. Each time she sings the word “entweicht,” the voice ascends higher: the first time, the top note is a B, the second time a C-sharp, and the third and final time, the top note is a high E (Example 2-3).

Ex. 2-3 “Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln,” mm. 30-35; 52-57; 57-62.
The scale passage allows her to flaunt vocally both her femininity and freedom in a non-threatening and flirtatious manner, defusing the potential danger with cunning.

Her second aria, “Welche Wonne, welche Lust,” sung to Konstanze in order to cheer her up and raise her hopes that they will soon be rescued by Belmonte, has no coloratura at all.

**Aria (Blonde): Act 2, No. 12 “Welche Wonne, welche Lust”**

*Welche Wonne, welche Lust  
Regt sich nun in meiner Brust!  
Voller Freuden will ich springen,  
Ihr die frohe Nachricht bringen;  
Und mit lachen und mit Scherzen  
Ihrem schwachen, kranken Herzen  
Freud und Jubel prophezeihn.*

What bliss, what rapture  
now reigns in my breast!  
I could jump for joy  
as I bring the good news,  
and with laughter and jest  
prophesy and rejoicing  
for her poor despairing heart.

It would seem that in the presence of her mistress, Blonde has no use for vocalizations that show power or defiance. Although she is bright, cheerful, and comfortable with Konstanze, she defers to the noblewoman, and does not appropriate any of the elements of Konstanze’s *seria* style. However, the text, with its use of the pronoun *Ihr*, may suggest that Konstanze is so caught up in her own grief that she is not paying attention to Blonde; Blonde is not addressing Konstanze directly, but is singing about her. This modified strophic-form aria contains no ornamentation, nor does it retain the same elegant strings-only instrumentation featured in her first aria, perhaps because Blonde has no need for coloratura as a communicative device.
Blonde has the flexibility of character that enables her to use coloratura only when she is with a person of a lower class and character level than herself. She sets herself vocally between the buffo Osmin and the seria Konstanze, clearly making herself a *mezze carratere*. Yet Blonde is not a chambermaid of the like of a Susanna or a Despina. In her first scene of dialogue with Osmin, she says, “I am an Englishwoman, born in freedom, and I defy anyone to enslave me!” In the duet following this scene of dialogue, “Ich gehe, doch rate ich dir,” Blonde sings of her heart born in freedom that can never be made a slave: “Ein Herz, so in Freiheit geboren, lässt niemals sich sklavisch behandeln.” Blonde’s intelligence and knowledge of human nature shine through as she deals with Osmin, avoiding his advances, but managing to stay in his favour. She has wisdom and culture equal to her mistress, seeming to be more lady-in-waiting to Konstanze than chambermaid. When the two women sing together in the Act II finale, their vocal lines are in parallel thirds with exactly equal amounts of embellishment (Example 2-4).

Ex. 2-4 Quartet: “Endlich scheint die Hoffnungssonne,” mm. 60-63
By contrast, from Konstanze’s first aria, “Ach ich liebte, war so glücklich,” to her third and final aria, “Martern aller Arten,” the changing melodic patterns of coloratura can be understood as expressions of her emotional growth and her gathering of strength to defy the Pasha. In her first and third arias, Konstanze consciously uses coloratura as a rhetorical device that enhances her argument or position. Additionally, as Wheelock puts it, “coloratura can be heard as a display of rhetorical force needed to exhibit the culturally assigned role of constancy.”

Konstanze appears for the first time in the opera in Act I, scene 7, in which she is trying to make the Pasha understand why she cannot return his affection. In the aria “Ach ich liebte, war so glücklich,” she wistfully describes her lover Belmonte, whom she may never see again, and explains how happy they were together. The Turkish Pasha, who has imprisoned her and also professed his love for her, is trying to win her love in return, but to no avail. He says, “Still sad, beloved Konstanze? Always in tears? See this beautiful evening, this charming garden, the soft music, my tender love for you -- can none of this touch your heart? You know, I could force my desires on you . . . but no, Konstanze, I want you to give your heart willingly.” There seems to be genuine respect, possibly even affection between these two, as Konstanze responds, “Oh generous man. If only I could return your love . . .”

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Aria (Konstanze): Act 1, No. 6 “Ach ich liebte, war so glücklich”

*Ach ich liebte, war so glücklich,*
*Kannte nicht der Liebe Schmerz;*
*Schwur ihm Treue, dem Geliebten,*
*Gab dahin mein ganzes Herz.*

*Ah, I was in love, was so happy,*
*I knew nothing of love’s pain.*
*Promised to be true to my beloved,*
*and gave him my whole heart.*

* Doch wie schnell schwand meine Freude,*
*Trennung war mein banges Los;*
*Und nun schwimmt mein Aug’ in Tränen,*
*Kummer ruht in meinem Schoss.*

*But how quickly my joy deserted me,*
*Separation was my unhappy lot;*
*and now my eyes are overflow with tears,*
*Sorrow dwells in my lap.*

In this first aria, Konstanze is trying to distance herself from the Pasha by describing how happy she used to be with her beloved. Rather than use coloratura as a forceful form of rhetoric, as she does in her third aria, the elaborate “Martern aller Arten,” here she uses it to appeal to the Pasha’s sense of pity and kindness. (Although the Pasha’s enlightened clemency has not yet been revealed to the audience, the fact that Konstanze senses enough humanity in him to communicate with him in this manner speaks of her intelligence and intuition.) Her sinuous scale patterns and less extreme range and intervals than in “Martern aller Arten” exemplify this soft approach. The aria begins with a gentle adagio section that states the first quatrain of text, in which Konstanze describes in short, regular phrases the constancy of her heart (Example 2-5).
Mozart had originally intended this aria to be a *cantabile portamento* aria, full of heartfelt pathos; however, the wishes of Caterina Cavalieri superseded his artistic intent and he gave in. Modern critics have criticized the aria for its over-embellishment and its lack of contribution to audiences’ understanding of Konstanze’s character. Bauman writes that this aria “establishes her voice more
clearly than her emotional nature.”

However, throughout this opera, Konstanze shows that she has numerous musical styles of expression at her disposal: at the beginning of this aria, she chooses a formal style of expression when speaking to the Pasha, shown by the somewhat stiff phrase pattern. In addressing him in this formal manner, she shows him respect, and does not allow herself a sense of over-familiarity. Her decorum and formality seem to decline purposely as the aria progresses, as she allows herself the freedom and expansion of an Eingang, or brief embellishment, at the end of the adagio.

As Konstanze appears to become enraptured by thoughts of Belmonte, her melody becomes somewhat more effusive. The contained vocal range of the adagio expands, and the aria soon changes tempo to allegro as she tells the Pasha how quickly her joy has deserted her. The coloratura in the allegro section consists mainly of ascending and descending stepwise patterns, generally within the interval of an octave. Most of the coloratura passages end in a final, held, middle-range note -- of course, in considering Konstanze’s soprano acuto sfogato range, the term “middle-range note” can be any note that does appear on leger lines above the staff. There are few disjunct or extreme intervals. While Konstanze does allow herself to open her heart to the Pasha in describing her love for Belmonte, a sense of decorum is retained throughout the aria, as befitting her persona of the gracious gentlewoman. Konstanze wisely chooses to focus the attention on her own feelings, rather than singing of her beloved’s attributes, in hopes of gaining the Pasha’s sympathy.

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90 Bauman, “Coming of Age in Vienna,” in Hertz, Mozart’s Operas, 76.
Ex. 2-6 "Ach ich liebte, war so glücklich," mm. 32-49

It is interesting to note that all the instances of extended coloratura in this aria are on the word "meinem" as she sings "meinem Schoss," or "my lap." One expects
coloratura to highlight an important word; here, it is difficult to decide if Mozart truly felt that the word “my” was particularly important in terms of the drama of the scene, or if he was simply using a word with an open vowel in a cadential position that would allow Cavalieri some ease in singing her coloratura passages (Example 2-6). I tend towards the latter of the two choices; in this aria, the coloratura passages are so long and ornate that an important word would be lost or misunderstood by the time the word is completed. By using “meinem” for the coloratura, a relatively unimportant word in the text, no meaning is lost, and the singer has a bright and open vowel to allow for ease in singing the passage work.

However, if Mozart’s decision to embellish this particular word is based on dramaturgy and not simply vocal practicality, then we might question the emphasis that the coloratura creates. By setting the coloratura to the word “meinem,” Mozart actually uses the embellishment and elongation to highlight the word following the coloratura, and falling on a strong downbeat -- the word “Schoss,” or lap, an embodied word that holds many possible, and potentially contradictory, implications. The fact that the text contains this word and not the more benign “Brust” suggests that Stephanie and Mozart may have been wanting to emphasize Konstanze’s deep, visceral needs and emotions. However, the implications of this emphasis on the word “Schoss” are not entirely clear. Is Konstanze trying to make the Pasha understand that she misses Belmonte not only emotionally, but also physically? Or is she attempting, by mentioning her physical, sensual self, to seduce the Pasha just enough to make him believe that she is about to submit to him. Perhaps by focusing attention on her own
body, Konstanze is hoping to soften the Pasha’s heart and remain in his favour, while keeping him at arm’s length. Gretchen Wheelock writes that traditionally coloratura had been seen as meaningless and devoid of feeling, but that in this opera, coloratura represents Konstanze’s outward display of constancy -- a noble character trait for an eighteenth-century woman that would have been very appealing to the Pasha.91 The embellishment of one seemingly neutral word (“meinem”) leads to a word rich with feeling (“Schoss”), evidence that, in this aria at least, coloratura cannot be seen as meaningless.

Despite Konstanze’s vulnerable position as captive of a Turkish Pasha who surely wishes to add her to his harem, she asserts herself as a social equal to him from this first scene. She refers to the Pasha as “du,” the informal, and affectionate form of “you” rather than addressing him with the more formal and distant “Sie” that one would expect in this situation, or the disrespectful “er” used for communication with servants in the eighteenth century. The two speak as friends, equals, and potential intimate partners. When he asks why she cannot love him, she replies, “Du wirst mich hassen. . .” or “You will hate me. . .” He could never hate her, he says: “You know how much I love you” (“Du weisst, wie sehr ich dich liebe”). One is left with the impression that if Konstanze were not engaged to another, she might be quite open to the possibility of a relationship with the Pasha. Konstanze does not imply that she is not interested in the Pasha; she simply states that something is preventing her from returning his love, which implies a possibility that she may actually be quite attracted

to him. However, her virtuous commitment to Belmonte prevents her from allowing the advancement of other suitors.

Her second aria, “Traurigkeit ward mir zum Lose” is sung in Act II, scene 2, when she believes she is alone in the Pasha’s garden; Blonde has slipped into the scene unobserved to check on her mistress. Of Konstanze’s three arias, this one has the least coloratura and the most moderate vocal range, ascending above the staff only five times for brief B-flats. The melodic line is mainly set either syllabically or with two notes per syllable. A brief coloratura passage at the end is a simple written-out metrical cadenza on the tonic 6-4 chord in G minor (Example 2-7). Rather than moving through harmonic changes, as is usual for extended bravura passages, this embellished descending arpeggio keeps the supporting harmony static.

Aria (Konstanze): Act 2, No. 10 “Traurigkeit”

Traurigkeit ward mir zum Lose, weil ich dir entrissen bin.
Gleich der wumzernagten Rose, gleich dem Gras im Wintermoose, welkt mein banges Leben hin.

Selbst der Luft darf ich nicht sagen meiner Seele bittern Schmerz, denn unwillig ihn zu tragen haucht sie alle meine Klagen wieder in mein armes Herz.

Sorrow has become my lot since I was torn from you.
Like a worm-rotted rose or the winter’s moss-covered grass my unhappy life is withering away.

I cannot even tell the breeze about the bitter pain in my soul; it will not hear it and blows all my laments back into my poor heart.

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92 G minor is an important key of grief for Mozart’s heroines; a notable example of a lament in G minor is Pamina’s “Ach ich fühl’s, er ist verschwunden,” from Die Zauberflöte.
Ex. 2-7 “Traurigkeit,” mm. 141-54

In this *aria d'affetto*, Konstanze appears to be too consumed with grief and despair to express herself in her usual manner. If she adorns herself with the embellishment of coloratura in the presence of others, then perhaps one may read this aria as a true baring of her soul, without the veil of coloratura as an artifice with which she conceals herself. If, as Wheelock writes, coloratura was regarded as an adornment or an artifice, or “at least as less revealing than those expressive, lyrical arias that claim to the heartfelt,” then “Traurigkeit” could be seen as the aria that most expresses Konstanze’s innermost feelings.\(^{93}\) When she is alone, as she believes is the case in “Traurigkeit, ward mir zum Lost,” she realizes that she has no need for argument; no one is present who must be persuaded to understand her position. Likewise, if coloratura is understood by the women of this opera to be a rhetorical device of both

\(^{93}\) Wheelock, “Staging Mozart’s Women” in *Siren Songs*, 51.
strength and feminine adornment (as Blonde used it in “Durch Zärtlichkeit”), then this unadorned aria shows Konstanze at her most emotionally exposed and vulnerable. One may conclude that throughout this opera, coloratura is used as means of communication rather than reflection.

From Konstanze’s first two arias, one would have the impression that she is an unassertive woman who seems to have resigned herself to the thought that her beloved Belmonte will not return for her, and she will be forced to break her vows of constancy and faithfulness to him. Certainly, she is in a complex dilemma. Either she can choose to submit to the Turkish Pasha as his dutiful concubine, thereby taking her place as a fallen woman, or she can choose to remain faithful to Belmonte, and courageously face possible torture or death. In her third aria, “Martern aller Arten,” she chooses the latter, engaging in a remarkable display of transformation that takes this Spanish woman from the role of virtuous gentlewoman, to that of a woman of power, determination, and self-assertion. As she transforms in character, her voice becomes stronger as well, thereby transforming in Fach from the timbre and weight of the lyric coloratura voice appropriate for “Ach ich liebte” and “Traurigkeit” to the dramatic coloratura required for the powerful “Martern aller Arten.”

In the past, this aria has repeatedly been criticized for the length of its opening ritornello, its florid writing, and its opera seria intensity in the midst of a Singspiel. Scholars, from Jahn to Bauman, have considered it inappropriate to both the genre of opera and the type of character. However, Konstanze is established as a seria character

94 Wheelock, “Staging Mozart’s Women” in Siren Songs, 47.
from the beginning of the opera, with her first aria, "Ach ich liebte," and Viennese audiences were quite accustomed to seeing a mixture of character levels from buffa to seria in comic operas at this time. It must be recalled that when Joseph set about creating the National Singspiel, he chose singers who were experienced and capable in both comic and serious opera genres. Likewise, he wanted the operas presented on the Singspiel stage to reflect both comic themes and noble seria ideals.95

Konstanze’s behaviour in this aria has also been criticized as atypical of the role expected of a proper female member of an aristocratic Spanish family, as she steps outside the expected role established for her. Critics from the nineteenth century to the present, who have questioned the believability of a woman acting out such insubordination, are compelled to disregard the character’s outburst in the famous “tortures” aria. “Martern aller Arten” has been called a piece “inserted without reference to the plot . . . treated somewhat as an extraneous piece . . . and out of keeping with the opera and with the character of Konstanze in it.”96 Thomas Bauman questions the dramatic intent of the aria, writing that “the entire episode -- prose and poetry -- was added expressly to accommodate a final tour de force for Cavalieri.”97

Bauman also questions the validity of the changes that Stephanie had to make to Bretzner’s libretto in order to give Cavalieri this huge, concerto-like piece, particularly since it falls immediately after an aria d’affetto. In Bretzner’s original

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95 Rice, Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera, 281-5.
97 Bauman, “Coming of Age in Vienna,” in Heartz, Mozart’s Operas, 76.
version, Konstanze sings “Traurigkeit,” after which Blonde makes her presence known, and the two women join together in a duet of hopefulness. Bauman writes that the northern German tradition of having the prima donna’s major aria di bravura in the first act of the opera was not well-received or customary in Vienna, where prima donnas and their audiences expected the highly embellished aria di bravura much later in the opera, despite the vocal challenges associated with singing such a piece after having sung in numerous other numbers. The position in the libretto selected by Stephanie and Mozart for “Marten aller Arten” late in the second act offered the advantage of integrating the Pasha into the action more fully throughout the opera (he did not appear in the second act of Bretzner’s version at all), but required the omission of Bretzner’s duet between the women that had much the same sentiment as Blonde’s aria “Welche Wonne.”

This new aria posed problems, however: Cavalieri was expected to sing two challenging arias of completely different styles requiring entirely different vocal colour in succession, and the audience was expected to accept Konstanze’s rapid emotional change from mournful and despairing to defiant and resolute. Stephanie had to develop a brief new scene between the arias for Konstanze and the Pasha, not found in Bretzner’s libretto, in order to “justify a spirited outburst from the otherwise dispirited Konstanze.” This scene of angry words and threats motivates the blistering barrage of coloratura in Konstanze’s aria that has had scholars questioning its dramatic

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98 Bauman, Die Entführung aus dem Serail, 78.
99 Bauman, ibid., 78.
integration in the plot of the opera since its composition. With scholars of opera theory and feminist musicology now approaching this aria with new eyes, however, “Martern aller Arten” is now regarded in the light that I believe Mozart intended: a show of defiance of the Pasha.\(^{100}\)

Aria (Konstanze): Act 2, No. 11 “Martern aller Arten”

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Martern aller Arten} \\
\text{Mögen meiner warten,} \\
\text{Ich verlache Qual und Pein.} \\
\text{Nichts soll mich erschüttern.} \\
\text{Nur dann würd' ich zittern,} \\
\text{Wenn ich untreu könnte sein.} \\
\text{Lass dich bewegen,} \\
\text{verschone mich!} \\
\text{Des Himmels Segen} \\
\text{belohne dich!} \\
\text{Doch du bist entschlossen.} \\
\text{Willig, unverdrossen,} \\
\text{Wähl ich jede Pein und Not.} \\
\text{Ordne mir, gebiete,} \\
\text{Lärme, tobe, wüte,} \\
\text{Zuletzt befreit mich doch der Tod.}
\end{align*}
\]

\begin{align*}
\text{Tortures of every kind} \\
\text{may await me;} \\
\text{I scoff at torment and pain.} \\
\text{Nothing can unnerve me;} \\
\text{I would tremble only} \\
\text{if I were untrue to him.} \\
\text{Be moved to pity,} \\
\text{spare me!} \\
\text{May heaven's blessing} \\
\text{be your reward!} \\
\text{But you are determined.} \\
\text{Willingly, unflinchingly,} \\
\text{I accept every pain and grief.} \\
\text{Then order, command,} \\
\text{bluster, roar and rage!} \\
\text{Death will liberate me in the end.}
\end{align*}

This piece, in which Konstanze tells her captor she is not afraid of death or torture, uses an extreme range and intervalllic leaps, along with long ascending scale patterns and breath-defying sustained high Cs andDs; the mere vocality of the work demands strength. The scale patterns span from one to over two octaves, a range that

\(^{100}\) An entirely different reading of the aria is given by Thomas Glasow who writes that the aria is not one of rage, but should be interpreted as an expression of relief following the momentous decision of the heroine to stand up to the Pasha and admit that she will surrender to death. Glasow, “An interpretation of ‘Martern aller Arten’,” 42-57.
is more suited to the violin than the voice. The aria abounds with compound intervals, and in one instance, the voice reaches from a B below middle C to a high C, a range of more than two octaves in the space of two measures (Example 2-8).

Ex. 2-8 “Martern aller Arten,” mm. 217-22

The aria is typical for a Mozart soprano bravura aria in some ways, and quite uncharacteristic in another. It takes a two-tempo form, a type of aria then at the beginning of its vogue among the Italian composers in Vienna, which they and Mozart called simply “rondò.”\(^\text{101}\) Mozart’s experimentation with various two-tempo patterns in this opera marks the beginning of his continuous cultivation of the rondò throughout his final decade, both in operatic and concert arias. This piece is far more complex and vast in structure, however, than any of Mozart’s later rondò arias. “Martern aller

\(^{101}\) Bauman, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 80.
Artéy has also been called a concerto for the voice, “complete with an opening ritornello of sixty bars, its ceremonial *tutti* scoring of full orchestra with trumpet and drums, together with a complement of solo concertante instruments”¹⁰² (Example 2-9).

Ex. 2-9 “Martern aller Arten,” mm. 1-23

The opening ritornello, which may seem excessive, can be seen to represent an exposition of the struggle of the embattled heroine. Bauman describes the contrasts in instrumentation during this ritornello as a struggle between defiance and supplication: the *forte tutti* sections including brass represent the force and power of the Pasha, while the lyrical *piano* sections played by strings and woodwinds represent the vulnerability of Konstanze and her supplications for mercy.\(^{103}\) Mozart sets this heroic piece in the martial key of C major. Throughout this opera, in addition to the military topos imbued in the key, C major takes on the role of representing all things Turkish: the opening march and final choruses in praise of the greatness and magnanimity of the Pasha are all in this key. The use of the opera’s tonic key for this aria lends it great strength and tonal stability, particularly considering that it is Konstanze’s only aria in this key.

By the time the voice makes its opening statement at measure 61, the struggle between decorous supplication and defiant scorn is over, with defiance winning out for the remainder of the aria. Konstanze no sooner repeats the orchestra’s opening three-bar motif, than she launches into the first of many coloratura passages (Example 2-10). If the orchestra represents the strength of the Turkish Pasha and the danger of her predicament, Konstanze effectively neutralizes this danger by managing to overpower the orchestra in vocal range and volume. In the Allegro assai section, her final run of coloratura is sung in unison with the orchestra, showing that she is able to meet the challenge of its power note-for-note.

\(^{103}\) Bauman, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 81.
In this aria, the words that are highlighted by the coloratura seem to have far more dramatic weight than in Konstanze’s first aria where she embellished the word “my.” In this final aria, the first word highlighted is the word “verlache” or “scoff,” in the context of her defiant “I scoff at torment and pain.” It lends Konstanze an air of bravado that seems uncharacteristic of the gentle manner of her two earlier arias.

Ex. 2-10 “Martern aller Arten,” mm. 61-74
For her second passage of coloratura, she returns to her familiar beseeching tone, asking that the Pasha take pity and spare her. Heaven’s blessing will be his reward, she says. In this stanza of text, the coloratura appears on the word “blessing,” milder than the word “scorn” in the first stanza, but the patterns of coloratura are not affected by Konstanze’s change of tactic. The vocal line retains its forceful quality, with unrelenting staccato repeated notes followed by sinuous passage work. It differs from the first and third coloratura passages only in key -- this section is in the dominant key of G-major, while the other two are in the tonic key of C -- and in pattern -- the two tonic passages are entirely comprised of ascending and descending octave and five-note scale patterns, while the dominant passage has a less rigid melodic pattern.

Ex. 2-11 “Martern aller Arten,” mm. 104-109
In the second coloratura passage, it is the orchestra that lends a gentler quality to the coloratura run on “Segen”. In the first passage (verlache), the orchestra is given repeated eighth-note block chords to emphasize this forcefulness; in the second passage (Segen), the orchestra seems to take on the task of softening Konstanze’s argument with broken, sixteenth-note Alberti-style chord patterns in the cellos, violas, and violins, and quarter notes in the basses (Example 2-11). Konstanze’s final coloratura passages appear on the word “befreit,” as she states that death will set her free. Here, the orchestra is completely in accord with her vocal line, as the entire string section plays unison throughout all the scale passages (Example 2-12).

Ex. 2-12 “Martern aller Arten,” mm. 264-280
Konstanze’s appropriation of the “Turkish” elements of the music -- the trumpets and the percussion which begin the aria but which are soon overtaken by Konstanze as she becomes equal partner to the orchestra -- show her strength over the Pasha’s words. By the end of the aria, he is completely astonished by Konstanze’s show of defiance. In the libretto, he remains onstage for the entire aria, and after Konstanze finishes and exits, he asks himself, stunned, “Is this a dream?”

Monologue (Selim): Act 2, Scene 4

Ist das ein Traum? Wo hat sie auf einmal den Mut her, sich so gegen mich zu betragen? Hat sie vielleicht Hoffnung mir zu entkommen? Ha! Das will ich verwehren! Doch das ist’s nicht, dann würde sie eher verstellen, Mich einzuschlafen versuchen --

Ja! Es ist Verzweiflung! Mit Härte richt’ ich nichts aus -- mit Bitten auch nicht -- also, was Drohen und Bitten nicht vermögen, soll die List zuwege bringen.

Is this a dream? Where does she get the courage to go against me with this behaviour? Does she have hope, perhaps, to get away from me? No, that’s not it, she would have disguised herself earlier, and attempted to trick me.

Yes, it is desperation! With harshness I cannot make it right; not with begging either. Therefore, what threats and pleas do not accomplish, cunning should bring quite well.

This is an important scene for the Pasha, because we see him for the first time as a powerful and potentially dangerous ruler, rather than as the spurned, but still gracious and courtly suitor he portrays in earlier scenes with Konstanze. The scene allows for a balanced portrayal of the Pasha, a man who, while he may be temporarily
stunned by Konstanze’s strength, is not emasculated by it. Prior to this scene, the Pasha has played both the role of the patient lover and the angry tyrant, to no avail. Realizing that Konstanze’s resolve is strong, he concludes that he must resort to using cunning, underhandedness, and intelligence, since neither force nor pleading have worked. This portrayal of a conflicted ruler foreshadows the final scene in which we see the Pasha wrestling between the bloodthirsty vengeance of a despot and the clemency of an enlightened, magnanimous ruler.

One might question why Mozart did not choose to give the Pasha a singing voice. After all, if the Pasha were a musical rather than just a speaking role, this moment would demand a musical response. It would be an opportune time for a ruler’s “rage aria,” a chance to answer back to the indignity with which Konstanze has just subjected him with her unleashing of vocal fireworks; however, this lack of a musical voice does not weaken the Pasha. Rather, his response, a well-measured monologue in the tradition of fine German spoken drama, lends further gravitas to an already-dignified character. There is a stillness created by the lack of music, especially in response and by contrast to Konstanze’s extreme vocalizing. Mozart’s decision not to compose music for the Pasha finds its precedence in the earlier version of the opera by Bretzner and André, in which the Pasha did not sing. Stephanie’s libretto also indicated that the Pasha should be speaking role; in fact, both Stephanie and Mozart had in mind for the role Dominik Jautz, a fine actor who was popular on the Viennese dramatic stage, and who was on salary with both the Singspiel and the National
Theatre. Because Konstanze is a formidable creature at this point, the Pasha must exhibit an equal, but opposite, strength, in order to not seem overpowered by her.

Konstanze’s outburst is an understandable result of a woman pushed to the limits of her morality. She asserts herself using forceful coloratura passages in order to defend her honour, maintain her societal position, and protect her fidelity to Belmonte. The fact that she must stand up to a feared, omnipotent tyrant in order to do so makes her an admirable female character in this Singspiel. Both Konstanze and Blonde exhibit traits of strength and defiance appropriate to their own character levels through their use of coloratura. In contrast to the other “silenced” women who inhabit the seraglio, these women dare to flaunt and embellish their voices, and use their female voices to stand up to the men of power around them.

Mozart’s use of coloratura for both Konstanze’s and Blonde’s arias allows the women to display strength through the rhetorical means of vocal adornment. The coloratura in their arias creates a display of both moral and vocal superiority to the men around them, a “larger-than-life display of womanly virtue.” The coloratura is a tool in their attempt to protect their honour while simultaneously displaying femininity, intelligence, and defiance in their dangerous situation. Blonde uses coloratura to raise herself above Osmin, and yet ensure that she remains attractive and harmless enough to keep him interested in her. Konstanze uses her coloratura as a powerful argument to push the Pasha away, and persuade him of her constancy for

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104 Bauman, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 16.

Belmonte. Perhaps when Mozart wrote that he hoped his newly-composed aria for Konstanze would evoke as much feeling as a bravura aria could, he was expressing his desire that, in addition to creating vocal display for the prima donna, he was also creating an expression of power for a sympathetic and strong leading female character.
Chapter Three:

Coloratura and Character in the *Figaro* Substitute Arias
On 29 January 1781, Mozart’s *opera seria* Idomeneo (K. 366), received its première performance in the Munich court of the Bavarian Elector Carl Theodor.\(^{106}\)

This performance included in its cast several singers of Mozart’s acquaintance, including Dorothea Wendling as Ilia, her daughter Elisabeth Wendling as Elettra, and Anton Raaff as Idomeneo.\(^{107}\) The castrato Vincenzo del Pratte sang the role of Idamante. Five years later, Mozart wrote several new vocal pieces for a private performance of the opera when it was presented at Prince Auersperg’s palace in Vienna on 15 March 1786. The new numbers, including the duet “Spiegarti non poss’io” (K. 489) and the *scena con rondo* “Non piú, tutto ascoltai. . .Non temer, amato bene” (K. 490), for the characters Ilia (soprano Anna von Pufendorf) and Idamante (tenor Baron Pulini), replaced his carefully-crafted original pieces.\(^{108}\) For these two leading roles, Mozart ensured that the substitute arias kept a similar character to the original works; however, for this Vienna performance, Mozart was not working with singers of the calibre of his Mannheim friends who sang in the original production. He was apparently frustrated with the quality of the singers he was given for the Vienna production, which required him to make the vocal music less


\(^{107}\) The Wendling family, including flutist Johann Baptist, his wife, soprano Dorothea, and their daughter, soprano Elisabeth, were dear friends of Mozart during his time in Mannheim (October 1777 to March 1778). The Wendlings continued to be close to Mozart throughout his life. Tenor Anton Raaff, for whom Mozart composed the concert aria, “Se al labbro mio no credi” (K.295), was another Mannheim friend.

virtuosic. Despite having to simplify the music for the "noble amateurs" playing the roles of Ilia and Idamante, however, Mozart managed to retain the vocal character of the original setting of the opera.

This was not the case, however, with the 1789 revival of Le Nozze di Figaro presented at the Burgtheater in Vienna. Substitute arias composed for this later production of the opera present the character of Susanna in a rather different light than in the original 1786 version. In the new version, she performs arias uncharacteristic of the original vocal conception of the character: one of the substitute arias, "Al desio di chi t'adorà," is a rather grand opera seria-style work, replete with coloratura, quite different from "Deh vieni non tardar," the aria it replaced, which has only a few short passages of coloratura in the final cadences. In "Al desio di chi t'adorà," the coloratura and the text it highlights compromise Mozart's original vocal characterization of the role. These changes also break with the accepted conventions of vocal style of the soubrette character within the opera buffa genre (as already seen, embellishment in arias was mainly reserved for a member of the upper or ruling classes). Because the style of Susanna's new music in the opera's revival no longer agrees with the original character type within the conventions of the opera buffa genre, her character level

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110 Landon uses the phrase "noble amateurs" to describe Pufendorf and Pulini, singers not associated with any of the major theatrical companies performing opera in Vienna in the 1770s and 1780s. Landon, Mozart: The Golden Years, 183-4.

changes. Susanna’s extensive coloratura in her new arias ennobles her, raising her from buffa soubrette to a *mezze carattere*.

The coloratura also indicates a change in Susanna’s vocal *Fach* from soubrette coloratura to lyric coloratura, an uncharacteristic *Fach* for a chambermaid.

The substitute arias for *Figaro* were composed to satisfy the wishes of the new soprano performing the role of Susanna, Adriana Ferrarese del Bene, a popular new Italian singer in Vienna, and the mistress of Mozart’s librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte.

Mozart’s desire to appease her wishes must have been strong, for he goes so far as to re-create the role in a way that it breaks with convention. Mozart was pleased to compose arias specifically for the singers with whom he worked, expressing in numerous letters his delight at how well they sang his arias, and his obvious sense of pride for the fine craft of tailoring his vocal music to perfectly suit the voice of the singer who performed it. In 1778, during the period of time in which Mozart was working in Mannheim with the Wendlings and Anton Raaff, he wrote of this pride in his own skill in vocal composition in a letter to his father:

> Yesterday I visited Raff [sic] and brought him an aria that I had written for him these past few days. The words go like this: “se al labro mio non credi, bella nemica mia,” etc., etc. I don’t think the text is by Metastasio. He was absolutely delighted with the aria. I told him that he should tell me honestly if the aria didn’t suit him or if he didn’t like it. He thanked me very warmly; and I assured him in return that I will arrange the aria for him in such a way that he would certainly enjoy singing it; for I love

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it when an aria is so accurately measured for a singer’s voice that it fits like a well-tailored garment.\textsuperscript{114}

Mozart could recognize a singer’s unique talents, and thanks to his own knowledge of singing technique and his unquestionable ability to set dramatic text, he was able to shape his arias with a particular sensitivity, creating works that fit not only the librettos, but also the singers who sang them. He had a personal knowledge of the technique required of singers to produce both cantabile lines and bravura sections. He had received training in singing during his time in England from April 1764 to July 1765, where he was fortunate to have studied with the renowned Italian castrato Giovanni Manzuoli.\textsuperscript{115} Here the young Mozart would have become familiar not only with Italian singing technique, including the practice of ornamentation and the shaping of cadenzas, but also with aesthetic attitudes governing the art of singing.

Mozart was experienced from a very young age at the composition of both concert arias (works written for singers’ concert engagements) and insertion arias (new arias composed for the remounting of other composers’ operas). Later in his career, he also composed substitute arias (arias written to substitute for the original arias in his


\textsuperscript{115} Mahling, “Comments on Junia’s aria in \textit{Lucio Silla},” 377. Mahling writes that a singer as renowned as Manzuoli would not have taken on a completely inexperienced pupil, so it may be assumed that Mozart’s father Leopold had instructed his son in basic vocal techniques.
own operas). Concert arias (by Mozart and by other composers) were written specifically to furnish singers with dazzling showpieces for appearances with orchestras, or often as arias to fit particular occasions. Mozart’s early concert arias are clearly influenced by the *opera seria* that he encountered in both England and Italy during his family’s concert tours in the mid-1760s. He was greatly impressed by the operas of Georg Frideric Handel and particularly Johann Christian Bach, having attended Bach’s *Artasere* during the 1765 performances of the *opera seria* in London. Mozart’s early concert arias show the influence of the *opera seria* style: they are technically demanding bravura arias composed to texts by librettist Metastasio, featuring themes of vengeance, despair, rage, death or sacrifice, and sung by heroic characters and demigods.

While Mozart’s early concert arias look back to a style of opera that was long established and perhaps even becoming a little antiquated by this time, he did not use the *da capo* or *dal segno* aria forms that had been conventional to opera seria. Instead, he composed his concert arias in the “new” aria forms that were popular in *opera seria* during the 1770s, those of through-composed ternary, binary or rondò structures.\(^{116}\) Arias such as K. 23, K. 88, and the much later K. 486a have extended dramatic recitatives followed by two-part arias beginning with a *cantabile* section, and followed by a *bravura* section. The *Figaro* substitute aria, “Al desio di chi t’adora,” follows this

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\(^{116}\) McClymonds and Heartz, “Opera seria,” and Don Neville “Rondò,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed June 10/06, <http://www.grovelmusic.com>). Rondò, in this spelling, is a term that has come to signify a type of two-tempo aria that became popular in the late 18th century. As a form, the rondò begins with an opening slow section, often laid out in an ABA pattern, which gives way to a faster section in which a new theme is established. Mozart was inconsistent in the spelling of this form, often referring in letters to a rondò as a rondeau.
opera seria aria model closely: after the recitative, there is an extended lyrical section, followed by an allegro bravura section.

In addition to concert arias based on seria texts, Mozart also had experience composing insertion arias, works that replaced the original arias in operas (usually comic) of other composers. Singers or opera directors would often request new arias because they felt that the originals did not show off a singer’s voice to its best advantage; sometimes because the replacement singers were less skilled than the originals. When the composer himself was not present, the musical director, or maestro di capella, would take on the job of composing any insertion arias. When it was possible, Mozart was always pleased to oblige both singers and directors for a number of reasons: the recognition that these arias would bring him, the opportunity to work with singers and learn of their skills and vocal technique preferences before composing a complete operatic role for them, and of course, the financial reward. These insertion arias also allowed Mozart to become thoroughly acquainted with the opera buffa style during his early adulthood in Vienna. Throughout his career, Mozart composed insertion arias that were interpolated into Italian opere buffe by Baldassare Galuppi, Pasquale Anfossi, Vicente Martin y Soler and Domenica Cimarosa, composers whose works were enjoying a huge surge of popularity in Vienna during the 1770s and 1780s.

It was not considered an insult to the original composer of the opera to replace an aria in a revival or touring production; it was standard practice. Numerous elements of an opera could be changed as required: arias were replaced, tiresome scenes cut
shorter, boring ones cut altogether. Leading singers had their favourite composers from whom they would commission insertion arias, so that often a staged opera would have several composers: the original, the composer of the prima donna’s arias and the composer of the primo uomo’s arias.\textsuperscript{117} Scholars are not in agreement over how the convention of insertion arias came about. Heartz and Lazarevich look to the following point in a document written to the opera directorate in Vienna by librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, as evidence that the singer was required to sing what she was given, and that the ultimate power for musical and dramaturgical decisions rested with the librettist and director.\textsuperscript{118} Da Ponte articulates his desire to regulate the practice of making changes to the opera:

The introduction of new arias is entirely up to the poet, the maestro di cappella, and the director of the opera. The singers should not be allowed to arbitrarily introduce any piece simply because it is not to their liking. Similarly, singers should not arbitrarily leave out a musical number without the permission of poet and the Maestro.\textsuperscript{119}

Both Heartz and Lazarevich feel that this document outlines not only what da Ponte felt was the optimum manner of distributing responsibility amongst the


\textsuperscript{119} Document in the Österreisches Haus- und Staatsarchiv entitled Ordine necessarissimo in una Direzione teatrale. Scelta ed approvata un’ opera dalla Direzione Imperiale. Quoted in its entirety in Heartz, Mozart’s Operas, 104-5; and in Lazarevich, “Insertion Arias as Reflections of Operatic Customs,” 728.
production heads, but that it also offers a glimpse of the power that this group held over the singers in the company. Heartz writes that this document indicates the beginning of the modern concept of librettist-director as the figure of omnipotent power in the opera house. “The eighteenth-century knew no simple term that embraced the creative range exercised by the modern stage director,” he writes. “Yet it is clear . . . that the concept had already arrived, even if the term had not.”

Lazarevich also understands this document as evidence of the political workings of the opera company. Evidence from Mozart, however, suggests that da Ponte’s document was articulating his desires and not actuality. Da Ponte’s document also states that the Maestro is responsible for composing new recitatives, and other musical numbers at the request of the poet; therefore, it is not a great presumption to imagine Mozart instigating the process himself by suggesting musical changes motivated by his desire to clothe singers in custom-made arias.

Regardless of who instigated the changes to arias performed in revivals by the Italian buffa company, few people would dispute the quality of the insertion arias that Mozart composed. He had an extraordinary gift for composing arias that fit the performing occasion or the drama of the opera into which these arias were placed; equally important to him, was pleasing the singers. Usually both the dramatic requirement of the libretto and the needs of the principal performers were served to a mutual benefit and satisfaction. However, the two substitute arias composed for the

120 Heartz, “The Poet as Stage Director,” in Mozart’s Operas, 104.
revival of *Le Nozze di Figaro* are so different from their original counterparts that they significantly change the opera as a whole and the role of Susanna in particular.

The role of Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* was created by the English soprano Nancy Storace for the opera’s première at the Imperial and Royal Court Theatre in 1786. A singer of Italian descent, raised and trained in London, Storace began her career in *opera seria* in London and travelled to Italy to advance her career soon after her London debut.\(^{121}\) Although some of her earliest roles in Italy were serious, she soon proved her talent in comic roles, and found great success on the buffa stage. When Joseph II was assembling the buffa troupe in 1783, he chose the finest singers that he could coax away from their engagements in Italy. In Vienna, Storace proved her affinity for both serious and comic roles, making her a natural for opera buffa’s *mezzi caratteri* roles.

She appeared to be a favourite with audiences immediately, delighting them with her vivacious charm and figure. Count Zinzendorf, the opera enthusiast and important chronicler of theatrical events in Vienna, wrote that Storace had “une jolie figure volupteuse et une belle gorge” (22 April 1783). An entry in May simply reads “Bella, bella, bella, gioia, gioia” (20 May 1783). Zinzendorf mentions Storace in his diary over thirty times during the year 1783: “La Storace has expressive features, a plump figure, beautiful eyes, beautiful skin, and the charming naïveté and petulance of a child,” he wrote on 1 July 1783. At a performance of *Fra i due litiganti* by Sarti, he carefully and admiringly inspected her from the darkness of his box: “La Storace

\(^{121}\) John Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera*, 335.
played her part like an angel. Her beautiful eyes, her white neck, her lovely throat, her fresh mouth make a charming effect” (23 May 1783). Clearly Zinzendorf admired Storace’s appearance, but he also mentions her “singing like an angel” on both 8 and 15 December 1783.\(^{122}\) His comments become less frequent over the ensuing years than they were during Storace’s first season in Vienna; however he continues to praise her beauty and acting abilities in opera buffa.

In 1789, *Le nozze di Figaro* was chosen for a revival at the Burgtheater in Vienna, and Adriana Ferrarese del Bene was engaged to play Susanna. Dissatisfied with her character’s arias, which she felt were too simple, too closely identified with Storace, and poorly suited to showing off her voice, which she felt was superior to Storace’s, she demanded new ones.\(^{123}\) Mozart composed two new arias — “Al desio di chi t’adora” and “Un moto di gioia” — to replace “Deh vieni non tardar” and “Vente inginocchiatevi.” Dramatically neither new aria requires any interaction between Susanna and the other characters on stage: they are essentially arias which the prima donna could simply “stand and deliver” — vastly different from the original arias which, although solo vocal works, could be considered visual and dramatic ensembles. The textual ideas in the new arias are vague and general, not speaking of the particularities of Susanna’s situation, and they express ideas that seem out of character for Susanna. The vocal lines — especially in the aria “Al desio di chi t’adora” which replaced “Deh vieni no tardar” — are embellished with several coloratura passages, in

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\(^{123}\) Heartz, “Constructing Le Nozze di Figaro,” in *Mozart’s Operas*, 152.
direct contrast to the simple, playful musical language of Susanna in the rest of the opera.

Nancy Storace was known as an excellent comic actress, especially in the buffo repertoire, but her preference for comic roles caused her vocal abilities to be underestimated.\textsuperscript{124} The music that Mozart wrote for the role would seem to suggest that she possessed little technical faculty in terms of fioritura, but was able to achieve a sincere and unaffected quality that was very appealing to opera buffa audiences. However, her training and acclaim in Italy in the opera seria repertoire would instead suggest that she was simply a versatile artist with the ideal Fach for this level of character in this genre: a light-voiced lyric soubrette soprano. The salary that Storace commanded in the opera buffa company in Vienna was the top for its time, and her farewell concert in 1787 earned over 4,000 gulden in profits.\textsuperscript{125} And despite the limited commercial success of Figaro in its first theatrical run, Storace was widely praised and hailed as a perfect Susanna.\textsuperscript{126} Zinzendorf's assessment of the opera and Storace's performance -- "the opera bored me. Storace enchanted the eye and the ear" -- seems to summarize the reaction of the audience of the original production of the opera.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{124} Rice, \textit{Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera}, 335.

\textsuperscript{125} Link, \textit{The National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna}, 421.

\textsuperscript{126} Carter, \textit{Le nozze di Figaro}, 124.

\textsuperscript{127} Zinzendorf's diary (4 July 1786), Link, \textit{National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna}, 276.
Ferrarese del Bene was considered a less accomplished actress than Storace. "Even her lover da Ponte said she couldn't act, which must be conclusive," writes Daniel Heartz. "Her acting is not too bad, but she hardly moves at all" was Zinzendorf's rather unenthusiastic assessment on 13 October 1788, followed by, "Una cosa rara. La Ferraresi did not acquit herself as well in the role as Storace," on 7 January 1789. Ferrarese’s vocal range was apparently wider than Storace’s, to judge from the music that Mozart wrote for each of them, and she liked to show off her cantar di sbalzo, or her ability to sing wide interval leaps. However, her voice was noted to be afflicted with an awkward break between head and chest registers. A contemporary critic reviewing her performance in Martin y Soler's L'arbore di Diana said, "She had an unbelievable top, a striking low register, connoisseurs of music claim that in living memory no such voice has sounded within Vienna's walls. It is only to be regretted that her stage acting does not live up to her voice."131

These rather unfavourable reports from her years in Vienna (1788-1792), however, are quite different from those written during her time in England in the mid-1780s, which must be included in the interests of forming a balanced picture. The

128 Heartz in Campana, "Mozart's Italian buffo singers," 582.
129 Zinzendorf's diary in Link, The National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna, 321, 325.
London audiences felt she united exceptional virtuosity with an ability to sing in either seria or buffa roles. She won praise in England for acting and singing in Antonio Salieri’s *La scuola de gelosi*, in which she sang the role of Ernestina, earning particular praise and applause for the insertion aria “Partiro dal caro sposo.” The review from the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* on 28 March 1786 reads:

> The fairy Warbler, Ferrarese, we see every time with fresh pleasure. She gave her part the most lively colouring by her action, and did, as she is wont to do, the greatest justice to the songs allotted to her. We long to see her in the serious, after having had so many occasions of admiring her exertions in the comic parts of the Lyric Drama. We think her fully equal to the task, not only from what we have seen of her in Eurydice last season, but from the inexpressible feeling and pathetic manner, in which she delivered the Aria in the second act of this evening’s performance, which is set to a most melodious music on the serious style.

Despite this success, Emperor Joseph II was not convinced that Ferrarese should be engaged for the Italian company when the suggestion was made to do so by Count Rosenberg. On 14 July 1788, he wrote in a letter to Rosenberg, “La Ferrarese will surely not please at all,” and a week later, “As far as I remember Ferraresi, she has a very weak contralto voice, she knows music very well, but has an ugly appearance.” She was, however, engaged by Rosenberg despite the absent Joseph’s insistence that the Viennese public would not like her. Mozart’s letters indicate that he

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133 Rice, ibid., 428.

too had a low opinion of her singing. Sources also assert that she was very difficult to work with and extremely temperamental. So, while he was unhappy about the matter, Mozart was a pragmatic professional who knew that he would be paid for the new arias, and he complied with Ferrarese's wishes.

Ex. 3-1: K.577 “Al desio di chi t’adora,” mm. 78-87

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136 Lorenzo da Ponte describes her fiery and disagreeable temperament in his Memoirs; it must be considered, though, that his memoirs were written after the breakup of their turbulent affair. Lorenzo da Ponte, Memoirs, trans. Elisabeth Abbott (New York: Dover, 1967), 191-194.

137 Heartz, “Constructing Le Nozze di Figaro,” in Mozart’s Operas, 152.
The pressure to please her may have been strong, given that she was a popular, newly-arrived soprano in the city and the mistress of Lorenzo da Ponte, Mozart’s colleague, and the opera’s librettist and director. However, he may have been making fun of her by exposing the conspicuous vocal break between her chest and head registers, as well as her reported mannerisms of ducking her head for low notes and throwing it back for high ones in the wide intervalic leaps in the substitute aria “Al desio di chi t’adora” (Example 3-1).

The original Susanna arias are melodically simple and song-like -- suitable for a young lady’s maid, and require the type of charm and comedic grace that Nancy Storace excelled at. Susanna’s original second-act aria, No. 12, “Vinite inginocchiatevi,” is a wonder of comic timing, and the dramatic situation is important to the plot of the opera. Susanna is instructing the pageboy Cherubino on how to dress and behave like a girl -- all part of an elaborate scheme that she and the Countess have devised to expose the Count Almaviva’s infidelities and his proclivity for seducing young girls:

Aria (Susanna): Act 2, No. 12 “Vinite, inginocchiatevi”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venite, inginocchiatevi,</td>
<td>Come, kneel down,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restate fermo li,</td>
<td>Stay still there,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pian, piano or vi giratevi,</td>
<td>Now turn around very slowly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bravo, va ben cosi!</td>
<td>Bravo, that’s just right!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La faccia ora volgetimi,</td>
<td>Now turn your face toward me,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olà! quegli occhi a me,</td>
<td>Hey! keep your eyes on me,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dritissimo, guardatemi!</td>
<td>Right here, look at me!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madama qui non è.</td>
<td>Madame isn’t here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

138 As well as the original libretto for Figaro, da Ponte wrote the texts of the new arias.  
Susanna’s aria, while solo, is essentially a visual duet in which only she sings, while the other half of the duet is the reactions of Cherubino and the stage business.\textsuperscript{141}

The dramatic action is the star of this scene; Susanna relates what Cherubino is to do, while the boy’s unsuccessful attempts to be feminine give the scene its comic thrust. It is also noteworthy that Susanna’s vocal line is declamatory, set syllabically, giving a clear impression of a young woman busily chattering. The sweeping, elegant melodic line is taken by the orchestra. This string-section melody creates a concertante effect with the voice, and could be interpreted as representing Cherubino, a young man of breeding, fashion and elegance; however, while Susanna plays out this scene with him, he is nothing of the kind. His awkwardness as Susanna dresses him creates a comic counterpoint to the graceful music Mozart has given him as accompaniment.


\textsuperscript{141} Throughout the original conception of the opera, the character of Susanna unfolds almost entirely in relation to the people around her: all of her music is sung in ensemble with other characters, to them or in their presence. Gidwitz, “Mozart’s Fiordiligi: Adriana Ferrarese,” 200.
“Venite inginocchiaveti” is a charming, witty aria (with no coloratura at all) that shows Susanna’s clever, playful side -- a comedic stroke of genius with a genial tune -- and one can imagine Storace, a singer known for her energy and acting skills, performing it effectively. The aria written for Ferrarese in the revival, however, “Un moto di gioia,” is somewhat less inspired. There is no evidence now that Susanna is involved with dressing Cherubino up -- neither the music nor the text reflects this, or gives any evidence of interaction with another character. The text is filled with generalities about the difficulty of the task at hand, and the hope that everything will go well:

Aria (Susanna): Act 2, No. 12a (substitute) “Un moto di gioia”

Un moto di gioia
Mi sento nel petto,
Che annunzia diletto
In mezzo il timor!

Speriam che in contento
Finisca l’affanno
Non sempre è tiranno
Il fato ed amor.

Di pianti di pene
Ognor non si pasce,
Talvolta poi nasce
Il ben dal dolor:

E quando si crede
Più grave il periglio,
Brillare si vede
La calma maggior.

I feel joy in my breast, which promises happiness despite my fears.

Let’s hope that anxiety will end in contentment. Fate and love are not always tyrants.

Life does not have to be fed by tears of pain; Sometimes good is born out of sadness.

And when one believes the danger is most serious, a greater calm soon shines.\textsuperscript{142}

The vocal line is followed closely by the strings, which play in parallel motion. Susanna’s line is rarely doubled; both violins and woodwinds alternate between playing in thirds and sixths parallel to the vocal line and offering a highly embellished obbligato accompaniment between her phrases. This may be a vestige of the musical and dramatic interplay between Susanna and Cherubino in the original “Venie inginocchiatevi.” Fortunately for the characterization of a young chambermaid sung by a soubrette soprano, “Un moto di gioia” contains almost no coloratura except for a small scale flourish at the end of each strophe, but consists mainly of syllabically-set text (Example 3-2). The text to which the coloratura is set offers little insight into the scene, the embellished words being “amor” (love) and “maggior” (greater).

Ex. 3-2: K. 579 “Un moto di gioia,” mm. 64-79
Before the discovery of significant *Abschriften* of *Figaro*, scholars had a difficult time determining where "Un moto di gioia" was placed in the opera. The general consensus, because of its textual content, had been at the start of the third act, when Susanna is waiting for the Count. However, a manuscript discovered in Florence in the *Istituto musicale di Firenze* that is an exact reproduction of the score from the 1789 Vienna revival shows the aria in the same position as "Veni
inginocchiatevi," only in this case with a different recitative than the original aria. This manuscript also includes the second stanza, an important point that I will soon discuss. Apparently the new recitative was required because the text is so different from that of the original aria. Confusion among scholars has occurred because the new aria does not seem to fit the situation of the libretto at that point, nor is there any mention of the task of dressing Cherubino in his disguise. It would seem that Cherubino is dressing himself -- a difficult task in those days of back-laced corsets and gowns -- and Susanna is comforting the Countess with some rather banal lyrics about the importance of remaining optimistic. The women ignore Cherubino, and one wonders if the stage business of a young page boy struggling to put on women's garments would have upstaged the aria entirely.

The manuscript found in Florence is unique among those printed copies of the opera which contain this aria in its inclusion of the second stanza of text. The

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145 Tyson, ibid., 294.
widespread omission of the second stanza demands examination. Eminent scholars of the past, including Otto Jahn, have called this second stanza bawdy, but to a modern audience, there is little in the text to give pause; nor does there seem to be any difference in tone of language between the first and second verses.\footnote{\footnote{Jahn, Life of Mozart, 149. Also in Einstein, Mozart: His Character, His Work, 214; Tyson, Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores, 293-4.}} However, it is possible that the text was written by da Ponte for the delectation of Ferrarese, who happened to be his mistress at the time, and about whom titillating rumours of her sexual proclivities abounded in Vienna.\footnote{\footnote{Mary-Louis Kurey and Robert Croan, “The Two Faces of Susanna: An Examination of Mozart’s Substitute Arias for Figaro,” Music Theory: Explorations and Applications 7 (1999): 29-30; Gidwitz, “Mozart’s Fiordiligi: Adriana Ferrarese del Bene,” 209.}} The word pene is thought to be a double entendre which can be translated as either “pain” or as “penis.” Thus, some scholars have asserted that the phrase “I pianti di pene” could translate to “tears of pain” or “a crying penis” -- inappropriate for the virginal Susanna, but not for Ferrarese.\footnote{\footnote{The plot of Mozart’s Cosi fan tutte (1790), which also starred Ferrarese, focuses on the exploits of two sisters from Ferrara (due Ferraresi). The contemporary audience of Mozart’s time immediately understood the joke because the town of Ferrara was reputed to be inhabited by denizens of questionable morals. The word “Ferraresi” was a euphemism for ladies of questionable virtue. Ferrarese, who played the virtuous Fiordiligi, was the live-in companion of the librettist, da Ponte, and the object of much gossip over her personal affairs. See Heartz, “Three Schools for Lovers,” in Mozart’s Operas, 222-3.}} While modern audiences may not interpret these lines in this way, this potential pun may account for this second stanza being omitted in most published editions of the aria.\footnote{\footnote{The most readily available publication of “Un moto di gioia” is in the Peters Edition Mozart Lieder (n.d.), which makes no mention of this song being a substitute aria. This piano-vocal score, edited by Max Friedlaender, contains only the first strophe.}}
Aria (Susanna): Act 4, No. 27 “Deh vieni non tardar”

Deh vieni, non tardar, o gioja bella
Vieni ove amore per goder t'appella
Finche non splende in ciel notturna face
Finche l'aria e ancor bruna,
E il mondo tace.

Qui mormora il ruscel, qui scherza l'aura
Che col dolce susurro il cor ristaura
Qui ridono i fiori e l'erba e fresca
Ai piaceri d'amor qui tutto adesca.
Vieni, ben mio, tra queste piante ascose.
Vieni, vieni!
Ti vo' la fronte incoronar di rose.

Oh, come, don't be late, my beautiful joy
Come where love calls you to enjoyment
Until night's torches no longer light the sky
As long as the air is still dark,
And the world quiet.

Here the river murmurs, and the light plays
That restores the heart with sweet ripples
Here, blossoms laugh and the grass is fresh
And the pleasures of love entice one.
Come my dear, among these hidden plants.
Come, come!
I will crown you with roses.

The second aria that was replaced is the exquisite "Deh vieni non tardar," in Act IV. In the original aria, for a moment, the madcap complications of the plot stop, and Susanna, who has successfully manipulated everyone in the palace during her interactions and ensemble singing, finally has a moment alone. Though she appears to be singing about the Count, as Figaro is supposed to believe, she is really singing about her love for her new husband. In this aria she expresses her real feelings for the first time, singing a poignant, reflective, lyrically blissful aria about how much she anticipates her first night with her beloved husband. The aria, preceded by the recitative “Giuane alfin il momento,” serves a rich dramatic function. In addition to expressing her feelings with great directness and sincerity, her words make Figaro think that she is singing about the Count, thus motivating the imbroglio that follows. The aria has very little vocal embellishment; except for the improvised ornamentation that would be expected on the fermatas, some passing tones and an outlining of the
tonic chord with a graceful arpeggio at the climactic point in the piece (Example 3-3), “Deh vieni” is an aria of exquisite beauty and musical simplicity.

Ex 3-3: “Deh vieni non tardar,” mm. 152-162

The aria composed in 1789 at the demand of Ferrarese as a substitute for this, “Al desio di chi t’adora,” has been called a frivolous work, a star turn that stops the show and calls attention to the singer. 150 Such a moment appears to remove the aria from the dramatic context of the opera, thus turning the aria into a performative moment for the prima donna. However, it was convention in Viennese opera buffa in the 1780s to place a rondo for the heroine shortly before the last finale. In fact, for the 1786 première, Mozart had originally intended to write one for Storace in this same

150 Anthony Tomassini, “An Imbroglio for ‘Figaro’, Its Director and Bartoli,” in New York Times, 9 November, 1998. Tomassini is writing about the occasion of Cecilia Bartoli appearing as Susanna in the Metropolitan Opera production. During the run of the opera, Bartoli performed the substitute on alternating performances, against the wishes and vision of the opera’s director, Jonathan Miller.
position, as she had requested a rondò as means to uphold her position as prima donna over Luisa Laschi, the singer playing the role of the Countess.\textsuperscript{151} He had begun one titled, “Non tardar amato bene,” but had abandoned the idea of an ornate rondò in favour of the song-like “Deh vieni.”\textsuperscript{152} Both Heartz and Platoff believe that the fact that this rondo was composed in E-flat is a clue that Mozart never intended for it to be used in the opera, stating that Mozart’s well-planned tonal map for the opera would not allow for such an aberration. Heartz writes that “it is just possible that ‘Non tardar amato bene’ was only a feint by Mozart until he brought Storace around to singing what he wanted her to sing all along. This would explain its impossible key of E-flat. To the everlasting credit of Nancy Storace, she finally settled for “Deh vieni non tardar,” in F, a marvel of subtle understatement... and all the more effective because of it.”\textsuperscript{153}

Unfortunately, Ferrarese could not be convinced to sing the understated “Deh vieni;” nor would she, by all accounts, have been able to carry it off. However, as we have seen, the practice of singers requesting substitutions was commonplace and her request for a custom-made aria not unexpected. Rice writes that for a rondò, this one is fairly understated -- he may be the sole proponent of this opinion in the literature -- and perfectly suitable for Susanna. “Mozart,” he writes, “refrained from exploiting

\textsuperscript{151} Rice, \textit{Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera}, 479.


\textsuperscript{153} Heartz, “Constructing Le Nozze di Figaro,” in \textit{Mozart’s Operas}, 152.
the full extent of Ferrarese's voice."\textsuperscript{154} He does point out that the use of wind instruments is particularly beautiful, and richer in instrumentation than normal for rondos of this period.

Aria (Susanna): Act 4, No. 27a (substitute) “Al desio di chi t'adora”

\textit{Al desio di chi t'adora,}
\textit{Vieni, vola, o mia speranza!}
\textit{Morirò, se indarno ancora,}
\textit{Tu mi lasci sospirar.}

To the arms of the one who adores you, come quickly, my hope!
I shall die if you leave me sighing in vain much longer here.

\textit{Le promesse, i giuramenti,}
\textit{Deh! rammonta, o mio tesoro!}
\textit{E i momenti di ristoro}
\textit{Che mi fece Amor sperar!}

Your promises, your vows, oh remember them, pray, dear heart!
And the moments of delight for which love has made me hope!

\textit{Ah! ch'io mai più non resisto}
\textit{All'ardor che in sen m'accende!}
\textit{Chi d'amor gli affetti intende,}
\textit{Compassa il mio penar.}

Oh! For I can no longer resist the ardour that burns in my breast!
Let those who know the affects of love sympathize with my pain.\textsuperscript{155}

The aria that Mozart composed for Ferrarese begins with “Giunse alfin il momento,” the same recitative that precedes the original aria. The aria then takes the form of a two-tempo rondò in Larghetto and Allegro. The opening A statement of the aria starts quite simply in the key of F -- the same as “Deh vieni.”\textsuperscript{156} It then moves into

\textsuperscript{154} Rice, \textit{Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera}, 482.
\textsuperscript{156} By keeping the new aria in same key as the original it replaced, Mozart does not compromise the tonal plan of \textit{Figaro}. Heartz, “Constructing Le Nozze di Figaro,” in \textit{Mozart’s Operas}, 150.
an ornate B section, before returning to a near-exact restatement of the A theme. The Allegro section, while shorter, contains four different themes in a pattern of CDEDF. The F section is the only part of the Allegro that contains coloratura.\textsuperscript{157}

Ex 3-4: K. 577 “Al desio di chi t’adora,” mm. 28-35

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image}
\end{figure}

The structure of the text of “Al desio” is apparently quite conventional for a Viennese rondo at this time. It consists of a twelve-line poem consisting of three quatrains of ottonari -- eight emphasized beats or stressed syllables of text. The first quatrains of text corresponds to the A section of music, while the second quatrains is the contrasting B section. The return to the A theme brings a return to the first quatrains of the poem. The Larghetto section follows the text with little repetition of words and

\textsuperscript{157} Rice, \textit{Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera}, 480.
phrases, and the text is set either syllabically or with two notes per syllable, except for the B section, in which the word “sperar” is extended throughout several measures by a lengthy coloratura passage (Example 3-4). The Allegro section consists of multiple declamations of the same text, and uses only the final quatrains of the text.

It is clear from the outset that the text of this aria represents a far more sexually-aware Susanna than that of the 1786 version. Here, Susanna breathlessly anticipates her wedding night, saying that she will die if she is left sighing in vain much longer. One can feel her palpitations as the aria moves from the lyrical Larghetto first part to the Allegro second part. The long, arching legato phrases of the Larghetto give way to short, breathless phrase fragments separated by eighth rests as she tells of her irresistible desire. Her needs and desires for her lover are none too subtly highlighted by bursts of coloratura (Example 3-5):

Musically, one can see how Ferrarese might have been pleased by this aria: it requires bravura delivery and rivals the Countess’s arias in length and complexity. In fact, both text and music of “Al desio” are so uncharacteristic of Susanna that in the nineteenth century the aria was attributed to the Countess, despite the fact that it had become popular in its day as the “Rondo de la Ferrarese,” whose role was known to have been Susanna. It is true that both the text and the music would fit the Countess far better than Susanna. The simple song quality of “Deh vieni non tardar,” the original aria, is absent in this grand rondo.
Ex 3-5: K. 577 “Al desio di chi t’adora,” mm. 88-102

In the context of the opera, however, this aria, which takes on characteristics of an elevated style, makes more sense than it would initially appear. At this point in the narrative Susanna is pretending to be the Countess by wearing the Countess’s cloak and fancy hat, a visual disguise rendered rather useless by the darkness of night. For this situation to work in the context of the narrative, the audience is required to believe that Figaro would not recognize Susanna’s voice and would be fooled by her disguise, a rather implausible scenario. Perhaps Mozart’s intention for the revival of the opera is to correct this implausibility by creating a situation for Figaro to believe
momentarily that Susanna really is the Countess. She would then be singing this aria in a style well above her station in order to confirm that fact.

By “clothing” Susanna in the “vocal mask” of a substitute aria that resembles the Countess’s more elevated vocal style, Susanna’s disguise becomes aural and not visual. If the aria is intended to contribute to Susanna’s façade as the Countess, then it should have an uncharacteristic style and musical and textual vocabulary. One might even interpret “Al desio” as a parody of the Countess’s aria “Dove sono” from the third act, considering that the arias follow the same formal structure and have a similar vocal range and require similar vocal colour. Both arias start with an emotional recitative, then go through lyrical slow movements, which are followed by Allegro sections that feature coloratura runs used to depict heightened emotion. The aria’s tessitura even resembles the higher range of the Countess, and the vocal Fach required to sing such a bravura work is that of the lyric coloratura and not the soubrette, as Susanna’s original music suggested.

One may conclude, since “Al desio” seems uncharacteristic of Susanna, and certainly lies outside of the generic conventions of the soubrette in opera buffa, that Mozart may have taken the opportunity borne of Ferrarese’s demands to create an aria that would disguise Susanna in the clothing, musical language, and coloratura level of the Countess. This vocal mask makes Figaro’s acceptance of his wife’s disguise far more plausible, and gave Ferrarese some much-needed help in creating a believable character portrayal in this scene. Apparently, however, Mozart felt that his music, while suited to the talents of La Ferrarese, would only work for Susanna if the singer
could perform as simply and sincerely as possible. In late August 1789, he wrote to his wife describing this new piece. “The little aria,” he writes, “which I composed for Madame Ferrarese, ought, I think, to be a success, provided she is able to sing it in an artless manner, which however I very much doubt.”\textsuperscript{158}

Questions about the dating of these two arias has long existed. The Köchel catalogue shows “Un moto di gioia” K.579 as having been written almost immediately after “Al desio” K.577, but Tyson’s research involving paper analysis of the autograph copy dates “Un moto di gioia” to almost a year later, an entirely plausible scenario given the fact that this production of Figaro was performed at the Burgtheater numerous times over a period of several months. Tyson speculates that initially only “Al desio” was commissioned for the revival, with the original second act aria, “Veni in ingnocchiatevi,” remaining in the opera. When it soon became clear to da Ponte that, even with the repetition of rehearsals and a run of several performances, Ferrarese was having difficulty pulling off the comedic business required of the original aria, a simpler one was requested.\textsuperscript{159}

The performance history of the two substitute arias composed for Ferrarese is significant. They mostly survived out of context, along with numerous other “concert arias” -- a term which in fact includes true concert arias and insertion arias composed to replace arias in later performances of operas. A 1789 Abschrift, dated from

\textsuperscript{158} Letter from Mozart to Constanze Mozart, 15-18 August 1789 (undated). In Spaethling, Mozart’s Letters, Mozart’s Life, 415.

\textsuperscript{159} Tyson, Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores, 317.
December, discovered in Florence in the *Istituto musicale di Firenze* and now housed in the Mozarteum in Salzburg, shows that Ferrarese continued to sing both these arias in the opera late in the year.\textsuperscript{160} This *Abschrift* confirms that “Al desio di chi t’adora” was placed immediately after the recitative “Gionse alfin il momento,” replacing “Deh vieni non tardar.”\textsuperscript{161} Further evidence of the performance of “Al desio” in this Vienna revival is an advertisement for the sheet music in the September 23, 1789 edition of *Wiener Zeitung*, less than a month after the opening performance of *Figaro*’s revival:

New Rondeau sung by Mme. Ferrarese, from the opera *La Nozze di Figaro* by Herr Kapellmeister Mozart, in actual service of H. M. The Emperor in pianoforte score. “Gionse alfin” Recitativo; “Al desio di chi t’adora” Rondeau for Soprano. 28 kr.\textsuperscript{162}

Further indication of this aria’s continued popularity in Vienna is found in the diary of Count Zinzendorf, avid theatre-goer and *Figaro* fan. Zinzendorf writes: “7 May 1790. Went to the opera *Le Nozze di Figaro*. The duet for the two women and the rondo for La Ferrarese continue to please.”\textsuperscript{163}

The Simrock-Neele 1796 piano-vocal score of Figaro places the two original arias in their usual positions in the opera, but includes “Al desio” in an appendix, erroneously describing it as the Countess’s aria. The full score of the opera, published


\textsuperscript{162} Köchel, ibid., 365.

\textsuperscript{163} See Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart’s Vienna*, 355.
by the same company in 1819, also prints the aria as a supplement and makes the same error in attributing to the Countess. Because the aria appears in appendices rather than in the body of the opera, these scores seem to suggest that, by this time, the aria was generally performed as a concert piece, and only occasionally (if ever) within the context of the opera.\footnote{164}

The contrary conclusion may be reached, however, when perusing an old volume of popular opera selections by Cherubini, Cimarosa, and Mozart, arranged for solo piano. This volume, published by Torricella in Vienna in 1820, contains mostly pieces from Figaro in the Mozart portion of the book. Among its selections is “Al desio di chi t’adora,” correctly attributed to Susanna. The title page reads: Rondo / Al desio di chi t’adora / per il Clavicembalo / ricavato dall’Opera / Le Nozze di Figaro / del Signor Mozart / Raccolta d’Arie No 230.\footnote{165} This is significant in that it is an 1820 manuscript listing “Al desio” as a standard aria from Figaro, implying that the aria continued to be performed in the opera at that time. Even more compelling evidence supporting the continued use of these arias in performances of the opera is found in a full score of Le nozze di Figaro by the Viennese music publishing firm Lausch, currently in the Conservatorio di Musica Luigi Cherubini in Florence. This score contains both substitute arias, while the original arias are absent. Although this copy is

\footnote{164} I have not been able to examine the Simrock-Neefe edition of the opera, as very few exist. See Paul Hirsch, “More Mozart Early Editions,” Music Review 3 (1942): 43.
\footnote{165} Hirsch, ibid., 44. The / sign indicates the division between each line of lettering.
undated, musicologist Alan Tyson’s study of the type of paper and the watermarks indicate that it was likely published around 1805.  

Mozart was influenced by the personality, vocal and dramatic abilities of singers for whom he wrote. We recall that in 1778, he wrote in a letter to his father, “I like an aria to be as exactly suitable for a singer as a well-made piece of clothing.” He obviously had a great deal of pride for the fine craft of tailoring his vocal music to perfectly suit the voice of the singer who performed it. In the case of the singer Adriana Ferrarese and substitute arias for the revival of Le Nozze di Figaro, however, he was compelled both by the wishes of the diva and conventional operatic practice to create substitute works that featured coloratura prominently, thereby completely changing the character level of the maid Susanna from the expected character level of a buffa role to that of a middle character. While the aria “Al desio” may seem inappropriate to the character of Susanna, and a compromise of dramatic consistency and vocal characterization to the whims of the singer, one wonders if da Ponte and Mozart had desired a new interpretation of the scene. Though there is no known evidence to support the assertion that the change in arias was motivated by anything beyond a mere pandering to wishes of the diva, a closer look at “Al desio” finds the aria making dramatic sense. If Mozart intended for Susanna’s disguise to move beyond a simple change of wardrobe to an imitation the Countess’s voice and manner, and the appropriation of her more elevated vocal style and formal aria structure, then

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166 Tyson, Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores, 293-4.

the elaborate nature of this coloratura aria may be justified. These substitute arias may, therefore, demand a new and different reading of the character of Susanna.
Conclusion:

Mozart's Coloratura and the Power of the Diva
In the first chapter of this thesis, after the presentation of contextual material, including a definition of the term coloratura, a discussion of the two different comic opera genres prevalent in Vienna in Mozart’s time, and the delineation of the three character types according to the model set forth by playwright and opera librettist Carlo Goldoni, I posed three questions that I would use as a basis for analysis throughout the case studies on the coloratura arias of Le nozze di Figaro and Die Entführung aus dem Serail.

The first question asked that the character level be considered, along with its adherence to, or departure from, the conventions of Goldoni’s comic opera character level dictates. I demonstrated that for the three characters in question, Konstanze, Blonde and Susanna, Goldoni’s tri-level model of character types is largely operative. In Die Entführung, Konstanze, a noblewoman, is a seria type of role, and behaves according to her status and her character level. Mozart has given her long, elaborate opera seria style arias. Susanna, on the opposite end of the spectrum, is a chambermaid, and therefore, a buffa character, with the requisite behaviour and the shorter song-like arias expected of such a character level. However, the role of Susanna in the revival of Le nozze offers some complications to Goldonian model; Susanna’s actions and behaviour in the course of the opera remain the same as in the original production, but her music changes so substantially that she can no longer be considered a buffa character, but a mezze caraterre.
Blonde, as well, presents a slight aberration to the Goldonian model because, though a maid and therefore of similar class as Susanna, her behaviour and the music that Mozart gave her raise her above the buffa level into the middle level between pure seriousness and pure comedy. It is my belief that this role has not yet been fully explored by scholars, perhaps because the complexity and interest of the more fully realized character of Konstanze has simply overshadowed this smaller role. However, the richness of the character of Blonde -- an Englishwoman in a court of Spaniards abducted by Turkish men, and a lady’s maid who is clearly more astute in the culture, arts, and behaviour of courtly life than a typical chambermaid -- is one that I hope to explore in further studies.

For the second question I asked how the amount and type of coloratura supported the determined character type, and if this coloratura is what one would expect for this type of role. We have seen that Mozart appeared to respect and work within the conventions of the character types of the two comic opera genres in question in this thesis. As one would expect, Konstanze, the most serious role of the three sopranos, has extensive coloratura in her arias. The coloratura passages are lengthy and varied in their melodic patterns, including scale passage-work and arpeggiation. Coloratura is not used merely as occasional embellishment in the arias, but supplies the principal content of entire sections of her multi-part arias. Blonde, the middle character, is given far simpler and shorter passages of coloratura in one aria, and none in her other aria. In the aria that has coloratura, she is given simple ascending major scales, quite different from the varied nature of Konstanze’s coloratura patterns.
Susanna, the buffa role, has only a simple pattern of embellishment, consisting of a tonic scale and arpeggio, at the end of one of her arias, which also supports her character type. As I demonstrated in the third chapter, which extensively analyses Susanna’s substitute arias, the coloratura in these new arias does not support her determined character level, and is beyond the embellishment that one would expect.

Finally, I asked if the coloratura functions as more than just an indicator of social status, and if it potentially gives us an insight into the character’s state of mind or her approach to her dramatic situation. This question perhaps allowed the most interesting conclusion about coloratura in Mozart. (Further study would possibly reveal if this is a trend of eighteenth-century opera in general, or a feature of Mozart’s use of coloratura in particular.) In all the cases of coloratura in the three characters examined in this study, coloratura was not used when alone, only when communicating with others, and thus may be seen as a communicative device. It tended to be used in situations in which the singer of the coloratura is set as a social equal or superior to the person to whom they are singing, so I would conclude that coloratura generally functions to a certain extent as a social indicator. We recall that Konstanze used coloratura in two of her three arias, “Ach ich liebte” and “Martern aller Arten.” Both of these arias are sung to the Pasha who she sees as a social equal, worthy of respect. The one moment in the opera in which Konstanze is alone, she does not use coloratura in the personal, reflective aria she sings, “Traurigkeit.” Similarly, Blonde uses coloratura in “Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln,” the aria she sings to Osmin, her social inferior, specifically for the purpose of demonstrating her social grace that far
exceeds his. As would be expected, she does not have any coloratura at all in "Welche Wonne, welche Lust," the aria that she sings to (or perhaps about) her mistress Konstanze.

The plot of *Le nozze* makes the argument for coloratura as a communicative device when addressing social inferiors less clearly discernible. Susanna's aria, "Venite inginocchiatevi," sung to social superiors Cherubino and the Countess, follows this rule through its complete absence of coloratura. However, the ambiguity of Susanna's situation in the park scene of Act IV creates a problem when trying to determine if the argument holds. For both "Deh vieni non tardar" and "Al desio di chi t'adora," Susanna's intended listener is Figaro, her social equal; therefore, one would expect the amount of coloratura to be minimal. "Deh vieni" has only a small passage of embellishment, while "Al desio," sung in the same situation, has a great deal of coloratura, making it an aberration to the rule. However, Susanna's identity is rather unclear at this point: should we analyze her character as a maid, or as the Countess, whose guise she has adopted? Is her voice her own, or is she using a vocal mask, singing from the Countess's higher social stature, in the presence of the socially lower Figaro?

Social indication, however, only plays a part in the function of coloratura within the comic opera. The heightened emotion of a character -- the sense of extreme danger, anger, elation -- all can contribute to the need for a character to express herself through coloratura. Konstanze's desire to convey to the Pasha how deeply she misses her fiancé, and why she cannot give her love to him, is expressed in coloratura. When
given the ultimatum to give herself to the Pasha or submit to the pain of torture, her fury unleashes itself in coloratura. Blonde is also well aware of her danger in the harem, and is moved to use coloratura as well, but instead of directly expressing her feelings of loss or fear to Osmin (a move that would probably give the sadistic creature great delight), she uses coloratura to deflect and lighten the sense of danger. Susanna’s use of coloratura in the arias of both the original production and the revival may express anxiety over her role in the scheme to ensnare the Count. In addition, the coloratura in “Al desio,” while superficially representing Susanna’s disguise as the Countess, can also be seen as a sincere desire and anticipation of her wedding night with Figaro, or conversely, as a pointed form of punishment for his jealous streak.

Throughout this thesis, I have stated that coloratura has meaning -- that coloratura creates a further understanding of the character, through its adherence to, or selective departure from, established conventions of character delineation and aria composition in eighteenth-century comic opera. Further, I have argued that coloratura creates meaning for the listener, as it expresses emotions that move beyond an aria’s text. The meaning is imposed at the compositional stage by both the librettist and the composer. Though I have mainly focused the discussion toward Mozart’s contribution to the dramatic function of coloratura in these operas, a necessary step given the limitations of a master’s thesis, I have not removed the performer from the equation. Meaning in opera requires the performance of the art, as well as the reception of the performance by an audience to be completed. I have noted the importance of the
singer in the compositional process as well as in performance, particularly in the third chapter, in which I discussed the influence of singers on Mozart's arias.

Singers of course play an important role in the conveyance of the dramatic meaning of coloratura, which may account for the inherent challenge in discussing coloratura as a dramatic device, and not simply as vocal adornment. The very virtuosity of coloratura takes us, as audience members, out of the Turkish harem; its blatant drawing of attention removes us from the garden in Seville and brings us back to our seats in the opera house, aware that we are seeing a diva at work. Perhaps we even wait for those famous high Fs and compare them to our favourite Dessay recording, or think that the coloratura runs of the singer playing Konstanze that we are seeing recall the brilliance of Schwarzkopf. It has been suggested by opera theorists that coloratura in any form requires us to see the performance as "phenomenal" -- which may be defined as a performance that openly declares itself as such, being a "performance" by the character on-stage.\(^{168}\) Conventionally, the term phenomenal performance has been used as a term to describe the situation of a song being "performed" by the character, usually for an "audience" on-stage -- examples might include Orfeo's "Possente spirto" from Claudio Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607) or the brindisi, "Libiamo ne' lieti calici," from Giuseppe Verdi's *La traviata* (1853) -- songs that openly declare themselves as such within the context of the opera.

In the case of the arias of Mozart which have been examined in this thesis, the intention of the composer is not phenomenal performance; the libretto does not call

for a performative moment, and Mozart has integrated the arias seamlessly into the action of the plot. However, we as audience members cannot help noting the embellishments calling attention to the singer, and becoming aware of her as a performer and not just as the vessel for, and interpreter of, the composer's art. We are aware of the difficulty of long coloratura passages and repeated or sustained high notes, and in fact, the very nature of the danger to the singer of such technical demands often makes it more thrilling to the audience. The operatic convention of singers taking curtain calls at the end of each act, draws further attention to the performer. Wheelock discusses a filmed production of *Die Entführung* in which Edita Gruberova, the soprano playing the role of Konstanze, takes an extended curtain call mid-act, after singing "Martern aller Arten." According to Wheelock, the camera continues to run as Gruberova comes back on-stage repeatedly to bow, and Wheelock sees in this act of obedience to the conventions of operatic behaviour a replication of Konstanze's captivity to the social conventions of constancy.¹⁶⁹

The real-life singer will naturally be distinguished from the fictional character through such measures that call attention to her. Carolyn Abbate describes the severing of the singer from the context of the drama of the opera, making the audience aware that we are watching a performative act: "The membrane between the pure voice-object and the voice that we assign consciously to the virtuoso, as performance, is thin, and thus permeable." Abbate uses the example of the Queen of the Night arias from *Die Zauberflöte* in her discussion of "the presence of the performer." In the

Queen of the Night’s second aria, “Der Hölle Rache,” the performer is actually forced to the foreground, because the voice-object in this extraordinary piece bears such a strong emotional charge. The aria oscillates “between drama -- the angry tirade by the character -- and voice-object that comes to the fore precisely in the melismatic vocalises. The melismas, splitting words and separating syllable from syllable, destroy language.”

By killing language, Abbate writes, the Queen also kills herself as a character, suddenly becoming terrifying because her voice is no longer part of a human character, but an entity of pure sound. I would assert, however, that Mozart intended this character (not just this voice) to be terrifying, and that the sonic elevation of the Queen to a transcendent level of supernatural being is fully integrated into the opera, and as such, should not be seen as a disembodied voice. The extreme nature of the Queen’s coloratura is very much a part of her whole being.

In all of the arias that I examined for this thesis, coloratura appears to be used at times when simply set text is insufficient to convey a character’s emotion, vocalizing that which is beyond the confines of plain melody. However, unlike later operas in the nineteenth century, when coloratura is often openly a performative act, with coloratura passages frequently occurring as wordless vocalizing, Mozart never composes coloratura to just the syllable “ah.” It is always on a word. But do we

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171 It must be noted that singers in modern day do choose to use the syllable “ah” for Mozart’s coloratura passages when the set word would make vocalization difficult, such as the “eh” vowel of the word “nimmermehr” in the Queen of the Night’s “Der Hölle Rache.” In the same aria, however, the word “Bande,” is normally sung.
hear it that way, and does the extension of the word over numerous notes or measures of music cause the coloratura to become wordless? Does coloratura kill language, as Abbate asserts?

I believe that in Mozart’s arias, while the text is often barely understandable since frequently nothing but a few syllables or words accompany multiple measures of vocalizing, the coloratura has been carefully set to the librettists’ texts, and is not wordless. Each passage of coloratura exists to amplify or illustrate the meaning of the text, with words of text set to the coloratura chosen to convey a specific meaning. Recall how carefully Mozart chose the three different words in “Martern aller Arten” that would receive embellishment -- scoff, blessing, and free. Those three words, and the three passages of coloratura that they accompany, tell the entire story of that aria: that Konstanze scoffs at the threat of torture, that the Pasha will be blessed if he releases her, and that she looks forward to the freedom of death.

Mozart used coloratura to display the talents of the sopranos (and indeed the singers of all voice ranges) for whom he composed, carefully considering the unique abilities of each one. Mozart took into account his singers’ wishes when composing arias, although how the actual compositional collaboration between singer and composer took place is not well documented. While the example of Adriana Ferrarese and the somewhat uncharacteristic substitute arias for Susanna in the revival of Figaro is an extreme case of a singer’s power to affect meaning, the vocal talents of other singers surely influenced the type of coloratura that Mozart wrote and, therefore, the dramatic meaning of the arias composed for them. Singers of Mozart’s arias were
fortunate to have been given the opportunity to perform music in which the coloratura that displayed their talents as virtuoso performers also helped them in the portrayal of their characters and the creation of dramatic meaning.\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{172} I would like to thank Dr. Jennifer Wise suggesting that coloratura could be both functional and ornamental, a point that helped redefine my thesis in its late stages.
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